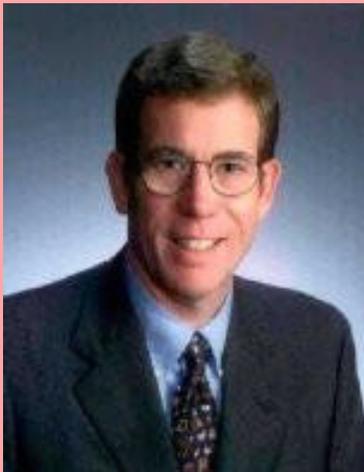


New Center Board Chairman Ed Segner



Edmund P. "Ed" Segner, III

Edmund P. "Ed" Segner III occupies a unique place in relation to Rice and the city of Houston. He is a graduate of the Rice Civil Engineering Department (Hanszen, '76) who has become the president of EOG Resources Inc., one of the more significant energy companies in Houston. He is also a part-time lecturer in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, the External Advisory Chairman for the Cain Project in Engineering and Professional Communication, and the new Chairman of the Center for Education's Advisory Board. "I'm also an avid Rice Owl fan, baseball in particular." This high level of involvement in both Rice and the Houston community makes Segner the ideal person to help carry out Rice President David Leebron's initiative to make Rice a greater presence in the community. The Center for Education is the perfect campus organization to achieve this. "We talk about Rice outside the hedges," says Segner, "and [the Center for Education] has been doing that. It is truly one of the great things that the Center for Education is all about."

Segner was on the Center's Advisory Board just after the Center formed. He is easily able to recall the improvements in the community the Center helped facilitate. "When the programs first started, the level of science teacher training was not what it could be. The Center has been instrumental in moving that forward, and of course, got recognized in the early days with a National Science Foundation grant. So it's always been an effective for Rice to give to the external community, *continued on next page*

Coppola's Book Praised in Teachers College Record

Robert W. Butche, a former executive and technologist and current historian of the Ohio State University College of Education and The Ohio State University School, writes, "In Coppola's hands, the melding of teaching, curriculum, and technology provides new insights for both teachers and technologists and new clarity and understanding about one of the most vital issues in today's schools." For Butche, *Powering Up: Learning to Teach Well With Technology*, "identifies where the rubber meets the road in applying digital technology to everyday classroom settings." The book is a vital addition to research on technology in classrooms because, though, "a great deal of academic study in the last 25 years has focused on how best to apply technology in school settings...in-service teachers, even those who have come to love their computers, still remain fundamentally uncertain about how to use technology to solve real, everyday classroom problems."

Butche finds more to love about the book than just the content. While discussing Coppola's treatment of one of the book's five case studies, Butche says, "[She] tells Trace's story with the deft hand of a novelist."

Though Butche is interested primarily in Coppola's treatment of technology, he does not miss her constructivist message. "What we learn from Coppola's case studies is that technology is best used when it augments what is being done in the classroom. Perhaps more importantly, Coppola shows us why the use of digital systems in the classroom is a practice, not a science."

The complete review can be found in the *Teachers College Record* Volume 107 Number 8, 2005, available on www.tcrecord.org.



Segner continued

and it's been true to that vision." Another important trait of Ed Segner's, a trait that makes him the perfect Advisory Board Chair as the Center looks to the future, is his role as a leader in the Houston corporate community. Since fundraising is currently one of the Center's chief priorities, a board chairman with the ability to interact with some of Houston's most powerful corporate leaders gives the Center a new edge. However, as Segner is quick to point out, no one should forget the job that Center for Education Founder Maconda Brown O'Connor did as Advisory Board Chair. "We were very blessed," says Segner, "with Maconda Brown O'Connor's past activities. She brought a lot of vision, leadership, financial contributions. She had tremendous vision. So, I think the challenge is following in those footsteps." (Dr. O'Connor continues to serve on the Center's Board.)

Following in those footsteps should not be hard for Segner, especially considering the education he received as a Rice undergraduate. One crucial aspect of this education was the strong theoretical commitment of the engineering program. "In many design oriented engineering programs, one knows how to use the formulas. In the Rice program, one knows how to derive the formulas, and therefore understands the assumptions behind those formulas, and whether or not the situation you are considering is applicable." He was also grateful for the opportunity to take a variety of accounting courses, which were also very strong on theory. "I chose to enter public accounting rather than engineering coming out of Rice." Rice's programs in communication were also very formative. "Being able to speak, being able to write [gave one] a much better opportunity to become a well-rounded individual coming into the business world."

