

The Public Servant

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Professor Emeritus of Political Science retires.....again

Dr. Ralph Walker leaves legacy of scholarship and public service



He bid farewell to the astronauts, earned a doctorate at UGA, then began teaching political science at Augusta College

When Dr. Walker joined the faculty in 1969, he brought with him a background of work experience in the public sector as an administrator in the aerospace industry. His expertise in urban politics and management came from his work with the University of Georgia's Institute of Government. He continued to stay abreast of the trends in public sector employment through his contacts in government, while also developing a scholarly reputation in public organization theory and public organization behavior.

Dr. Walker could foresee the potential for the role of an academic unit that would assist with the preparation of highly skilled government personnel. With the support of former president Dr. Richard Wallace, he was able to initiate the Augusta College Research Center that has assisted numerous government entities and public officials through its public opinion and feasibility surveys, wage and salary studies and research services. Today the Center mobilizes the expertise and information resources of Augusta State University to serve the needs of the entire Central Savannah River area (and Dr. Walker will continue to serve as director of the center).

Political leaders, as well as members of the news media, came to respect and seek Dr. Walker's analysis of current issues. Political hopefuls sought his advice and news reporters relied on his commentary throughout the year. He made frequent appearances on television at election time and during the session of the Georgia General Assembly. This community recognition was a tremendous support when in 1991, representatives of Augusta College and Georgia Southern University entered into an agreement in which the Master of Public Administration program offered by GSU in Augusta would become a program conducted in cooperation with Augusta College.

Key element of the agreement was the commitment to jointly hire a faculty member who would be based at Augusta College and teach both in the Political Science Department and also in GSU's MPA courses then being offered at Fort Gordon. Eventual goal of the arrangement was that the MPA degree program would become an academic program of Augusta College within a five-year period.

The two institutions hired Dr. Gwen Wood in September 1991. She held a doctorate in public administration and had 17 years of experience in higher education administration. She became the first director of the MPA program when it separated from GSU in 1996.

— Continued on page 2

Dr.. Ralph Walker will miss the classroom, but he estimates that over the course of 40 years behind the lectern, he has taught more than 10,000 students. He loved teaching and believed in the potential of each student, secretly hoping that he could influence them into developing careers in public service. He challenged students to dig deeper and to stretch their boundaries — and many of them did. They are now making a difference in government and politics both locally and across the nation.

For many years, Dr. Walker was a familiar face on local television as he provided political analysis in local elections, and was a consultant and developer of Augusta's consolidated government. As a member of the Richmond County School Board, he was instrumental in the creation of John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School, and was a personal supporter of the late Augusta Mayor Charles DeVaney, who served as his graduate assistant while attending Augusta College. He was also the catalyst for the initiation of the MPA program at Augusta College (now Augusta State University).

Outstanding Teaching Award 2010

Dr. Sandra Reinke, director of the Master of Public Administration degree program received the Outstanding Teaching Award, at the annual Retirement and Recognition ceremony April 29. This is one of the university's highest honors. It recognizes outstanding teaching, as well as service to the university and the community.

— Continued on page 2 —



Dr. Walker retires

— Continued from page 1 —

From the beginning, Dr. Wood was an active recruiter of the MPA program, meeting with prospective students during her office hours at Fort Gordon and participating in graduate studies fairs at Paine College and the Savannah River Site. She visited the personnel and planning offices of the city and county governments in Richmond and Columbia Counties, and held briefings on the MPA program for career counselors in the Education and Training Support Program of Fort Gordon.

Initially the primary responsibility for the MPA program fell on Dr. Walker and Dr. Wood as faculty members with the most experience in teaching the MPA core curriculum. Over the years from 1991-1994, other faculty members from political science and business became involved. Then, the Department of Sociology was sought for expertise in criminal justice, social services administration and research methodology. Soon it became evident that the college needed to authorize an additional faculty position for the public administration discipline. This would allow the graduate program to go forward with four or more courses each quarter.

In 1996 the agreement with Georgia Southern expired and the two institutions separated. Dr. Wood was named director of the MPA program at Augusta State and applications were accepted for fall classes on the ASU campus. The first six graduates of the program completed their studies and graduated in June 1998.

Those graduates are now active community leaders:

Amaris Garcia
Todd Glover
John Meadows
Thomas Paradise
Tammi Reginelli
Sonya Spray
Ronald Wiggins

(Glover and Wiggins currently serve on the MPA Community Advisory Board.)

