

Sociologue Newsletter

2014 issue

A Passion for Discovery and Service: Interview with Carolina De La Torre Ugarte

Carolina De La Torre Ugarte has a long name and an even longer resumé! A double major in Sociology and Psychology, she is known to the faculty for her inquisitive mind and concern for social inclusion. As a student, Carolina participated in a number of academic research projects including a study of her own design on families of prisoners; she took courses on trauma and resilience while studying in Jerusalem; and she was co-president of UT's Latin American Student Organization (LASO). In 2013 she received the prestigious UT Courage to Climb Award, which honors UT's rising stars, as well as the Department of Sociology's Student Engagement and Leadership Award. Lois Presser sat down with Carolina in July 2014 to discuss her rich experiences and aspirations.

Q: What drew you to sociology?

A: Originally I was just going to major in psychology: I'm curious about how people think. But while signing up for classes I saw that there

was a social justice and social change course and it counted as a social sciences course. I thought, that sounds fun! It was with Tobin Walton and he was awesome. I didn't think I would love sociology as much as I did. And I didn't think there were many jobs in it. But as I went through the classes I learned that there are a lot of things you can do with a degree in sociology.

Q: Would you tell me a bit about the sociological research you did?

A: I helped lay the groundwork for a study with Michelle Brown of how people talk about populations considered "other," like the elderly and immigrants. I loved it. And then I was in Gina Benedict's criminology class, and I heard that UT was doing an internship program (Undergraduate Summer Research Internship through the UT's Office of Research & Engagement) where they would support a research project in the summer. From Gina's class I got the idea, maybe I should go talk to members of prisoners' families. The more I spoke

with her and other sociology professors it became clear to me that there isn't a lot of research at all about how adults cope with having their loved one in prison. Gina (Benedict) would say: "This is your project. I'm here to talk and I'm here to give advice, but this is your baby." So I went through every step of the research process.

Q: Down the road what do you think you'd like to do?

A: More and more I like the idea of working in a university as a professor or adjunct professor as I do something else. Universities are good places for finding resources for research and outreach projects. Counseling, even a private practice, is also always on my mind. I definitely want to work with victims – in any kind of capacity – so that can mean domestic violence, that can mean immigration, that can mean children's services. One group I want to work within particular is men in prison. I think it's hard for people to be compassionate



with men in prison, or even to like them. But the verse from the bible, "When I was in prison you visited me" (Matthew 25:37) has stuck with me. I think one of the difficulties in my life is deciding on one path. My parents always told my sister and me that whatever you do, you're going to do well, so pick something you love. And that's really gone to my head: I get to thinking I'll just do everything! ☐

From The Head of UT Sociology

Greetings once again from the Department of Sociology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. We hope it has been a good year for you. It certainly has been for us. The Department continues to be recognized for its excellence – we are proud to have won teaching awards, service awards, and others. Importantly, those awards have come from within and outside of the university.

Our undergraduate students continue to win lots of recognition. Elizabeth Connor won the 2014 College of Arts and Sciences Extraordinary Academic Achievement Award. Valerie King won the Extraordinary Professional Promise Award, making us look good at the Chancellor's Honor's banquet. Valerie also won the Division of Student Life's Courage to Climb Award, an award that was also previously awarded to our student Carolyn de la Torre Ugarte. Our own Eric Dixon won the University of Tennessee Torchbearer Award, which is the University's highest student honor.



UT Sociology Department
Head Jon Shefner

(Continued on page 3)

UT's Sociology graduate program ranked #10 in 2014!

The Department of Sociology at UT has once again risen to the top of the rankings for graduate education. We are currently #10 on the Graduate Programs rankings based on student assessments. That position puts us ahead of such prestigious programs as University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and Princeton. Rankings cover a wide variety of criteria, including academic competitiveness, career support, and financial aid.

Source: "The Graduate Program Guide for Students Created by Students." www.graduateprograms.com/top-sociology-programs/.



Rhiannon Leebrick, doctoral student, and Robert Emmet Jones, professor of sociology.



Professor Scott Frey's study abroad students at Angkor Wat complex outside of Siem Reap, Cambodia in May 2012.



Abigail Randall (left) and Jules Shelton (right), doctoral students.

