Tower of talent draws generous support

John Taylor addresses guests at last year’s Golden Graduates’ Luncheon.

There is a great deal of goodwill and support for the University out in the community, says John Taylor, Director of External Relations.

This support will continue to be strong as long as the University remains bold and visionary and addresses its research to areas which make a tangible difference in society.

November last year marked the launch of the “Leading the Way” campaign, for which John was the prime mover (backed by an excellent team) and of which he is justifiably proud. The campaign aims to raise $100 million to help advance the University’s achievements in ways which have a positive impact on this country’s prosperity and on the quality of people’s lives. Already, with over $48 million worth of donations from generous friends of the University, it is almost halfway towards this target.

“The campaign has enormous transformative possibilities,” says John, “because it helps spread the word that the University is not an ivory tower but addresses issues of moment. The more our researchers and teachers can talk about their work and frame it within the bounds of the campaign, the more likely they are to win the support which will help finance their future efforts.”

The campaign was firmly based on a feasibility study which gave insight into what inspires people to give. “Anything self-serving is not a strong incentive to give. That came through very strongly,” says John. “What catches people’s imagination is top quality research which has the potential to enable positive change.”

The campaign is based on five themes which engage people emotionally: the health of our nation, the development of our children, the growth of our economy, the future of our cities, and the expression of who we are. These John sees as an umbrella covering many different types and facets of research. On the first three, the scope of relevant research is immense. “The future of our cities” encompasses transport, engineering, sustainability and design, all of which impact on people’s lives. The fifth theme, “the expression of who we are”, which “may seem more ephemeral than the others”, strongly appeals to people’s creative instincts and accommodates the work of some of our leading writers and historians. This theme invites support for blue skies research and commentary in any field.

Speaking of the donors, John emphasises the diversity of their interests, often inspired by personal experiences. “We must listen carefully to our donors in order to find a balance between the University’s needs and the donors’ interests and personal convictions. It is that matching of needs and desires that results in a deep satisfaction from giving. Donors need to feel that their gifts will make a difference in a way they care about.”

John is confident the Advancement Office, with a very good structure in place, with a very experienced Advancement Director, Jim Hill, and a skilled team of researchers and writers, and a high level of expertise in web development and data management. Even more important has been “the

(continued on page 2)
From the Vice-Chancellor

It is a pleasure to welcome all staff and students back to the University. I hope that you have all had a relaxing break, and that you return ready to face the challenges and opportunities that 2009 will present. I would particularly like to welcome new staff who have joined the University recently and look forward to meeting with you in staff orientation sessions.

In 2009 we have an Academic Audit, we will advance our campus development plans, and we will continue to focus on achieving the goals we have set in the University’s Strategic Plan. However, the global financial crisis is likely to result in a reduced ability or willingness on the part of government to invest in universities given the other priorities it now has. It may also lead to a decline in enrolments of international students whose own financial circumstances will have been harmed by the recession.

More positively, there is some evidence that domestic enrolments will rise, assisting us to meet our Investment Plan student numbers and to ensure that our students are well placed to succeed in the University. In doing this we will be keeping a watchful eye on our responsibility to enhance participation of under-represented groups and to meet the challenges set by the Taskforce on Undergraduate Admissions and Equity. Falling construction costs should provide welcome relief at a time when the University Council is considering our proposals for major investment in campus development. It is to be hoped that the new Government will recognise that the education sector is as worthy of infrastructural investment as are roads, rail and the extension of the broadband network.

Early indications are that we are on track to meet enrolment and hence our teaching revenue targets. But there are some uncertainties about the situation that lies ahead and we would all be wise to take a prudent approach to the management of our budgets and to the hiring of new staff until we see the depth of the current financial crisis and can assess its impact on the University more accurately. It is my hope and expectation that the sound financial performance of the University over the past few years and the measures we have taken to diversify and increase our revenues will enable us to continue to build a great University.

Gradual growth of more trusting relationships with the faculties as we develop systems and principles that are being applied across the University.

When I first arrived there was a tendency to work in silos. Working in cooperation we can accomplish so much more.”

John’s satisfaction with his role, which he entered at the invitation of former Vice-Chancellor Dr John Hood, comes largely from the tangible results he sees.

“The government can no longer provide all the money we need for research, and we must be aware that the generosity of donors is an important part of our funding for top-quality research now and in the future. It’s not always easy to ask for financial support, but the endpoint makes it all worthwhile—when suddenly it becomes possible to establish a chair, or a fellowship or scholarship which will add value to a vital area of research.”

