Alacartoona is a she, the essence of a person, and a big part of the European cabaret tradition of the 20th century with contemporary performance. “What results is a new form – the contemporary cabaret – with specific characters who interact in music and words to become curious about what appeared to be a perfect situation, which led to questions about how they could work from home. Those questions prompted the writing of the first of 17 books about interweaving career and life choices. Soon after writing their first book, Sarah and Paul moved to Los Angeles to take advantage of publishing, radio, and TV opportunities. Despite continuing to work from home, they discovered that their lifestyle was once again drifting away from their ideals. In fact, what they found they were missing most was the sense of community they enjoyed in Kansas City and at UMKC.”

“Lifeboat: Careers and Life Choices for Navigating a Changing Economy” led to the writing of the second edition of their book, “Middle Class.” In 1974, they realized working from home was their answer. “All ages seem to enjoy us,” Hankel said. “The older couples are always trying to figure out how we could see each other more than the 100 miles away to a small community located in the Los Padres National Forest. Nestled in a picturesque mountain setting, they established the Pine Mountain Institute, where they write, provide consulting services, and offer online continuing education classes. It’s also their home, and the nexus for what Paul calls “localized social activity.”

“How we see as a solution to many of the challenges we face today is ‘relocalization’ – bringing people back to their local communities where they’re earning a living and relating to things that are going on in their community,” says Sarah.

Alacartoona performs monthly at Jardine’s, a Kansas City restaurant and jazz venue, as well as other locations, and sold out performances aren’t uncommon. “All ages seem to enjoy us,” Hankel said. “The older couples thank us for the performance, as do the young adults at the next table.”

Because of the unique history-based musical performance aspect of Alacartoona, the band is not only being noticed by the public, but it was recently awarded a grant by the ArtsKC Fund. With continued fundraising efforts, the group will debut an upcoming film, “Night is the Mirror,” this fall.

“Alacartoona’s Web site, www.alacartoona.com, further exemplifies the members’ creativity and imagination. Find their performance calendar there, so you can experience Alacartoona live. Then you might understand what embodies the inspiration and passion of these UMKC alumni – it is not just a band.”

“She is much more than that.”
Dean’s corner

It has been an interesting year here at UMKC, and in the College. Like many institutions across the country, we faced significant budgetary challenges. To help meet those challenges, we cut expenditures and imposed a hiring freeze. As we look at some individuals and institutions outside of the University who have been impacted by the recession, we believe that we have weathered this storm fairly well. In essence, we have successfully continued our missions of teaching, research and service, while continuing to plan for the better days ahead.

On a very bright note, our College enrollment numbers have been up in both fall and spring semesters last year. This may be due in part to the fact that individuals tend to go back to school during times of economic downturn, but some credit for the rise in enrollment must also go to our increased marketing efforts. With faculty and staff input, we created a recruitment plan for the College, and have been working with Admissions to implement it. Our retention policy is in full swing and we are anticipating significant results this coming year. We are also working on a complete revision of our College Web sites, including every department and program in the College. With more than 50 Web sites, our College Web sites will add 110,000 square feet to the campus and will be completed, but will put us in a better position to continue to attract the best and the brightest students, faculty and staff. We also know that facilities matter, and new buildings increase greater access and utilization of end-of-life care services, according to Anderson, those recurring themes affect end-of-life decision-making for many African Americans; history of disparity and mistrust, generational family values, and spirituality, religion and culture. But she says she believes the issues can be overcome through education.

Dean Karen Vorat

Social workers help people with life. Gloria Anderson (MSW, ’76) is helping people with an especially sensitive part of life: death.

A clinical instructor at the UMKC School of Social Work, Anderson is an international author and motivational speaker. She is founder and president of Heart Tones, a company that offers educational and inspirational workshops, presentations and products. Her personal experience with elderly relatives and extensive research for her masters’ thesis culminated in her groundbreaking publication, The African American Spiritual and Ethical Guide to End of Life Care: What Y’all Gon’ Do With Me? All ethnicities have difficulties talking about end-of-life issues, but Anderson’s research found that it can be especially troubling for African Americans.

“Many African Americans have not had equal access or used end-of-life care options such as hospice and palliative care,” she explains. “For example, only 8 percent of African Americans utilize hospice care, as compared to 34 percent of whites.”

According to Anderson, three recurring themes affect end-of-life decision-making for many African Americans; history of disparity and mistrust, generational family values, and spirituality, religion and culture. But she says she believes the issues can be overcome through education.

“I feel that speaking to and educating groups, organizations and individuals within the community is the best approach to helping increase greater access and utilization of end-of-life care services,” she says.

“I have always loved helping others, and I feel that my life course is directed to doing that .” —Gloria Anderson

Anderson’s passion for helping others didn’t begin with her graduate work, though.

“I have always loved helping others, and I feel that my life course is directed to doing that,” she said. “Receiving my MSW has provided a solid foundation to do so professionally.”

Anderson has presented workshops and lectured throughout the United States and Canada, and also published a motivational work, Passion For Your Purpose – Discovering Peace, Direction and Balance in Your Life, and an inspirational book of original poetry titled While I Wait.

UMKC College of Arts and Sciences

Jim Falls, the College’s “one-man recruitment and retention center” to retire

Every school has one: a teacher who achieves legendary status, becoming an intrinsic part of the school’s culture. That teacher brings course material to life, tilling the classroom with passion and making personal connections with the students. Since 1963, Dr. Jim Falls has been that person in the College of Arts and Sciences.

A long-time professor in the Department of History, Falls recently announced his upcoming retirement. To help honor his indomitable spirit and years of service to the University, a scholarship has been established in Dr. Falls’ name. Your gift can help make the scholarship a reality. To donate, contact Karen English at 816-235-1139, or e-mail englishk@umkc.edu.

Do you have a favorite Jim Falls story? If so, we would love to hear it! Please e-mail to Karen English, UMKC College of Arts and Sciences Director of Advancement, englishk@umkc.edu.

Alumna helps people confront end-of-life decisions

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