ASAFA JALATA'S WORK LEADS HIM TO BOTSWANA – MORE FULBRIGHT SUCCESS FOR SOCIOLOGY



Asafa Jalata (right) with students Douglas Oeser (left) and Benjamin Webster, Fall 2013 new graduate student reception held at the McClung Museum

Asafa Jalata, professor of sociology, has received a Fulbright grant for the 2014-2015 academic year to teach and conduct research on the evolution of democracy in Botswana. He will teach Sociology of Development at the undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Botswana, Gaborone, and he will engage in research to write articles and a comparative book entitled *Cultural Capital and Democracy in Botswana and Ethiopia*. Relatively speaking, Botswana is praised for its economic and democratic successes and peace, unlike many areas of Jalata's previous research. The main question he will address is: What are the major factors that have contributed to these successes and how can more successes be achieved in the future?

Jalata's Fulbright builds on the department's recent success with Fulbright awards. In 2013, Scott Frey conducted research on the impact of Agent Orange in Vietnam with the support of the Fulbright Foundation. Paul Gellert taught and conducted research in Indonesia during Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 as a Fulbright Scholar. Professor Jon Shefner conducted research in Ecuador on social movements during 2008, also as a Fulbright Scholar.

The **Sociology Department Honors 2013-14**

2014

Faculty Awards

Asafa Jalata – Fulbright Award for Work in Botswana
Lois Presser – UTK Excellence in Teaching Citation
Jon Shefner – Betty Lynn Hendrickson Professorship
Jon Shefner - Distinguished Lectureship Award from the Southern Sociological Society

Departmental Graduate Student Awards

Research – Lisa East
Service – Sara Malley
Teaching – Steve Panageotou

Gertrude Hurlbutt Scholarship Awards

Jeffrey Dixon and Jalen Dukes

Outstanding Graduating Seniors in Sociology

Rosemary Dodd, Nicholas Khoury, and Alex Wagner

Student Engagement and Leadership Award

Carolina De La Torre Ugarte

2013

Faculty Awards

Stephanie Bohon – Martin L. Levin Distinguished Service Award from the Southern Sociological Society
Scott Frey – Fulbright Award for Work in Vietnam
Paul Gellert – UT Jefferson Award

Departmental Graduate Student Awards

Research – Alex Stoner
Service – Zach McKenney
Teaching, Service – Lauren Copley

Gertrude Hurlbutt Scholarship Awards

Alexander Gibson and Brittany Augustine

Outstanding Graduating Seniors in Sociology

Michael Tyler Dinwiddie, Jurdan Jones, Taylor Staley-Spates, and Rachel Stoller

Student Engagement and Leadership Award

Marcus Jones

Greetings! *(Continued from page 1)*

year was marked by other good news and accomplishments. The Department built on several successful years of faculty recruiting. We added Robert Durán and Victor Ray to our ranks as assistant professors in fall 2014. Lo Presser's book, *Why We Harm*, was published by the prestigious Rutgers University Press. Palgrave MacMillan Press published *Social Justice and the University*, a volume (edited by Jon Shefner, Harry Dahms, Robert E. Jones, and Asafa Jalata) that brings multidisciplinary scholars together with activists and others to examine how universities can teach and advocate for social justice. Stephanie Bohon's very successful term as editor of the journal *Population Research and Policy Review* comes to an end just as Michelle Brown becomes editor of *Crime, Media, Culture*. The Department was also awarded support by the UT Office of Research and Engagement for our work in the Green Economy. Additionally, we hosted the annual conference of the International Social Theory Consortium this year, with Harry Dahms leading that effort.

Finally, our graduate program is currently ranked #10 in the nation by students on student satisfaction (graduateprograms.com). We are delighted that our commitment to our students' education shows in this and many other ways! Sad events took place this year as well. We note with sorrow the passing of our longtime colleague and friend, Suzanne Kurth, who died in fall 2013, shortly after her retirement. Donald "Chip" Hastings, an emeritus professor, dear friend to many, and husband of our own Sherry Cable, died after an extended illness in December, 2013. Finally, Michael Jarrett, friend to many and husband to Stephanie Bohon, died after a courageous four-year struggle with cancer. We're sorry for these losses and wanted to pass this news along. This newsletter is devoted to telling you what is going on with us. Return the favor! Get in touch – email me, your favorite professor, whomever you like – but get in touch, and stay in touch.

Best to all,
Jon Shefner



CONGRATULATIONS DR. KEN TUNNELL!