A source of pleasure for John has been the chance to get to know the researchers, people of huge talent who are changing the world. “They’ve come overseas with us, they’ve spoken at dinners, their support has been essential. They are the inspiration for the donors’ enthusiasm.” (Though he modestly fails to mention his own contribution, it seems obvious his energy and enthusiasm must have inspired others as well.)

After completing an MA in English at Victoria University of Wellington and training as a teacher in Christchurch, John taught at Christ’s College and at Sutton Valex School in England before being appointed headmaster first at Rathkeale College in Masterton, and then at King’s College in Auckland where he served from 1988 to 2002.

“It’s been a fascinating experience moving from a private education institution to a public environment—a wonderful transition from one rewarding career to another.”

John is a member of the New Zealand Institute and of the Education Forum, is a trustee of the New Zealand Education and Scholarship Trust and of King’s School Board, and chairs both the Myers and the Robertson Scholarships selection committees. He is married to Sarah, who runs the New Zealand Education and Scholarship programme, and has three children and seven grandchildren. His interests include golf, tennis, rugby, critiquing, reading, theatre, bridge, and the politics of education.

Theology rocks

Among 35,000 young people who gathered at the Parachute Music 09 Festival in Hamilton were many who made a visit to the booth of the School of Theology to find out about study opportunities at The University of Auckland.

The School of Theology, represented for the first time at this annual Christian event (the Southern Hemisphere’s largest multi-day music festival), attracted a huge amount of favourable attention over the four days, says Theology Registrar, Pervin Medhora, who led the team that coordinated the University’s presence.

Pervin was full of praise for the students and staff who were rostered on over the four 12-and-a-half-hour days to oversee the activities and give information. The students, she said, inspired others with their genuine enthusiasm for the courses they were doing. Many people they talked to had been unaware that they could study theology at The University of Auckland, and showed particular interest in the conjoint degrees with Arts and Science and the General Education papers that could be included as a component in a range of degrees. “The students did such a wonderful job of promoting the School that some people asked if they had been especially trained. One even said ‘I’m definitely enrolling. The students have sold the degree to me’.”
Word pictures

One of Godfrey's recent photographs, taken while fishing.

Godfrey Boehnke, University photographer from the Centre for Academic Development – and valued contributor for many years to University News – was one of nearly 40 staff to be recognised for his contribution to the University, at a dinner hosted last December by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon.

Stuart saluted Godfrey for his many years of dedicated and valuable service. “Godfrey started here, I am told, at almost the same time as Colin Maiden became Vice-Chancellor. Few can rival his record not just for longevity but also for diligence, professionalism and consistent excellence… The University’s photographic record over the last nearly 40 years is to a large extent Godfrey’s, and posterity will have much to thank him for, as indeed do we.”

Though Godfrey’s creativity as a photographer is well-known to staff, it extends also beyond the visual into a fascination with words. Here is the poem Godfrey wrote in tribute to the occasion, at which he “felt extremely honoured”.

Wine and words

Beneath the mirrored ramparts and evening’s fluted song
We gathered, rows of honours, and medalled pros with gongs
Wines well chosen, loosened tongues and napkins slid to floor
As the speaker read citations the flutes were heard no more

I sat in awe and marvelled deep, at accomplishment and deeds
And then my turn it came and inclined me to the creed
The challenge not to shoot VC while drinking in this land
Was only easy on the night as no camera filled my hand.

Books were swapped beneath the cloth while posing nonchalant
And bottles let their flavours flow among the cited throng
Wine-recognition we fellowshipped and talked of simple things
Beneath the mirrored ramparts, whose guests sometimes were kings.

Pervin said they were all proud of the polished and professional presentation of their display, especially the large and striking pull-down poster designed by a member of the Marketing team. She also said the programme, which incorporated interactive activities, helped lead the visitors into relaxed conversation with staff and students.

“We had a wonderful reception,” said Pervin, “in the midst of a festive atmosphere where young people were having fun and listening to rock music. I’m sure the students helping to look after the booth were feeling like rock stars themselves.”

Stephen Garner said the School of Theology after this successful debut would definitely attend the festival each year from now on.

Global warming

A public lecture on “Global warming: A Christian response” will take place in Theatre OGG84 in the Owen G Glenn Building from 6-7pm on 12 March.