A strong point of kinship between Segner and the Center for Education is the Center's theoretical background. "Our function," he says, "is really helping other teachers become better teachers. In doing so, you've got to make sure they have good science, or good theory behind it. So, that's what we provide. And it is that melding of good theory and good practice that provides the data for good research."

Simply having a successful businessman who is adept at problem solving and communication does not guarantee financial growth for the Center. It is vital, though. If one looks at the success of other Rice organizations, such as the Shepherd School of Music, one will see that alumni contributions count a great deal toward that success. And though Segner is a Rice alum who is finding ways to help the Center, there is a limited number of Rice alumni with direct ties to education. And, one must not forget that teachers, the group that is most directly serviced by the Center, do not make a great deal of money. The business community can be enticed to help an organization like the Center for Education. "Education is our future in this community," Segner says. "A gift to the Center for Education is a kindergarten through twelve gift, as opposed to a college gift. A gift to the Center for Education should not be considered a competing gift to what the University is doing as a whole."

And though Segner notes that Rice may be better suited to serve the secondary levels, he also believes "In the long-run, we have to make a difference in the early grades, so that when students get to middle school, they are not already shut out [from opportunities]." The Center for Education has the resources necessary to make this happen: The School Literacy and Culture Project specializes in prekindergarten and kindergarten literacy, and the Houston Independent School District is using middle school teachers who are trained in the Model Science Lab methodology to mentor elementary science teachers.

But no one can expect a quick-fix. "Investing in the Center for Education is a long-term investment. We all care about this city thirty to fifty years from now." And, just as Segner has used his Rice education to benefit both Houston and Rice, an investment in the Center for Education's programs that help educate Houston's children will eventually be an investment in Rice as well. "A vibrant Houston helps make a vibrant Rice. And a vibrant Rice helps make a vibrant Houston."

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MSL Teachers Earn Travel Grants to Africa and Beyond

Five Model Science Lab teachers have been awarded travel grants from the Fund for Teachers. Nedaro Bellamy from Lanier Middle School and Rosalind Russell from Johnston Middle school won a team grant to research and study the ecological and ethno-botanical relationships in Ghana ecosystems. Laura Shanks from Lanier Middle School will participate with the Classical Discovery Program to study Greek history and culture in Athens, Greece. Lisa Webber from Braeburn Elementary will participate in a “Tanzania Teaching Safari,” wherein she will teach English to students in a local school and explore the natural and cultural history of Tanzania. Diann Valentine from Fondren Middle School and her husband Johnny Valentine from Edison Middle school won a team grant to explore and collect sand and science data and observe the artistic and cultural experiences of Hong Kong, Bali, Singapore, and Bangkok. Johnny Valentine is not with the Model Science Lab, but intends to use his knowledge and skills as a music teacher to contribute to the research.

The Fund for Teachers was founded in 1998 in Minneapolis by Raymond Plank, a man for whom teachers had a “strong, lasting and positive influence.” Plank started the program with an endowment of \$1 million “to provide teachers with opportunities for summer sabbaticals – self-designed programs of summer learning and exploration.” The fund for teachers has now expanded, and awards grants to teachers in Denver, Houston, Minneapolis, New York, Oakland, St. Paul, Tulsa, rural Colorado, rural Oklahoma, and Boston. In addition, beginning in 2003, the Apache Corporation honored Raymond Plank and the Fund for Teachers by donating \$5 million per year for three years. Center co-director Linda McNeil serves on the Fund for Teachers Advisory Board.

“Fund for Teachers is a unique foundation whose mission is to enrich the lives of schoolteachers and students by providing recognition and opportunities for renewal to outstanding teachers. Making a difference one teacher at a time, Fund for Teachers awards grants directly to teachers to support professional development opportunities of their own design.”

According to the founder, “The fund for teachers rewards promise, creativity, and dedication. Our grants of up to \$5,000 each are based solely on merit. They are intended to make teachers – and their students – smile. And they reflect a goal my father often spoke of – to make this world a little better off than it was before.”