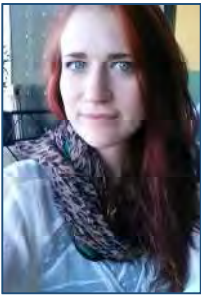
Kenneth (Ken) Tunnell (PhD, '88), Professor in the School of Justice Studies at Eastern Kentucky University, received that university's 2014-2016 Foundation Professorship, the highest honor that the University assigns. Tunnell's career has been an illustrious one. He is the author of numerous books, including *Choosing Crime: The Criminal Calculus of Property Offenders* (1992), *Pissing on Demand: Workplace Drug Testing and the Rise of the Detox Industry* (2004), *Living off Crime* (2006), and *Once upon a Place: The Fading of Community in Rural Kentucky* (2011), as well as dozens of book chapters and journal articles. He also serves on the editorial boards of the scholarly journals *Sociological Spectrum* and *Crime, Media, Culture*. Tunnell was nominated in 1994 and 2001 for the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Outstanding Book Award and in 1993 for the American Society of Criminology's Outstanding Book Award. His work in critical criminology and specifically on the oppression of working people and their difficult, sometimes criminal choices, has earned him a national reputation.

Alumni News

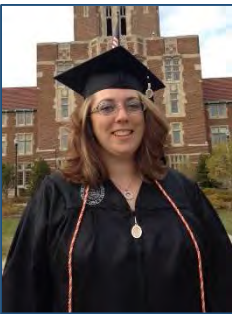


LaTonya Loche (BA, '08) is currently teaching 9th grade Health and Physical Education and is also the Head Girls Track & Field Coach at Richwood High

School in Monroe, LA. In addition, she has established a nonprofit organization, Striving 4 Greatness, to help children in Bastrop, Louisiana and surrounding areas to achieve educational excellence and gain life skills.

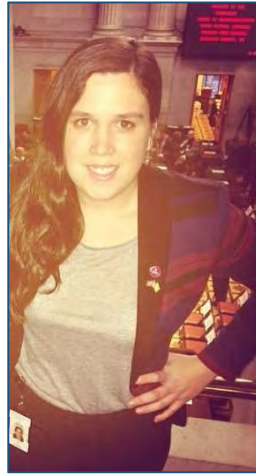


Amanda Greene (BA, '12) is working at Breaking Free in St. Paul, Minnesota, a non-profit organization that helps women and girls escape prostitution and sexual exploitation.



Ashley Jackson (BA, '14) came to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the fall of 2011 as a non-traditional transfer student. In December 2013 she completed a double major –

sociology with a criminology and criminal justice concentration and psychology – along with a minor in history, and became a third generation graduate of UT!



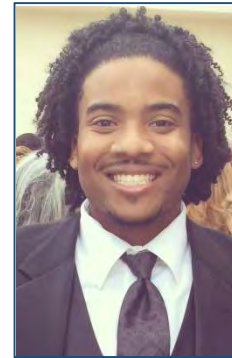
Chelsea Angelo (BA, '13) is an intern in Nashville, Tennessee for State Senator John Stevens. Previously she interned for U.S. Senator James Cooper in Washington, DC. She appreciates the opportunity to interact with constituents on a personal basis, which state government affords. Chelsea writes:

“There are so many different types of people walking through the office each day – from lobbyists to other staff members. It's definitely been an interesting session, with bills ranging from guns to wine in grocery stores!”



Football brought **Dwayne Goodrich** (BA, '14) to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1996. While here he was a part of the 1998 National Championship team. He left in

1999 to pursue a professional football career. In January 2013 Dwayne returned to UT to complete his degree. He earned his BA degree in sociology with a criminal justice concentration in August 2014.



Michael Redmond (BA, '08) graduated from UT having majored in Interdisciplinary Studies (foci in Legal Studies and Sociology.) He is currently a Senior Associate with DC Public Schools where his focus is on STEM integration and

access for students of color. Michael earned his master's degree in teaching from Belmont University. He was a Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) Fellow and is currently a 2014 Peabody College of Education Fellow at Vanderbilt University.

Michael's academic focus is on exclusionary disciplinary practices and cultural competency teacher training surrounding closing the opportunity (achievement) gap for students of color. He holds multiple roles outside of educator within Metro Nashville Public Schools as an urban teacher-mentor and professional development facilitator.



Eric Dixon (BA, '14) is serving as an Appalachian Transition Fellow. The mission of this fellowship program, run by

the Highlander Center, is to help realize a regional economy that is just and sustainable. Although the program is managed and led by the Highlander Center, he is working at the Appalachian Citizen's Law Center in Letcher County, Kentucky on economic and energy policy in the coalfields. Eric's efforts help former miners and others work on reclamation and renewable energy projects.