The lecturer is Professor Robert White, Associate Director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion and a director of the John Ray initiative, an educational charity that works to develop and communicate a Christian understanding of the environment. Professor White is Professor of Geophysics in the Department of Earth Sciences at Cambridge (since 1989) and is a Fellow of the Royal Society. He leads a research group investigating the earth’s dynamic crust.

Science and religion

Professor Robert White will also speak at “A symposium on science and religion in the 21st century: Faith in science, science in faith” on Saturday 14 March from 8.30am-6pm. He will speak on “Natural disasters: Acts of God or results of human folly?” Other speakers include Dr Stephen Garner (Theology) speaking with Dr Nicola Hoggard-Creegan, on “The view from theology”, Dr Graeme Finlay (Molecular Medicine), and other scholars from New Zealand and overseas. The event will take place in Theatre 401-419, “Neon Foyer”, Engineering School, Symonds Street.

Please register for the symposium by 11 March, with Pervin Medhora (Theology) (p.medhora@auckland.ac.nz). The cost is $20 (non-waged people $10), with refreshments and lunch provided. Parking will be available under the Owen G Glenn Building, at $5 flat rate.

Professional development launch

The Association of Tertiary Management, Aotearoa Region, announces the launch of the New Zealand 2009 Professional Development programme with a breakfast sponsored by the ATEM Auckland Group. The breakfast will be held in the Decima Glenn Room at the Owen G Glenn Building at the University from 7.30am, Friday 6 March. The programme is to be opened by Ali Hughes, ATEM Aotearoa Region Chair. A guest speaker will talk about leadership in a changing higher education sector. Breakfast will be free for ATEM members and $30 for non-members (to be paid in cash on the day).

To register please email Jenni Tupu, Faculty of Education (jtupu@auckland.ac.nz) by 27 February.

The University of Auckland News
Secrets revealed

Archaeologists from the Department of Anthropology have been working on the margins of Lake Quarn in Egypt. Associate Professor Simon Holdaway and Dr Jennifer Hellum write of their work.

Between 8,000 and 9,000 years ago, parts of the Sahara were much wetter than they are today. Monsoon rains fell far north of their current limit, meaning that hartebeest, gazelle and even hippo inhabited a lake margin in an area of Egypt that is today hyper-arid, devoid of all vegetation. Bones of these animals together with the remains of catfish and Nile perch lie strewn on the surface along with tens of thousands of stone artefacts.

The lake today, called Lake Quarn, is only a shadow of its former self. Environmental change over the last 5,000 years has gradually lowered lake levels so that agriculture associated with the Pharaonic and later Greco-Roman periods as well as modern-day activity occurs well away from the ancient lake edge deposits.

It is the ancient lake margin that has attracted a group of archaeologists from the University’s Department of Anthropology. Archaeological deposits are common on the ancient shorelines of Lake Quarn. Some date to the Epi-Paleolithic, when hunters and gatherers exploited a wide range of animals that roamed across the Sahara. Then about 6,500 years ago, when the desert was drying out, people came to the Fayum who were among the first to use domesticated plants and animals in Egypt (wheat, barley, sheep and goats). They occupied the shoreline of Lake Quarn, leaving an archaeological record that extends more than 30 kilometres along the ancient lake edge. These people made and used stone artefacts and heated their food in hearths, many of which remain on the surface today. They also made and used pottery.

The domestic plants and animals probably came from the Levant, the location of modern-day Palestine. Here the people who used these plants and animals lived in villages. However, whether the people who lived around Lake Quarn were also sedentary or more mobile like the nomadic grazers of modern North Africa is a topic much debated by archaeologists.

The team from Auckland is working in Egypt to solve this problem. Using an array of techniques developed during research in Australia, Anthropology students under Simon Holdaway’s direction spent five weeks last November-December mapping the location of 95,000 stone artefacts and bone fragments.

The Egyptian research is conducted in collaboration with the UCLA/RUG Fayum Research project, involving the Cotsen Institute at UCLA and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. The Auckland researchers are responsible for conducting a survey around the lake margins, recording stone artefacts associated with the early agricultural occupations. This initial field season was supported with funds from the Faculty of Arts Research Development Fund. Grants for a further three years’ work have been submitted to Marsden and the National Science Foundation.