SLC Teachers Receive HAAEYC Honors

At the Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children’s (HAAEYC) May 5 Awards and Officer Installation Dinner, the School Literacy and Culture Project saw three of its participants receive honors.



Sharon Dworaczyk, Connie Floyd, Debbie Lingrey (seated)

Debbie Lingrey was named Classroom Teacher of the Year. “This individual is acknowledged for his/her outstanding teaching practices and for the ways in which parents and community are involved in the classroom” (HAAEYC website). The Classroom Teacher of the Year is also awarded the \$1,000 Elsie Samuels Scholarship Award, to be used toward expenses to attend the NAEYC Conference. Lingrey joined the Classroom Storytelling Project as a resident teacher in 1996, and became a mentor teacher in 2002. She currently teaches in the Chapelwood United Methodist Church School for Young Children. Last year’s HAAEYC Teacher of the Year, Erika Kuntschik, was also an SLC resident teacher.

Sharon Dworaczyk, a resident teacher since 1996 and mentor teacher since 1999 received the Teacher Educator of the Year award. “This individual is acknowledged for his/her contribution to the education of teachers” (HAAEYC website).

School Literacy and Culture Project Associate Director Connie Floyd, who has been with SLC for eleven years, was reelected to the HAAEYC Board of Directors.



Thanks to Our Generous Supporters

The Center for Education would like to thank the following recent donors. Each of these foundations, corporations, and individuals has helped strengthen Houston's teachers and students. Without this support, the Center could not provide its unique and important services to so many. Thank you!

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**The Brown Foundation
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Drs. John and Rebecca Kirkland
Mr. and Mrs. David Klein
Mr. and Mrs. Edmund P. Segner
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vrancken**

2005 Summer Creative Writing Workshops



A first-grader works on a story

Every June the Center for Education's School Literacy and Culture Project (SLC) teams up with Writers in the Schools (WITS) to create one of the most popular and effective summer camps in Houston. The Houston Press has called the Summer Creative Writing Workshops "the best summer program for kids." Students of all ages, from entering kindergarten to high school seniors, participate in the workshops. Each classroom pairs a WITS writer with a professional teacher to "offer a supportive environment where children engage in writing stories, poetry, essays, and plays, as well as simply reading for pleasure." Several SLC mentors, including Associate Director Connie Floyd and Associate Literacy Director Judy Rolke, teach in the workshops.

These SLC mentors use the same storytelling and dramatization techniques that have become so popular in

area elementary schools. So, while the workshops focus is developing the children's writing skills, there is also room for imaginative fun

Both parents and children love the workshops. Katie Cervenka, Rice's Director of Foundation Relations, has a six-year-old son in camp. "My son absolutely adored the summer creative writing workshop," she says. "He could not wait to go each day. He enjoyed exploring different ways of expressing himself and was so proud to see himself – in words and drawings – reflected in the final anthology from his class. I have already recommended the program to several friends. I can't wait for next year!"



Third-Graders read at the camp-end celebration



Biology Professor Sass Retires After 47 Years at Rice

by Nathan Black, Editorial Staff, Rice Thresher

Being disqualified is usually not a good thing, but in the case of retiring Biology Professor Ron Sass, it is a rare distinction. During his 47 years at Rice, Sass earned numerous teaching and mentoring awards, including the George R. Brown Prize for Excellence in Teaching three times, as well as the George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching.

"His teaching record was so stellar that he was retired in the mid-1980s from eligibility for the George R. Brown Teaching Awards," Dean of Natural Sciences Kathleen Matthews said.

Sass will teach at the School of Continuing Studies in the future, but this semester was his last teaching undergraduates.

Sid Richardson College junior Scott Hersey said he made sure to take Sass' spring class, BIOS 322: Global Ecosystem Dynamics before Sass retired. Hersey said Sass was particularly responsive to students, and that his lectures resembled former President Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats.

"Going to class was pretty much like story time," he said. "There was never any doubt that what he was telling us was correct... [and drawn] from personal experience," Hersey said.

Sass, who estimates he taught 8,000-10,000 students during his time at Rice, has also taught classes ranging from ENST 101: The Sustainable Environment to the first evolution course at Rice, Baker 312b: Patterns in Evolution, in 1977.

Sass served as master of Hanszen College – then all male – in 1964 and from 1966-'68. Sass was the second Hanszen master and the first chosen with student input.