The Pledge Foundation

Sociology alums Dwayne Goodrich and Ashley Jackson are the co-founders of the Pledge Foundation. The Pledge Foundation's mission is to improve the lives of ex-convicts and reduce their risk of recidivism by providing job training, education, and long-term job placement for those who have a felony conviction.



Stephanie Bohon launched Sociology's fall 2014 colloquium series August 27, with her talk, "Is Immigration Bad for the Environment? Neo-Malthusianism, Environmental Nativism, and Empiricism."



Daniel Lai (center) at the 2014 Piedmont Park Summer Arts & Crafts Festival in Atlanta, Georgia

Congratulations to sociology doctoral student Daniel Lai! He won Best of Show at the 2014 Piedmont Park Summer Arts & Crafts Festival in Atlanta, Georgia. Daniel's multi-media art, which he composes using discarded books, has earned him a regional, national *and* international reputation. More information is available on his website: <http://daniellai.artspan.com>. Under the supervision of Lois Presser, Daniel is currently working on his dissertation, which examines the rhetoric of opposition to LGBT bullying intervention programs and laws.



Liam Hysjulien earned his master's degree in sociology at UT in 2012. His poem "Lay" appeared in the February 3, 2014 issue of *The New Republic* and is published here with their permission.

Lay

By Liam Hysjulien

After your organs disintegrate,
Your cells recite poems to one another.

They burn fires along your chest
To god of tiny stomach, of suspended brain, of colonizing
teeth.

Cells die different, exploding every second. Lights in a
building slowly shutting off. A building collapsing in your
arms

No different from R screaming, "Only to live, to live and
live! Life, whatever it may be!"

No different from a squad yard turning to artificial snow
against an artificial cheek.

No different from touching you and reaching beyond your
body,
Scanned, electric, a naked screen.

I'm the one holding your hand as your cells unravel.
Keeping you warm, even if I must crawl inside you. Live
inside you.

I'm controlling your hands with my hands.
Tightly tying strings around your arms and feet.



Victor Eric Ray

New Faculty Member Victor Erik Ray

Victor Ray joined UT's Department of Sociology in fall 2014 as assistant professor in the area of political economy. His research examines racial and gender stratification with a focus on the reproduction of inequality. Victor is currently working on papers examining diversity in organizations with a focus on how formal discrimination grievance procedures help or hurt those who access them.

His other projects include a series of experimental papers examining racial attribution as it pertains to genetic attitudes and skin tone and an examination of racial and gender discrimination in online markets. His research employs both qualitative and experimental methods to discern nuanced understandings of contemporary racial and gender based discrimination.



Robert Durán and his book, *Gang Life in Two Cities* (2013, Columbia University Press)

New Faculty Member Robert Durán

Robert Durán is one of our newest faculty members, having joined the department in the fall 2014 semester as assistant professor in the area of criminology.

Before coming to UT, Durán was associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at New Mexico State University where he published his first book about Latino youth and survival in the American Southwest. *Gang Life in Two Cities: An Insider's Journey* tackles the policies that impact marginalized youth and racial and ethnic minorities in the Southwest. Having lived in Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico, Durán has benefited from learning from family members, barrio residents, community activists, and professors.

His interest in understanding Lantina/o community has continued to the U.S. Mexico border where he has researched border surveillance, juvenile justice, law enforcement, in addition to gangs and violence. He is currently pursuing research relating to the study of drug markets and police shootings.

Sociology Faculty News



UT sociology faculty 2014: (1st row, l-r) Sherry Cable, Jon Shefner, Lois Presser, Victor Ray, Michelle Christian, Huan Bui, (2nd row) Harry Dahms, Robert Duran, Scott Frey, Stephanie Bohon, Robert Jones, Michelle Brown, Paul Gellert. Not pictured: Damayanti Banerjee

The Sociology faculty at UT is dedicated to examining and nurturing understanding of social justice and injustice.

Damayanti Banerjee's research is primarily aimed at understanding the social and environmental consequences of material inequalities in society. Within this broad framework, she is interested in three distinct research initiatives. Her research focuses on *theory building in environmental justice*. Dr. Banerjee's papers in this area examine how the "justice" of environmental justice is best conceptualized as a repertoire of strategies that movement groups use to mobilize their claims. Her second research area focuses on *the role of the modern state as an important actor in routinization of environmental knowledge*. This research explores the role of the modern state as an arbiter in environmental decision-making or, as she calls it, an *ecoregulatory state*. Banerjee proposes that the ecoregulatory state engages in two specific regulatory strategies—normalization and then scientization to identify the likely outcomes that emerge from these strategies. Finally, she is developing a third research focus with particular attention to the organizational framing of alternative energy resources.