Visitors to the site included a group of 24 students from the Department of Classics and Ancient History under the direction of Dr Jennifer Hellum, who were taken on two separate tours of the site by Simon Holdaway and Rebecca Phillips. This gave them a very good idea of the prehistoric history of the site, problems with the intrusion of modern cultivation, and the meticulous nature of the recording and field practices. Many of the students aspire to excavate in Egypt, and this provided them with the best possible kind of impetus.

The group was on a month-long trip through Egypt, taken as an accredited paper in Classics and Ancient History under the direction of Dr Jennifer Hellum, who were taken on two separate tours of the site by Simon Holdaway and Rebecca Phillips. This gave them a very good idea of the prehistoric history of the site, problems with the intrusion of modern cultivation, and the meticulous nature of the recording and field practices. Many of the students aspire to excavate in Egypt, and this provided them with the best possible kind of impetus.

The group was on a month-long trip through Egypt, taken as an accredited paper in Classics and Ancient History, visiting archaeological sites and presenting research on assigned areas. The intent is to give the students an introduction to the modern country and a feeling for the geography of the ancient sites, as well as a chance to see the archaeological marvels they have been studying. For most, visiting a working excavation from The University of Auckland was a highlight.

What SODU can do

The HR Staff and Organisational Development Unit (SODU) will shortly release its 2009 Staff Development Programme for Academic and General Staff.

Based on feedback from staff, 28 new learning opportunities have been added to the programme for this year. Take advantage of the wide range of courses now available in the areas of personal and professional development, leadership and management development and raising awareness. Look out for the all-new “Feel good factor” wellness seminar series. These topical, informative 90-minute sessions will be held every two months on a Friday.

The programme will be added to throughout the year so keep an eye on the SODU website at www.auckland.ac.nz/sodu for updates.

Copies of the booklet and planning calendar will be sent out to departments via internal mail. Please contact Bronwyn Hoskin on ext 89630 or sodu@auckland.ac.nz for additional copies.

Building and fire warden training

Information sessions for University building and fire wardens will be held soon. These sessions will provide staff with up to date information on the policy, procedures and practices for emergency evacuations at the University.

- Tamaki – Monday 16 February, 2-3pm
  Room 721.231, Level 2, Bldg 721
- Epsom – Wednesday 18 February, 2-3pm
  Room 201a, A-Block
- City – Thursday 19 February, 2-3pm
  Room 420, Level 4, Kate Edger Information Commons, Alfred Street

Register for any of these sessions via PeopleSoft HR Employee Self Service (Course Number=HRFWT). For queries phone Jemimah on ext 85070.

General staff on Council

Nominations are invited for the election of one member of the University of Auckland Council by permanent members of the general staff of the University, to be held at 5pm on Monday 9 March 2009. Nominations close at the Office of the Registrar of The University of Auckland, 24 Princes Street, on Monday, 16 February.

Every permanent member of the general staff (which includes persons appointed for a term of not less than three months on either a full-time or a part-time basis) is eligible to be an elector and to nominate candidates at this election. Any elector may be nominated as a candidate.

Every candidate must be nominated by two electors on a nomination form, which must also be signed by the nominee.

For further information, contact Ruth Taylor on ruth.taylor@auckland.ac.nz or ext 87754.
Music and Fine Arts staff and students from the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries (NICAl) will be vital players in this year’s Auckland Festival 2009.

The biennial festival brings nearly three weeks of nationally and internationally acclaimed performances and exhibitions to Auckland.

NZ Trio, the Ensemble in Residence at The University of Auckland, will perform in the Music at Twilight series. The Trio has earned national and international respect for its dynamic interpretations of traditional and contemporary classical music. This year, the repertoire comprises works by Mendelssohn, Chinese-born composer Musheng Chen, and New Zealand artist and composer Phil Dadson (9 March, Baptist Tabernacle).

The University of Auckland Chamber Choir will also appear in the Music at Twilight series with a programme called Accent on the Americas, led by guest director Robert Wiremu (11 March, Baptist Tabernacle).

Works of Elam School of Fine Arts students will again be showcased in Elam Art Upfront, an exhibition mounted inside the lobbies and foyers of corporate buildings on Shortland Street. Taking up the challenge are nine of the country’s most promising emergent artists, Priscilla Brown, Tim Chapman, Warren Childs, Roisin Moore, Katie Theunissen, Tiffany Treweek, Florence Wild, Fiona Gillmore and Louise Menzies. Elam Art UpFront runs from 6-20 March, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. The exhibitions are free.