Dr. Saundra Reinke receives Outstanding Teaching Award

Dr. Saundra Reinke, director of the Master of Public Administration degree program received the Outstanding Teaching Award, at the annual service recognition ceremony April 29. The Outstanding Teaching Award recognizes exemplary teaching as well as service to both university and community. In addition to directing the Master of Public Administration program, is an ordained Deacon in the Episcopal Church. She joined Augusta State in 1999, following a 20-year career in the Air Force, retiring in the rank of Lt. Col.

One of her most outstanding academic accomplishment is the accreditation of the MPA program by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. However, she feels that her greatest achievement has been in the classroom where she shares her knowledge and experience with the students via collaborative and service-learning assignments. Since 2000 the MPA students have completed 10 major projects that have benefited seven public and

nonprofit agencies. Her class assignments are structured in such a manner that students not only learn to present organized, well-researched academic presentations, but they also develop an awareness of personal presence and professional communication skills. As a result, MPA students have

given academic presentation at every PKP Student Research Conference since 2001. Additionally, many have gone on to present papers at state, regional and national conferences. Thirty-two students have seen their work in and many have presented at state, regional, and national conferences. Thirty-two students have had the honor of seeing their work appear in prestigious literary publications.

As one student expressed it, "She inspires me to move forward and believe in myself not only as an intellectual contributing to the academic world, but also as an activist that has a responsibility to utilize that role and create change in my own community."



Rev. Saunda J. Reinke, DPA



2010 Pi Alpha Alpha Honorees

Scott Anthony
Stephanie Coleman
Brittany Dixon
Betty Eason
Patrick Eskridge
Laura Harrison
Aaron Price
Clarrisa Rolison
Jessica Wright

Ghadeer Albashir received a certificate for the best first-year student paper.

Best 2010 capstone honors went to Stephanie Coleman for *The Probation Process: A Process Evaluation of the Augusta Division of the Southern District of Georgia*.

Dr. Martha Ginn received honorary membership as the new Pi Alpha Alpha advisor.

Guest speaker was Daniel J. Craig, Superior Court Judge, Augusta Judicial Circuit.

TIMELINE OF MPA PROGRAM AT ASU

- 1991** Memorandum of agreement signed between Georgia Southern University and Augusta College to establish a joint MPA program.
- 1994** University System of Georgia Board of Regents approves establishment of MPA program at Augusta College.
- 1996** MPA program established at Augusta State University with Dr. Gwen Wood as Director.
- 1998** First MPA class graduates.
New faculty line added to support MPA program.
- 1999** Dr. Sandra Reinke hired for new faculty position.
Dr. Paul Harris joins MPA faculty.
- 2000** Community Advisory Board established
Portfolio assessment established.
- 2001** PADM 6350, Emergency Management added as elective.
- 2002** Self-study submitted to NASPAA for accreditation (first attempt).
Annual program evaluation process established.
Community Advisory Board reviewed curriculum and recommended adding courses on communication skills, non-profit finance, grant writing and making Administrative Law (PADM 6050) a required course (replacing PADM 6400, Ethics).
MPA faculty adopted all CAB recommendations on curriculum except making PADM 6050 required. Instead, faculty gave students the option of Taking PADM 6050 or PADM 6400.
- 2003** NASPAA does not agree to accredit ASU MPA program.
Dr. Reinke becomes MPA Director upon Dr. Wood's retirement.
Graduate assistants added to program.
PADM 6850, Intergovernmental Relations, added as elective.
Admissions procedures changed to be more closely aligned with other MPA programs in USG.
Oral comprehensive examinations eliminated as a graduate requirement (in line with exit requirements at other USG MPA programs).
Dr. Randall Miller joins MPA faculty.
Human Services Administration track added to MPA curriculum.
- 2004** Practitioners added as part-time faculty (Mr. Andy Crosson, Ms. Kim Gray, Ms. Mary Howard, Dr. Carolyn Hargrove).
ASU MPA Program hosts Georgia ASPA Chapters' Academic Conference.
Separate budget line created for MPA program.
New faculty added to MPA program.
- 2005** Program mission statement revised.
Standards developed to define "MPA faculty."
Initial learning outcomes developed.
Capstone options, procedures revised.
Pi Alpha Alpha Chapter established and first induction ceremony held.
- 2006** Dr. Augustine (new faculty line) hired.
Part-time administrative assistant, Ms. Martha Corkrin, hired for program.
- 2008** Program accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)

PADM 7050 *Capstone changes will benefit students*

The switch to the "new curriculum" began last fall with students taking PADM 6500 just prior to the capstone and developing their proposal in 6500, then executing it in the capstone term.

Formerly students took PADM 6500 and 6600 as a cohort, with a group service learning applied research project. Now, they will take 6500 in the semester prior to their capstone, and then be able to complete their capstone proposal in 6500. The course will now be four credit hours, instead of three, and the extra contact hours will be used to review statistics and SPSS. Additionally, second readers for the capstones will be assigned in 6500 and thereby have earlier input into the project and its design.