Stephanie A. Bohon continues to pursue research in social and applied demography, immigration to emerging gateway locations, Latino migration, ethnic economies, and immigrant adaptation. She recently finished writing a book, *Immigration and Population*, co-authored with recent UT grad Meghan Conley (the James Farmer Postdoctoral Fellow in Civil Rights and Social Justice at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA), which explores immigration controversies in the United States and Europe and how demographic research can inform immigration policy debates. The book will be released early 2015 by Polity Press.

Michelle Brown is excited to continue her research and teaching in the emergent areas of carceral studies, law and society, visual criminology, and transformative justice. Professional work has taken her this past year to a few places, including Norfolk, Atlanta, Toronto, and London, where she has studied and given talks on alternative justice and US-based decarceration efforts, organizations, and coalitions. In the fall, she will become co-editor of the Sage publication *Crime Media Culture*, criminology's leading media journal. She is also busy organizing *The Routledge*

International Handbook of Visual Criminology (to be co-edited with British criminologist Eamonn Carrabine). She is beginning her second year as Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Department and is eager to continue work advising, mentoring, and recruiting undergraduate majors and honors students in sociology. One of the undergraduate committee's major projects includes the development of a departmental experiential learning program that is suited to our social justice mission. In addition to these efforts, Brown has spent a good deal of time feeling intellectually challenged by a bunk bed building project for her 4 year old daughter, basic landscaping, princess culture, and UT's cone zone.

Hoan Bui continues her active program of research on gender, immigration, crime and criminal justice. Her research focuses on how class, gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as immigration experiences, shape crime, victimization, and experiences with criminal justice. Bui's publications on domestic violence explore the impacts of immigration settlement on the likelihood of, and women's responses to, domestic victimization. Her work on immigration and crime investigates the impacts of immigration resettlement on

risk behaviors among juveniles from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Her project on prisoner reentry examines women's post-incarceration adjustment and explores how gender shapes women's reentry experiences.

Sherry Cable's primary research interests are in environmental conflict, environmental inequalities, and environmental policy. Her most recent book, *Sustainable Failures: Environmental Policy and Democracy in a Petro-dependent World*, was published by Temple University Press in 2012. Recent articles include: "Risk Society and Contested Illness: the Case of Nuclear Weapons Workers" (*American Sociological Review*) with Tom Shriver and Tamara Mix; and "Mining for Conflict and Staking Claims: Contested Illness at the Tar Creek Superfund Site" (*Sociological Inquiry*) with Tom Shriver and Dennis Kennedy. Cable received the 2011 *Allan Schnaiberg Outstanding Publication Award* from the American Sociological Association.

An award-winning teacher, Cable teaches courses in environmental sociology, food and society, environmental policy, and sociology of the built environment. She lives in Knoxville with her two cats, a dog, and a tortoise. Her heroes are her mom and her daughter, Kate.

Harry F. Dahms studies the impact of economic, political, and organizational transformations on social life, culture, and human sociality. "Culture" and "society" increasingly function to integrate individuals and social groups into societal conditions that are in tension with shared norms and values, in the process producing high levels of "cognitive dissonance," a phenomenon that ought to be integral to research in sociology. Given the intellectual and emotional costs of processes of socialization in societies whose constitutional logic is inherently contradictory and irreconcilable, Dahms conceives of the critical analysis of the *constitutional logic of modern societies* as the primary responsibility of sociology.

Dahms is Co-Chair of the UT Committee on Social Theory, which provides the infrastructure for graduate students to pursue an interdisciplinary certificate in social theory. His recent publications include *Social Justice and the University* (Palgrave; co-editor and co-author), *Social Theories of History and Histories of Social Theory* (Emerald; editor). He is currently completing a manuscript, *Modern Society as Artifice* (Ashgate).

Robert Durán joined the department in fall 2014. He taught at New Mexico State University since 2006, after earning his doctorate in Sociology at the University of Colorado, Boulder. His research focuses on the criminalization of the Latina/o population in the Southwest and individual and group efforts to resist unequal treatment. His 2013 book, *Gang Life in Two Cities*, is one of the first university press books to introduce the study of gangs by a former gang member. The book shares the voices and experiences of people who are deemed unworthy of full participation in society. Durán, who spent more than 20 years in direct contact with gangs, said that it was a need to share this perspective that inspired him to write the book. He continues to study injustice: a current project concerns police violence against civilians.