Other fine arts events include the Art Crawl, a chance to view the works and meet some of the artists. The Crawl departs from the Gus Fisher Gallery, Kenneth Myers Centre (74 Shortland Street), 12 and 19 March at 1pm. The event is free.

Art lovers are also invited to join in an exhibition discussion, “Can artists make great places?”, led by Mythly Meher, the University’s WINDOW curator. The free talk will be held at 4pm on 9 March at the Gus Fisher Gallery, 74 Shortland Street.

As part of the festival’s “In Conversation” series Andrew Clifford, Curatorial Assistant at the Centre for New Zealand Art Research and Discovery (CNZARD), will host a discussion with Ray Lee, Phil Dadson and Drew McMillan on the mysteries of sound. The free series runs weekdays, 12.30-1.30pm in Red Square.

For more information visit the NICAl website: www.creative.auckland.ac.nz or the Auckland Festival website www.aucklandfestival.co.nz

This is not an article about where the truth lies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nor is there space even to outline the many provisions of international law that might be relevant to events such as the recent armed operations in Gaza - eg, the unlawfulness of the armed conflict or the requirements of international humanitarian law in relation to the conduct of the war (most obviously the Fourth Geneva Convention in relation to civilian populations). Rather, my concern in this piece is the much more limited aim of outlining how the human rights framework that is now pervasive in the world applies when situations arise such as the recent Israeli action in Gaza. The starting point is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a 1966 treaty sponsored by the United Nations and ratified by the majority of the countries in the world, including Israel, which ratified it in December 1966. It forms international law binding on Israel. The body responsible for interpreting the ICCPR, the Human Rights Committee of the UN – a body of international jurists elected by the UN to review actions taken under the Covenant - has expressed the view on more than one occasion that Israel’s obligations under the ICCPR extend to the West Bank and Gaza. There is no nation state called Palestine (which has observer status at the UN rather than being a member) and so it cannot enter into treaties; as a result, the duties of the authorities in Palestine in relation to human rights law are much less clear. Hence the focus on Israel.

There are a number of important parts of the ICCPR, starting with its central obligation: each member state undertakes to “ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction” the substantive rights set out in the treaty; what this means is spelled out further – there is an undertaking “to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights” set out in the Covenant. Put shortly, human rights law contains an obligation to make its guarantees practical and effective, not merely theoretical and illusory.

What of the fact that there is an armed conflict? First, there are the obligations of international humanitarian law, which run alongside rather than in place of international human rights law. That is so in part because, secondly, international human rights law contains provisions allowing for flexibility in its operation in war time. If there is a public emergency threatening the life of the nation – and it may be that the repeated rocket attacks and suicide bombings from Gaza into Israel meet this test – then a nation can declare that it is no longer bound by some provisions of human rights law. But some provisions are non-derogable: the international consensus built after the horrors of the middle of the twentieth century was that states could not side-step some obligations because they were involved in an armed conflict.

Of the non-derogable human rights, two are of particular relevance: Article 6 of the ICCPR provides a right not to be deprived of one’s life “arbitrarily”, and Article 7 prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment. The concept of arbitrariness means that deaths that were not strictly necessary are unlawful, and any treatment that is inhuman is beyond the pale.

Importantly, these substantive rights are joined by procedural rights arising from the need to make human rights practical and effective. The basic requirement is that credible evidence of a breach of the right to life or the right not to be subject to inhuman or degrading treatment must lead to an adequate investigation carried out by an independent body designed to uncover the facts and whether any state agent has breached human rights law.

There have been situations in which states have taken human rights seriously: for example, in 2007, the judges of the House of Lords – sitting as the highest court in the UK – ruled that an Iraqi national, Mr Al Skeini, who died in a prison in a British base used as part of military operations in Basra, had a right to life (protected by the European Convention on Human Rights, which was the template for much of the ICCPR and is applicable in the UK) and that this right had been breached.

It takes political will to ensure that the human rights framework is applied: the ideals of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights – from which international human rights law has developed – remain theoretical and illusory too often. As an advanced democratic nation that has witnessed so much pressure since its birth at the same time as the human rights framework was being laid down, Israel can make a most powerful gesture by ensuring that the procedural obligations arising under the ICCPR are respected in relation to any credible allegations arising from its actions in Gaza.

Kris Gledhill
Senior Lecturer, Law School

The University of Auckland News
Trabutes flow for retiring professor

Professor Mike Taggart has been saluted by the Chief Justice as “the most influential legal academic of his generation”.