State budget cuts hurt all programs

Make A-Day gift to MPA program

Designate your fall A-Day gift to the MPA program. These funds go into a separate account which can be used for promoting the program. Mark your form clearly "MPA Program" and rest assured that you are making a wise investment.



11th annual Student Research And Fine Arts Conference



Celebrating Student Success



Andrew Jensen –
"America's Escape from Guantanamo Bay"

MPA students present papers at conference



Janell Thompson – "Current Issues in Homeland Security"

Research papers were also presented by:

Ghadeer Albashir – "The Historical and Political Development in Jordan."

Gerry Dillon – "The Effects of Outsourcing on the U.S. Economy"



Adam Mestres –
"U.S. Stadium Security: The Good, Bad & Ugly"
(Adam was **winner** of award for outstanding paper)

[MPA grads set higher goals](#)

Gretchen Keneson heads for USC

Gretchen B. Keneson, MPA '09, has been accepted in the Fall 2010 semester of the Political Science Doctorate Degree Program at the University of South Carolina. She also presented her paper on volunteerism at both the SECOPA Conference and the GPSA Conference last fall 2009. Additionally, at the GPSA Conference, she presented her capstone paper entitled "Deadly Silence: An Assessment of Emergency Alert Systems for Lincoln County, GA." Gretchen's husband, Cody (the Chef) completed his B.A.A. degree at ASU this year, and has been accepted into the MBA program at the University of South Carolina. They are currently looking for an apartment in Columbia, SC.

Wilson aims for administration

Marion (Jody) Wilson, MPA '08, began work on the ED.S. program at Georgia Southern this summer semester. This is an education specialist degree with a concentration in higher education administration. Once he complete that degree, he plans to begin working on an Ed.D. in higher Education Administration. And in the meantime, he is also working in the ASU Admissions Department, and teaching evening communication classes. Where does he get all that energy?

Peery enters public management

John C. Peery, MPA '07, called for copies of the syllabi from his graduate classes at ASU. He is entering the public management track of the Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The school is located in Catonsville, a suburb of Baltimore. John says he is currently a "house husband/student" and loves it! You can reach him at 706-951-8717, or jpeery1@umbc.edu.

Clayton begins second career

Patrick Clayton, MPA '04, retired from his federal job and is now working for the Richmond County School System. He has a lot of good things to say about the MPA degree, as well as working for the government. Contact him at:
Chief Patrick Clayton
Department of School Safety and Security
Richmond County School System
706-826-1133
ClaytPa@BOE.Richmond.k12.ga.us

Nettles heads Life Sciences Business Development

Darryl Nettles, MPA '09, sent a message that he would be unable to attend Dr. Ralph Walker's retirement event, because he would be out of town. He was attending the Bio Sciences International Conference for his NEW job at the Medical College of Georgia. He is Outreach Development Coordinator for the Life Sciences Business Development Center (business Incubator/GA Life Sciences Center of Innovation). Congratulate him at dnettles3@juno.com

Donald Miles announces two major life changes

In a letter to Dr. Reinke, he says:

I hope that this e-mail finds you and the rest of the MPA faculty doing well. I wanted to give you and the MPA program a brief update on my current status. On April 1, 2010, I was promoted from Assistant to Director of Planning and Research at Aiken Technical College. This past year I have been very busy preparing and writing our institution's Reaffirmation Report for SACS which was due this past March. We just received feedback from the offsite team, which was very good news; and are looking forward to an on-site visit in November.

I got married in November 2009; therefore, I am now living in Columbia, SC, and commuting to work in Aiken. Please feel free to share this news with the rest of the MPA faculty. If there is anything that I can ever do to help out and assist the MPA program please let me know. I am truly grateful for the knowledge that I gained and the overall experience of going through the MPA program at ASU. Thank you for all that you have done for the program and continue to do.

Sincerely,

Donald Miles, MPA

Director of Planning and Research
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Videos from working MPAs:

http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=43AAB9EA408E00EB

MPA students present papers

Two MPA students presented papers at the Georgia ASPA chapter conference at Kennesaw State University this spring. Adam Mestres and Andrew Jensen participated in the panel on National and International Policies. Dr. Reinke was chair and discussant of the panel.

Andrew presented his paper on "America's Escape from Guantanamo Bay." Adam presented his paper on "U.S. Stadium Security: The Good, Bad, and the Ugly."