Scott Frey has examined a variety of issues surrounding environmental sustainability. His most recent work focuses on the human causes, adverse consequences and their distribution, and human responses to environmental problems in several geographic settings: the Ogallala Aquifer Region of the U.S. Great Plains (the problem of water depletion and its consequences for the region, especially Southwestern Kansas), the maquila (manufacturing operations in free trade zones) urban centers of northern Mexico (hazardous production facilities and waste dumping), the Special Economic Zones of Shanghai and southern Guangdong Province in China and Vietnam. He is currently writing a book examining how and why core-based hazardous products, production processes, and wastes are displaced to the peripheral zones of the world.

In addition to his academic

responsibilities, Frey is co-director of UT's Center for the Study of Social Justice. Last year he received a coveted Fulbright Fellowship which will allow him to study the environmental, human health, and socio-economic problems associated with pesticide use under export-focused rice production in Vietnam.

Paul Gellert is an expert on the politics of natural resources from timber to palm oil, minerals, oil, and gas in Indonesia. He is now developing a comparative project on the political economy of coal and other energy extraction in the United States, especially in Appalachia, that will address questions about poverty and underdevelopment in the country commonly referred to as the world's remaining superpower. In 2013, Gellert was awarded the University's Jefferson prize, which honors faculty who have demonstrated excellence in research. Gellert is also the Department's Director of Graduate Studies.

Asafa Jalata's work identifies and explains the links in the chains of historical, political, and economic forces shaping racial and ethnic inequality in the modern world system; development versus underdevelopment; and social/national movements on global, regional, and local levels. For the last twenty years he has explored the relationship between the colonization and incorporation of Oromia, the Oromo country, into the Ethiopian Empire and the global capitalist system and the development of the Oromo national movement.

In recent years, Jalata's research and scholarship have expanded to cover additional regional and global areas. Currently a Fulbright fellow in Botswana, Jalata is researching a book entitled *Faces of Terrorism in the Age of Globalization: From Christopher Columbus to Osama bin Laden*.

Robert Emmet Jones has an interdisciplinary education in the social and natural sciences and his work examines the social dimensions of environmental change and ecosystem management. His current research and publications examine issues pertaining to sustainability, renewable food systems, community resilience,

urban forestry and social and environmental justice. He has worked with others to develop research studies and grants to identify the barriers and bridges to relocalizing food systems and growing green economies in East Tennessee and Southern Appalachia. Jones recently co-edited (with Shefner, Dahms and Jalata) *Social Justice and the University: Globalization, Human Rights and the Future of Democracy* (Palgrave MacMillan) which examines the roles universities have played, and can play, in advancing social justice. Jones was promoted to Full Professor of Sociology in August 2014.

In 2014 **Lois (Lo) Presser** was promoted to the position of Full Professor. She continues in the position of Associate Department Head. On the research front, Presser has been developing an innovative perspective within critical criminology known as narrative criminology. Narrative criminologists consider the stories that people tell, and not simply the events and circumstances reported in those stories, as shaping patterns of offending. Presser discussed the implications of narrative criminology for addressing global problems as opening speaker of the First International Symposium on Narrative Criminology held in Oslo, Norway, May 2014. Her 2013 book *Why We Harm* presented an original narrative theory of harmful action; she drew on interview and archival material to identify the storied logics that drive genocide, intimate partner violence, punishment of offenders, and the killing of animals for meat. Dr. Presser's next, forthcoming book is a volume co-edited with Sveinung Sandberg entitled *Narrative Criminology*. She is also committed to projects on restorative justice, the emotional impacts of narrative, and mass harm including harm to nonhuman animals.

Victor Ray joined the Department in fall 2014 as assistant professor in the area of political economy. Victor's research concerns the way race- and gender-based discrimination operates. Before coming to UT, Ray attended Vassar College and received his bachelor's degree in urban studies. Ray went on to receive his master's degree and

doctorate in sociology at Duke University. During his graduate studies, he was the recipient of a number of grants and fellowships including the Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowship, the American Sociological Association Minority Fellowship, and a Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation. Ray's work has been published in *The Journal of Marriage and Family* and *Context*.

Jon Shefner has been busy with a number of projects. With Harry Dahms, Bobby Jones, and Asafa Jalata, he recently published a unique volume that brought organizers, sociologists, foreign language scholars, lawyers, and others to discuss how universities provide bridges and barriers to social justice in the volume *Social Justice and the University: Globalization, Human Rights, and the Future of Democracy* (Palgrave, 2014).