Dame Sian Elias paid this tribute in farewelling Mike who has retired from The University of Auckland Law School after 26 years.

Academic colleagues and students past and present, lawyers, judges, family members and friends packed into Old Government House for the function on 25 November.

Expressing appreciation for Mike’s work as a New Zealand scholar, Dame Sian said she did not mean to diminish the many other capacities in which Mike had served: as Dean, as inspired teacher, as active member of the University Senate, as willing contributor to law society and government reforms, as mentor to students and colleagues, as someone who has contributed to the community he lives in, as a dear friend to so many.

“But Mike has been the most influential legal academic of his generation, an influence that has extended beyond his principal area of scholarship and has impacted upon New Zealand scholarship more generally.

“And although I call him a New Zealand scholar, his importance is that he is a scholar who is not nationally confined. His connections with the wider world of ideas and the best thinkers of our time have placed our law and its preoccupations in a better space and connected us all.”

The Dean of Law, Professor Paul Rishworth, praised Mike Taggart, as being “without peer as an administrative law scholar in New Zealand” and “one of the most eminent in the Commonwealth”.

His research had been “enormously influential”.

Teaching was “very much Mike’s love along with research”, said Paul. “As a teacher he was indefatigable and his teaching style was infectious”.

Turning to Mike’s role as a consultant and adviser Paul said his “intellectual firepower” was “in heavy demand for most of the big administrative law cases”.

As a colleague he was unfailingly cheerful and generous. “He always made time to help everyone. “We your colleagues in the University and the Law Faculty salute you and express our deepest admiration for you,” said Paul.

In response Mike Taggart said he had loved studying law, and had loved reading and writing about law and teaching law for nearly 30 years. “I have been extremely fortunate to be able to do something I have enjoyed so much.

“The opportunity to learn something new every day, to get as close to the bottom of legal puzzles as one is capable of getting, of reading the often brilliant scholarship of others while trying to be the best teacher/scholar one can be – and to be paid for doing it. I can think of no more enjoyable job.”

Reflecting on the biggest changes in his professional lifetime at Auckland, three stood out, said Mike. “The first is the complete acceptance of Law as a legitimate scholarly discipline befitting its place in the University. Law is firmly part of the humanities and social sciences, and thankfully held to the same high scholarly standards.”

The second was the development of the Davis Law Library into a world-class law library “reflecting the centrality of books and now information to both the scholarly and practical sides of lawyering”.

The third highlight had been the development of a significant and vibrant postgraduate programme and culture at the Auckland Law School. “It is a wonderful experience to see some of my LLM and doctoral students here. I have learnt so much from these students.

Mike said he had valued above everything else his freedom to research “whatever I have wanted to do. There has been no prescription to be relevant or any pressure to pursue any particular research line.

“Over the years I have written some eclectic and esoteric stuff – much of it seemed of little use or interest to anyone. But strangely it is the esoteric stuff that has turned out to have the most practical application – a testament, I think, to what scientists call ‘basic’ research, and the need for the University to support it and the community to subsidise it. Relevance is a relative thing.”

Dancing beyond borders

“As a professional ballet dancer I felt politically irrelevant, disconnected from wider social issues...”

“I have a lust for finding out how we can channel our artistic talents, energies into politics.

So I quit ballet, got a motorbike and rode around Africa, trying to figure out how I could make myself useful to different communities.”

With these words, Dr Nicholas Rowe (Dance Studies) sums up the decade-long journey that has taken him from the stages and curtain calls of the Australian and Royal New Zealand Ballet companies to the wilds of Africa, and to eight years of living and working as a dance educator in the West Bank.

Today, as a new member of the University’s Dance Studies programme at the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries (NICAI), Nicholas is committed to bucking traditional teaching and learning practices and using dance as an educative tool for raising political awareness and enriching the lives of disenfranchised peoples.

If all this sounds more noble than doable, take note: Nicholas uses both research and action to support his words. His doctoral thesis from the London Contemporary Dance School, University of Kent, at Canterbury, England, examined dance in traumatised communities, and he is a contributor to a recently published collection, Dance, Human Rights and Social Justice: Dignity in Motion (Scarecrow Press, 2008), an area of research Nicholas describes as “very unexamined”. Nicholas has also authored the forthcoming Raising dust: a history of dance and social change in Palestine (IB Tauris, 2009).