"Consequently, I was probably a bit too young at the time," he said. "Nevertheless, it was a hoot. ...To live with a bunch of guys as a married man was a different experience."

Sass recalled a time when Hanszen students protested the "tie rule," which required students to wear a coat and tie to Sunday lunch. One day, the students showed up wearing nothing but their ties.

Sass said he also remembers giving Hanszen students technical assistance in starting "Hanszen College Radio," which later became KTRU.

Throughout his career, Sass has researched a variety of topics, including crystal structures, muscle physiology and climate change. He also switched departments – from chemistry to biology – in 1975. *continued on page 7*

Scientist and Educator

Harry Carothers and Olga Keith Wiess Professor of Natural Sciences, Rice University • Professor of Chemistry and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, 1958-2005 • Founding Co-Director, Rice University Center for Education • The Texas Hall of Fame for Science, Mathematics, and Technology, 2002 • Studies on Environment and Policy Issues, Rice Center for the Study of the Environment and Culture and James A. Baker Institute of Public Policy • Meritorious Service Award, 2001, Association of Rice Alumni • Piper Professor for 1999, Piper Foundation, San Antonio, Texas • Citation for Excellence in Refereeing by the editors of the American Geophysical Union journals, 1998 • Convenor, *International Global Atmospheric Chemistry Program* • Consultant, Embrapa Meio Ambiente (Embrapa Environment), Government of Brazil • Consultant, *United Nations Development Program* • Member, Scientific Organization Committee, Chinese Academy of Science, Soil Science Institute, Nanjing, China • National Research Council Senior Research Fellow (NASA), 1988 • The Rice University Honor Certificate for Teaching, 1985 • The George R. Brown Prize for Superior Teaching, 1981 • The Rice University Student Association Mentor Recognition Award, 1976 • The Rice University Award of Highest Merit, 1972 • The George R. Brown Prize for Excellence in Teaching, 1967, 1969, 1970 • Master of Hanszen College, 1966-68 • Salgo-Noren Distinguished Professor Award, 1966 • Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (Cambridge University), 1965 • Atomic Energy Commission Postdoctoral Fellowship, 1957-58 • National Science Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship, 1954-57 • Phi Beta Kappa, 1954 • Author of 150 scholarly papers and 2 books



Ron Sass, 2005



A Teacher's Reflection on a Year of Storytelling

By *Andre Calderon, KIPP Shine Prep*

The Rice Storytelling Project was quite a ride. From the first moments that my four-year-old friends got a taste of producing original stories, of dramatization, of the boundless space that allowed them to express themselves, they were hooked. The project provided a vast outlet for creativity. I started with the invitation, "Where do we begin?" and followed the students through a myriad of cars and trucks, and Barbies and blocks, from dogs and cats to moms and dads, and maybe the occasional visit to Chuck E. Cheese's. Some stories were violent, while others were funny. Most importantly, all were their own. The Storytelling Project served as an "invitation to the literacy club" for my students. It brought together the creative outlet with a tie to literacy. It also embodied the true spirit of reading and writing.



Andre Calderon

In my class we played The Imagination Stick. It was a simple game that used just that, a stick wrapped in the craziest blue wrapping paper I could find. I would call a student to the front of the class and chant, "I have the power of imagination!" The student would take the stick and silently pretend it was something else. It could be anything. The class would stand at the edge of their seats, some with their arms raised attempting to take a guess. That imagination stick became a horse, a pencil, a spoon, a skateboard, a bicycle, a baton, a staff; who knew we could have so much fun with a stick? Not Playstation, T.V., or a movie, but a stick. It was the gift of entertainment through learning.

The Storytelling Project connected their own words and ideas to a text, filling it with meaning. The teacher, as scribe, further connects their words to the story when he reads aloud off the very paper they just created together. The dramatization brings it all together – the child's words transported onto paper; read by teacher; students listening; characters acting out words on paper; words on paper become real, exciting, funny, the gift of entertainment through learning.

Many of the students chose to document their visits to the park, playtime at school, or a family outing to the store. Others embellished actions not yet possible for a four-year-old. One student described an independent jaunt to the mall, ally by himself, on the preferred method of transportation, the motorcycle. Others chose tales of princesses, dinosaurs, sharks, and talking dogs. This, to me, touches on the importance of Storytelling. It allows the child to more where she feels most comfortable. It tells the child, "Go!"