Professor thanks

Dr. Walker for guidance

Dr. Walker was one of my favorite professors. As I was finishing up my undergraduate degree in political science, Dr. Walker encourage me to apply for an internship with Senator Sam Nunn. What a wonderful experience that turned out to be! Because of that experience I ended up working in Washington, DC for several years, obtained graduate degrees from UGA and Syracuse University, and for the past several years I have been a professor of political science at Missouri State University.

I owe much of my success to Dr. Walker's influence. Having been in several of your classes, I just want to say thanks SO MUCH for helping me get started in my career. I will always be grateful to you for all of your help and guidance. All the best in your retirement.

Sincerely,

Patrick G. Scott, Ph.D

Volunteer research study published in GPA journal

"Can We Keep Them Coming Back for More?", a research article by Dr. Reinke and MPA alumna Gretchen Keneson, MPA '09, was published in the *Proceedings of the Georgia Political Science Association 2009*. The authors surveyed volunteers at six different agencies in the CSRA to identify what motivates them to volunteer their time.

MPA Notes

For your address book:

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Networking pays off

Does anyone remember last fall when Katy Quinlan submitted a notice about a "student clerk position" in her office? It was a part-time job, so you may have deleted it, thinking it was not worth your while.

Well, Andrew Jensen did not delete that message, and consequently not only has a nice part-time job, but he also has his foot in the door for a government position when he graduates. Yes, he had to go through piles of paperwork and an extensive background check, but he got the job and an opportunity to move right on up the career ladder. Keep up the good work, Andrew!

LaMotte manages Media Center

Edgar La Motte, MPA '07, is now Media Center Manager at ASU. Contact him at elamotte@aug.edu, or 706-737-1704.

"Awakening Leadership"

Taylor Dixon Burke won both CSRA and Southeast Regional levels of the National Management Leadership speech competition. He then placed in the top three at the national semi-finals Eastern Division in Omaha, NE, in May. His topic was "Awakening the Leadership in Me."

Taylor is the 16-year-old grandson of Martha Corkrin, MPA program degree specialist. He lives in Aiken, SC, with his parents David (manager, URS-SRR) and Tami (owner, Honey House Web Designs, LLC). He attends Adelphi Christian Academy (formerly Aiken Christian School).



Mesina chooses doctorate in public administration

Catching up with Dennis O. Mesina:

Hi Dr. Reinke,

I am writing to give you a few updates. First, last February, daughter Abi welcomed home a baby brother. We named him Samuel (call him Sam). Later, in May I finally earned my MPA from George Mason University. I especially wanted to thank you for this achievement. It would not have been possible without you, or the faculty at ASU.

Also, due in large part to your efforts, I am now a doctoral candidate for political science, focusing on public administration at George Mason. I always try to remember your focus on "becoming an intelligent consumer of information."

Since leaving Augusta in 2006, I have been amazed at how poorly government managers understand and use information and data.. Your focus on useful data collection and analysis has helped me execute successful projects and earn a promotion. I am continuing school because there is a great need for good public managers, and eventually, I would like to educate potential MPAs. We need more MPAs in government; too many policies are built on unfounded conclusions and faulty data.



I've attached some newer pictures of the kids. Abi is now four-years old. Remember the one-day-old baby I brought by ASU in 2005? Give my best to Dr. Miller and Dr. Walker.

*Best wishes,
Dennis Mesina
dennis.o.mesina@ugov.gov*



**Sandra J. Reinke, DPA
Director**

**Martha A. Corkrin
Degree Program
Specialist
706-729-2256
www.aug.edu/mpa**

Vignette from the Seventies:

"Good luck, Ralph. My first time in your classroom was a wonderful experience. You came in with your steaming coffee and had a stack of tiny aluminum ash-trays for your students that smoked. That was 1976. I still enjoy seeing you at the Village Deli, and I can NEVER remember an unkind word coming from your lips. You are a gentleman and an Augusta icon." — avidreader, Dec.19, 2009, Augusta Chronicle

Top 10 reasons to get MPA degree

- 10 — So you can make a difference, change the world and help others by solving problems.
- 9 — Learn to better communicate and work in teams and groups.
- 8 — Understand the bigger picture (beyond just the bottom line) to get things done.
- 7 — Have a flexible degree that lets you transition seamlessly across sectors — public, private and nonprofit.
- 6 — Improve your professional knowledge, skills and abilities and thus open up new career opportunities.
- 5 — Meet passionate and committed individuals who share your interests.
- 4 — Prepare yourself for a rapidly changing economy and globalized world.
- 3 — Develop your decision-making, judgment and leadership skills.
- 2 — Have an impact on public policy on whatever level you are working on.
- 1 — Because an MPA will help you succeed at items 1-9 more than a JD or MBA!