The Australian-born senior lecturer is also a film director. Before leaving Ramallah at the end of last year, he spent eight months working with 25 Palestinian children who scripted, scored and acted in a feature film. Called The Secret World, the film is based on William Golding’s Lord of the Flies. Set in the West Bank, the book’s story has been modified to reflect the experience of children literally living in a city behind a wall.

“The Palestinian people are disconnected from the social structures that are supposed to support them and this film is a chance for young people to explore that isolation,” says Nicholas, who is married to, and has two children with, a Palestinian woman he met in Ramallah. “But despite the situation on the West Bank, the children don’t consider themselves victims. Unlike Lord of the
involved in the film.
toward two charities chosen by the children
distribution. If that happens, all proceeds will go
hopes the film will be picked up for commercial
might apply to their daily lives,” says Nicholas, who
day, they debated their differing interpretations of
silent at the more poignant moments, and cheered
immediately allayed, as the young audience
and politically obscure in its messages were
concerns about whether the film was too complex
families and friends, was a huge success. Any
the children involved in the film, along with their
2008 to attend the world premiere of
The Secret
Nicholas returned to Ramallah at the end of
2008 to attend the world premiere of The Secret
Flyes, the film ends on a redemptive note.”
New Zealand painter Max Gimblett, based in
New York since 1972, spent his childhood living
above a shop in Grafton and exploring the paths
and gullies at the bottom of the Auckland
Domain. The site of many of those boyhood
haunts is now the home of The University of
Auckland’s Owen G Glenn Building where a
magnificent mural by Gimblett was completed in
January.

Gimblett is now one of New Zealand’s senior
abstract painters and was the subject of a major
retrospective at the Auckland Art Gallery and City
Gallery, Wellington in 2004. Pre-figured by
Abstract Expressionism, Gimblett’s work is
characterised by his Zen approach to mark-making,
informed by his ongoing exploration of Asian
culture. This brings a philosophical slant to his
work, which was largely geometric to begin with
but has become increasingly expressionist,
establishing a tension between order and chaos,
discipline and freedom. His approach can involve
extensive preparations that culminate in a few
seconds of intense, intuitive decision-making as the
artist’s body, brush, paint and surface are
combined in performance. Right now his work
features in the New York Guggenheim Museum’s
exhibition The Third Mind: American Artists
Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989, which opened last
month and includes such pivotal figures as John
Cage, Yoko Ono, Laurie Anderson and Jack
Kerouac.

Gimblett’s mural for the Business School is
unique, translating his gestural interrogations of
the liquid medium of paint and precious metals
into an exploration of the earther, concrete forms
of clay, although it is interesting to note that he
was a ceramicist in Toronto for three years before
taking up painting in his late twenties. It was
originally produced in 1992-1993 in collaboration
with Philip Luxton for a private collector, who later
gifted it to the University. Working together, Luxton
prepared large slabs of clay in a wet state for
Gimblett to cut shapes from, working quickly with
a knife. They were then bisque fired before glaze
was brushed and poured on, and then fired again.

It was personally reconfigured (and re-titled) by
Gimblett especially for the Owen G Glenn Building
in 2008 during one of his visits to the University as
inaugural honorary Visiting Professor at the
National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries.
The modular nature of the piece is inspired by the
late cut-out works of Henri Matisse, and is made
up of ceramic pieces that float on a blue wall,
added in 2008 to reflect the sea, sky and glass
vistas that the building captures. “As above so
below,” says Gimblett of his sea/sky-scape,
invoking the well-known alchemical phrase that
links levels of reality (physical, mental and spiritual)
or the interconnectedness of microcosm (interior/
self) and macrocosm (exterior/universe). This work
also recalls the cut-out forms of Richard Killeen
and the deep blue spaces surrealist painter Joan
Miro associated with dreams. It is an array of
primeval forms, each a manifestation of the artistic
moment of creation that not only make reference
to the evolution of life itself but also acknowledge
the artist’s own origins in Grafton.

Andrew Clifford

Nicholas Rowe with NICAI Dance students.

To further extend discussions around the film,
the Al-Mawrid Teacher Development Centre (a
Palestinian NGO that was one of the film’s
backers) will create an educational kit to
accompany the film that can be used as a tool for
discussing democracy and human rights within
Palestinian classrooms.

Head of Dance Studies, Associate Professor Ralph
Buck, says Nicholas is a role model for NICAI’s
Dance Studies students. He says as a dancer, writer,
teacher and filmmaker, Nicholas makes important
connections with the reality of people’s lives.