Dr. Shefner heads up the Green Economy project, which is aimed at creating better jobs for Knoxville residents by increasing the size of the local Green Economy. Knoxville has the largest per capita Green Economy in the US, and it continues to grow quickly. This growth provides opportunities for good jobs in a variety of areas, and promises to also address environmental degradation. Shefner is working with colleagues across campus on that project, as well as with departmental colleagues Bobby Jones and Jenna Lamphere.

Shefner also continues to do research on austerity policies across the globe and austerity protests in Latin America. He is working on a new book project that explains the various paths to the failed policy of austerity.

On the home front, both of Dr. Shefner's children will be out of the house soon. He expects to be bereft. □

Department Children

Lots of little people are frequenting the halls of the Department of Sociology these days.



Malcolm Ray, age 2, son of Victor Ray



Michelle Christian's 5 year-old son, Niko



Zoe Gerlaugh, age 5, daughter of doctoral student Katherine (Kat) Gerlaugh



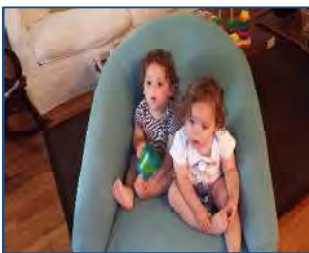
Master's degree student Douglas Oeser with son David, age 5



Sabine Brown-Hoffman, age 4



Robert Durán's family: Justice (5), Jocelyn (15), Teo (16), Jazmine (19) and baby granddaughter Zanae



Ansel and Halen Presser (2)

Water is a Central Focus for Erica Davis, Junior in Sociology



Erica Davis (far right) with colleagues at Virginia Tech StREAM Lab.

Erica Davis is a junior from Hendersonville, Tennessee who is majoring in sociology (environmental issues and globalization concentration) and minoring in geography. She spent the summer of 2014 working with the Virginia Tech StREAM Lab to understand perceptions of the urban hydroscape. Erica and her colleagues learned how and why residents value different hydroscape features. They also identified community educational outreach needs to guide future watershed remediation efforts.





In Memoriam Donald (Chip) Hastings

By Erin E. Robinson

The first time I met Chip, after only speaking a few words, he knew exactly where I was from. Teasing me for my hard “A” sounds when I spoke, he hit it exactly: “Western New York, near Canada?” “Yep,” I said, “How did you know that?” This was only the beginning! Chip’s attention to detail and the subtleness of everyday things was something that drew me to his classes and conversations.

When I think of Chip, I think of how empowered I felt by his words of encouragement as I completed my master’s degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and was unsure of where I would be next. For so much of my college career, the focus from advisors, parents, and friends was “what are you going to do with a degree in sociology?” Chip’s words were golden to me. As we sat in his office and I talked about how I didn’t know what kind of job I was really ever going to be ready for, he looked at me and said “It doesn’t matter. You have the skills to do whatever you want to do.” Chip’s encouragement helped me focus on the critical analysis skills that I developed through graduate school and led me to complete my doctorate at the University at Buffalo.

He was a member of my thesis committee and his encouragement of my topic, the environmental disaster at Love Canal, opened my eyes to how one can truly focus one’s energies to become an expert on a topic. His support of this directive for me helped me sharpen my focus in environmental sociology, something for which I will always be grateful. His words, “You have a career in this topic, kid”, still ring in my ears. Needless to say, this is true as Love Canal is seeing yet another series of newly filed lawsuits in 2013 -- nearly 40 years after its discovery!

I remember his often asking me what some of my life goals were. I remember one conversation in particular when I told him I’d love to run a marathon. We talked about how to make that happen, setting goals, and just going for whatever you think is possible – or even the impossible! I often share stories with my students of lectures and discussions he gave; offering this generation of college students’ timeless wisdom imparted by Chip. I am so thankful for my experience at UT, and though studying under Chip went by quickly, I appreciate every moment and feel as though I gained a lifetime of knowledge.

Balancing a career of teaching and research, raising a family, and having fun doing it along the way – all things I know Chip would be proud of – and proud that he helped steer the course.

Erin Robinson earned her master’s degree in sociology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (’97), followed by her doctoral degree in sociology at the University at Buffalo (’04). She is Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice and Director of the Environmental Studies Program at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York.