Storytelling was a peephole into my students' lives and thoughts that had never taken the time to look through. What I learned changed how I taught and how I think about teaching.

Center Advisory Board Member Kirkland Wins Teaching Award

The Center for Education is proud to announce that in October 2004, Center for Education Advisory Board member **Rebecca Kirkland, M.D.**, received the Arnold J. Rudolph Baylor Pediatric Award for Lifetime Excellence in Teaching.

"This Award for Lifetime Excellence in Teaching is given by the Department of Pediatrics in recognition of sustained excellence in teaching over a professional lifetime career in Pediatrics. Whereas, her teaching has been judged to be of exceptional educational value by virtue of the appropriateness of content, superiority of organization and clarity, and excellence in the style of presentation; and whereas, this has been attested to by all those fortunate enough to have been taught by this superb teacher; and whereas such teaching has been consistently excellent during a lifetime of teaching."



Rebecca Kirkland, M.D.



Sass continued

"I have found it productive to switch research interests about every decade," Sass wrote on his web site.

"The average lifetime for a president of a university is eight years, because by that time you've done all you can do," Sass said. "I think much the same is true with research. You run out of new ideas. You can continue on and reinvent the wheel, but that's not very exciting."



Agricultural University, Nanjing, 2001

"He goes into a field, figures it out, solves major problems, then moves on," Biology Department Chair Joan Strassmann said.

Most recently, Sass has focused on climate change and specifically methane, a major greenhouse gas.

Sass found a way to reduce methane emissions by flooding rice fields only intermittently rather than constantly.

Symposium speaker Robert Harriss (Ph.D. '65), Sass' colleague and a senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric research in Boulder, Colo., said rice yields were met or surpassed under the more environmentally friendly method Sass pioneered.

After refining partial flooding in East Texas, Sass traveled

internationally to promote his method. He made personal contacts with China's power brokers – he once had dinner with the head of the Nanjing Communist Party and also gave the national weather report on TV.

"I couldn't give it in Chinese, so I'm not sure anyone understood me," Sass said.

"The practice has been adopted across China in the last 25 years, Harriss said.

"Sass has the remarkable characteristic ... of not getting embroiled in the circle of worry [over global warming]," Harriss said. "He likes to find solutions."

On top of his teaching and research, Sass helped found Rice's Center for Education in 1988.

After officially retiring from Rice July 1, Sass will continue his work at the Center for Education and teach in the new Masters of Liberal Studies program at the School of Continuing Studies.

He will also work on a new project with the Baker Institute for Public Policy focused on reducing carbon emissions.

From the Baker Institute project, Sass will seek the same kinds of "win-win" solutions that he found to reduce methane emissions.

"What we're looking for are solutions that can be marketed," he said.

Sass said he would advise undergraduates to pick their careers carefully.

"Choose your job for all the right reasons – you can get by quite comfortably without having to sell yourself," he said. "I think I'm much better off than the majority of lawyers out there."

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"On top of his teaching and research, Sass helped found Rice's Center for Education in 1988."



•Upcoming Events•

Applications are now being accepted for the sixth annual Rice/NCTA East Asia Institute to begin in January, 2006. Secondary teachers accepted in the Institute receive 30 hours of instruction from Rice professors, valuable books and resources, a generous stipend, and a \$300 grant for their school library. In addition, as alumni of the Institute, they are eligible to compete for a place in any upcoming East Asia Study trips. Applications are due by September 30, 2005. For all information, including the application, please visit <http://asia.rice.edu/outreach.cfm>. Contact person is Ms. Dee Garza, who may be reached at deegarza@rice.edu.

Registration continues for the 2005-2006 Classroom Storytelling Project. Call 713-348-5333 for more information.

Watch for information about the 2005 Hazel Creekmore Symposium, coming in the fall. This year's featured speaker will be Stanford University's Linda Darling Hammond.

To learn more about the Center's teacher development programs, its publications and its research activities, see our website at <http://www.rice.edu/education>

To learn how to participate in one of the Center's teacher development programs, contact Glenda White at the Center for Education at (713) 348-5145.

The CenterPiece is edited by Jonathan M. Hamrick



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