“Several courses within the Dance Studies
programme aim to rigorously examine how dance
makes a difference in our society, and Nicholas
shows how this can be done in some of the
world’s most traumatised societies,” says Dr Buck.
“His addition to our Dance Studies Programme is
exciting and further marks our place on the
national and international dance landscape.”
Qualitative Research in Business & Management

This book, written by Professor Michael Myers (Information Systems and Operations Management), has been published by Sage Publications. It looks at the key issues that concern qualitative researchers in business and management.

The purposes of this book are:
• To provide a broad, reasonably comprehensive discussion of the various qualitative research methods (and their philosophical underpinnings) that researchers can use;
• To provide excellent examples of qualitative research in business and management (almost all of the examples are taken from top journals);
• As well as discussing a variety of qualitative research methods, Michael also considers how it is possible to write up research for publication.

This book is aimed primarily at scholars and advanced students in almost all of the business disciplines.

Classifieds

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

Beautiful one-bedroom apartment in Wakefield street with spacious balcony looking over Sky City and harbour. Very short walk to University and AUT. Fully furnished with brand new carpet, fresh paint, modern kitchen, and dining area. Only $290 pw. Call or email to inspect now at (021) 773 379 or mfarid@ auckland.ac.nz

Flatmate wanted for Freemans Bay two-bdrm apartment. Quiet and handy. Prefer male, gay friendly, to share with library professional midaged male. $155 pw + expenses. Phone 376 6486 (evenings).

Mt Albert. Two or three people wanted to rent three-bedroomed standalone unit/townhouse. Fully furnished, sunny and warm, with a deck and garden. Off-street parking and near bus stop for University. $380 pw. Contact Margaret on (021) 066 5879 or 620 4736.

Short-term let, early March to early June. Titirangi one-bdrm freestanding modern sunny unit, ensuite bathroom. Bus at door. $290 pw incl power. Use of (old yet reliable, manual) car negotiable. Phone Christine for details on 817 8246 (or) (021) 297 5301.

ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED

House-sitter available. Care for your house and pets while you are away. Experienced with references. Available after 15 Feb. Phone (021) 062 3077.

OVERSEAS ACCOMMODATION

The Sunflower Apartment. The Appartamento Girasole is in a cluster of Tuscan farm buildings, built in the 18th century as an olive pressing business and restored as a residence for 16 families. Nestled in a valley between Montespertoli and Empoli, it is ideally situated for sightseeing. It sleeps six, has two bedrooms, a kitchen/dining/living room and a bathroom, is fully equipped and centrally heated, with a small private garden near a 25m by 20m communal swimming pool. Inquiries to sharon.blake1@clear.net.nz Rates: July-August, Christmas, New Year, Easter

700 euros a week; June and September 600 euros; other months 450 euros.

PROPERTY FOR SALE

Convenient and fully-furnished apartment in Quest on Eden building. 54sqm with high ceilings. Queen bed, queen sofa bed in lounge, cutlery and dish service for four persons. Storage room, vacuum cleaner, washer/dryer, heated towel rail, refrigerator, microwave, toaster, kettle, shower, patio with table and two chairs. Must see to appreciate. Who needs a carpark when you’re this close to campus? $197,900. Call Mary at (09) 489 9836, available immediately. See Trademe listing number #AH5999

MISCELLANEOUS

Academic travel. I have 12 years experience in booking all aspects of travel for University staff. I pride myself in ensuring that your travel plans are sourced at the lowest possible costs and are tailor-made to your requirements. For more information email Karen at karen.embleton@ mondotravel.co.nz or phone 366 4645 (wk) or (021) 188 7781.

Carpenter/building available. Over 30 years experience. Lots of renovations and historic places. References. Phone Chris on 828 2298 or (027) 293 2279. Maintaining a house in Pakuranga/ ongoing position. Seeking mature, responsible, female student to help the owner. Minimum of 16 hours a week. Cleaning, ironing, windows etc. Details given during the interview. A home phone number is required. Please email martine@clearfield.com

Yoga classes. Expressions of interest are being taken for a yoga class (suitable for all levels) to be held every Tuesday from 5.30-6.30pm, Level 3, 1-11 Short Street, starting on 18 February. The cost is $10, and more information on the class and teacher can be found at www.yogaforhealing.co.nz If you are interested in attending, email Anne Cave at acnz.ar.jpeg