****In an effort to memorialize Chip Hastings and his many contributions to the UT Department of Sociology, his widow, Dr. Sherry Cable, has created the Dr. Donald “Chip” Hastings Endowed Scholarship. Established in July 2014, the endowment provides tuition assistance to undergraduate and graduate students pursuing a degree in Sociology. While some recipients will demonstrate financial need, all will be in good academic standing with the College and the Department of Sociology. For more information on how you can contribute to this fund and/or other gift funds within the Department of Sociology, please contact Michelle Geller at: (865) 974-2365 or mgeller@utfi.org.**



In Memoriam Suzanne Kurth

By Julie Wiest

Suzanne had been a constant in my life since I enrolled in the sociology doctoral program at UT in the fall of 2004. In fact, she was the first person I met in the department. Suzanne was the department head when I was in the process of applying, and she took the time to meet with me to explain the process and answer my questions. That meeting commenced a mentoring relationship that would last for nearly ten years. Suzanne quickly became my teacher, my mentor, and my friend.

Suzanne generously gave her time and talents to help me succeed. While I was a student, she taught me in several courses, helped me navigate the many program requirements, chaired my dissertation committee, and even fought a couple of battles on my behalf. When I started applying for tenure-track jobs, she helped me sort through job ads, commented on several drafts of cover letters, wrote recommendation letters, and advised me on job offers. And when I became a faculty member, she continued to advise me as a whole new set of questions and circumstances arose.

I know that Suzanne did all of these things for many other students and junior scholars. Suzanne was a committed mentor (sometimes perhaps at the expense of her own work). What made her mentorship most remarkable for me, though, were the ways in which it extended beyond academy walls. Suzanne certainly taught me the skills needed to be a sociologist and academic, but she also taught me lessons that often take an entire career or lifetime to learn. She didn’t just teach me about working; she taught me a lot about living.

First and foremost, Suzanne taught me the importance of good relationships. When I was a student, she encouraged me to present my work at academic conferences, not just to put a line on my CV but to network with other scholars. She introduced me to other UT grads and scholars in my areas of specialization, invited me to attend receptions and committee meetings with her, and encouraged me to volunteer for service activities within my professional organizations. She also taught me how to be diplomatic and cooperative in my dealings with others, and she stressed the importance of being a good citizen of my department, university, and community.

She also taught me the importance of balance, mostly by example. Suzanne had a very active life outside of work. She served in her neighborhood association, participated in community events, practiced yoga, and loved to travel. During academic conferences, she always took a little time for sightseeing and often invited me along, often with her colleagues at other universities she wanted me to know.

I will be forever grateful for the time I spent with Suzanne and the many lessons she taught me. Her death is a loss for all those who knew her, but it is comforting to think that her legacy will live on through her students and others whose lives she touched, enhanced, and changed.

*Julie B. Wiest is assistant professor of sociology at West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania. She earned her doctorate in sociology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 2013. Under Suzanne Kurth’s supervision, her research on how Americans portray serial killing was published as a book, *Creating Cultural Monsters* (CRC Press, 2011).*

Recent Events in Sociology

Faculty Research Symposium September 12-13, 2014, Highlander Center



(Left to right) Victor Ray, Louise Seamster, Michelle Brown, Scott Frey, and Robert Duran



(Left to right) Paul Gellert, Michelle Christian, and Jon



Lois Presser

Death Penalty/Mass Incarceration Teach-in September 6, 2014, UT Campus



Michelle Brown making opening statements



Guest speakers André Canty and Stacy Rector



Student, faculty, and community members at the Teach-in.

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What are you up to?

We would love to know and share your story with your fellow UT Sociology alums! Get in touch!

E-mail lpresser@utk.edu.

We like a challenge! Our departmental mission is to create a research and learning environment that tackles the most serious injustices of our times. From the classroom to the field, our students acquire the intellectual tools to critically analyze social trends along with the tools to conduct research and evaluate social policy. Through our research and writing, we seek to provide a map vividly illustrating that better social policy directly improves people's lives.

Our sociology graduates are in careers from criminology, environmental sociology, political economy and globalization, and teaching. Sociology alumni are also working in sociology-related and unrelated fields around the world.

Let us know *your* story by contacting us by e-mail (jshefner@utk.edu) or phone (865-974-6021). Or keep in touch by returning the enclosed information form. Best wishes from UT Sociology!



Enkeshi, El-Amin, Jihad El-Amin, and Michelle Alatz at the Graduate Student Reception



Steve Panageotou and Aaron Lemelin at the Graduate Student Reception



Mural at the Highlander Center