KU names School of Pharmacy honor roll

More than 50 School of Pharmacy students were inadvertently omitted from the University of Kansas all-university honor roll announced in January. Making the honor roll from Derby is Amber Marie Wanklyn, daughter of Mark and Sandy Venskus.
University of Kansas officials visited the classrooms of nine graduating seniors earlier this month to announce that they were Chancellor’s Student Award recipients. The awards recognize the students’ academic, volunteer and leadership accomplishments during their time at KU. Michelle Tran, of Derby, received the Alexis F. Dillard Student Involvement Award. The award goes to a graduating student who has unselfishly contributed to the university through campus involvement. Tran, the daughter of Chinh and Lan Tran, is majoring in Slavic languages and literatures and Russian, East European and Eurasian studies.
Caney Valley High School is also sending a delegation of journalism students to the Kansas Scholastic Press Association's state competition at the University of Kansas on Saturday, May 5.

Representing Caney Valley at the state competition will be Brice Metcalf, Paige Testerman, Becca Deal, Amanda Ballew, Lance Graham, Brooke Gaston, Brittany Roper, Molly Robbins, Allie Abilez, Tomy Ford, Apple Hoard, Apryl McCammon, Chance Harmon and Samantha Henry.

The students qualified for the state competition after having placed in first, second, third or honorable mention at a class 3A-4A regional contest in Pittsburg in February.

While at KU, the students will also tour the William Allen White School of Journalism.

Tom Nelson Jr., is the CVH journalism instructor.
The following students at the University of Kansas have received awards at the 10th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium.

They are Kurt Mattingly, junior in American studies, son of Huber and Debra Mattingly of El Dorado; Jason Beury, senior in environmental studies and Spanish with a minor in peace and conflict studies, son of John Beury of Benton; Jessica Snyder, senior in astronomy and engineering physics, daughter of Mike Snyder of Clearwater; Ashlee Widler, senior in speech-language-hearing, daughter of Todd Widler of Clearwater; Grant Snider, senior in architecture and chemical engineering, son of Timothy and Rita Snider of Derby; Jay Kimmel, senior in economics, international studies and political science, son of John and Karen Kimmel of Wichita; and Matthew Leming, senior in biology, son of Thomas and Candace Leming of Wichita.
Cell phone users crave coverage, but not the sometimes unsightly towers that provide it. But as David Blaha points out, the two go hand in hand. "Cities don't necessarily like seeing the towers, but people are buying wireless with the idea of replacing their land line," said Blaha, director of business development for Selective Site Consultants Inc. of Overland Park. "It's part of our culture; it's the future. We can't stop it. You have to decide how to mitigate it or live with it."

The business, which helps telecommunications companies secure sites for towers and equipment, was launched in 1996 in the early days of the cellular industry. Its four partners left Fluor Daniel to help Aerial Communications (now T-Mobile) finish building its system in the Kansas City area. "They saw a definite vacuum in the industry for a firm," Blaha said.

Sassan Mahobian, president of SK Design Group Inc. in

SEE PROFILE I D27

Selective Site Consultants' Larry Louk (left) and Hossein Novin stand near flagpoles that are actually cell towers.

TAMMY LJUNGBLAD | THE KANSAS CITY STAR
PROFILE: Company to diversify with sale of two products

Overland Park, said the firm’s timing was one of the keys to its success.

“They were fortunate to start the company when most of the cell phone companies were just starting,” said Mahobian, who has performed civil engineering work for Selective Site. “They developed a good relationship with all of them.”

Selective Site Consultants helps telecommunications companies locate sites for towers or space on existing towers and structures. It guides projects through the regulatory process and can also design them and supervise their construction.

Customers include Sprint-Nextel Corp., T-Mobile, Cingular Wireless (now AT&T), Altel and Cricket.

The firm has about 70 employees and also has offices in Minneapolis, St. Louis, Omaha, Neb., and Edmond, Okla. A Houston office will open this year.

Selective Site’s revenues were $8.5 million in 2006, up from $7.7 million the previous year. That’s after a revenue drop in 2002.

“We definitely are on a pretty strong growth curve again,” Blaha said.

Because towers can clash with their environment, Selective Site has resorted to creative means to get them placed. Two flagpoles at the University of Kansas Edwards Campus are actually cell towers. At St. Ann Catholic Church in Prairie Village, cellular equipment is housed inside a bell tower. At the Blue Valley Sports Complex, a cell tower doubles as a light post.

“Most of the residents who live by that (sports complex) area and drive by it would be challenged to find out which is a light and which is actually a utility,” Blaha said.

But these creative solutions aren’t always possible. Some tower proposals have resulted in angry neighbors’ opposition.

“It can be a firestorm,” said Blaha.

That sentiment is echoed by Jack Holzer, communications services manager in the Emergency Communications Department for Johnson County.

“They fill a very unique need and, from my perspective, a real difficult need,” said Holzer, who has worked with the firm as it sought space on county towers. “That’s a horrible thing they have to deal with. I don’t know how they do it.”

Blaha said the firm tries to counter protests with information, but not everyone can be pacified.

“We attempt to communicate with the community as much as possible,” he said. “We set up meetings with community groups in opposition to the project. At the end of the day, we still may not be in agreement, but we’ve attempted to provide as much information as we can.”

While the company’s core business will remain telecommunications site selection, it has gradually begun offering its services for general commercial development.

“We feel bullish enough to take on new challenges,” Blaha said. “We know land use. We know the challenges of zoning.”

The company also plans to branch out with the sale of two products. Selective Site has engineered a nut-and-socket locking system to prevent vandalism of cellular and utility towers. Once the product has completed its Department of Homeland Security certification, marketing will begin.

Selective Site also hopes to enter the alternative energy market with a biomass converter. It’s seeking contracts for the product.

Although this line would seem different from its core business, Blaha said it builds on the company’s ability to find sites, design projects and supervise construction. The firm is following the same strategy that launched it: entering an industry at the opportune time.

“We think the climate is right for that kind of industry to be taking off,” he said.
Working on the “Generation Rap” weekly radio program has given Monique Cooper (center), a student at Blue Valley West High School, new perspectives, she says. She was among the hosts on a recent show, broadcast on KPRS-FM.

Students carry on-air lessons beyond station’s control booth

“The best and the brightest”
develop leadership,
confidence and maturity
producing the program.

By ERIC ADLER
The Kansas City Star

It’s Saturday, 7:56 a.m., and the cramped studio at KPRS, Hot 103.3 Jamz, is packed shoulder to shoulder with 30 laughing and chattering African-American teenagers from a dozen high schools:

- Ruskin, Paseo, Lincoln, Pembroke...
- The clock ticks toward 8 a.m.: Showtime.
- “All right, OK. Shhh.” The din quiets.

“Let’s make it happen!” comes the voice of the only old man in the group.

It’s Jim Nunnelly, 64, shaved head, pitched voice and known best as the administrator of COMBAT, Jackson County’s anti-drug program. But in this throng he is Granddad, the mentor and leader of “Generation Rap,” a Saturday morning radio program that this year marks its 20th anniversary, heard by some 14,000 listeners.

To the audience, “G-Rap,” as it is known, sounds like a typical teen radio talk show. Topics range from pets to teen pregnancy, comedy to hip-hop misogyny.

But to the “G-Rap” regulars who create the show each week it has also become — often to their surprise — exactly what Nunnelly crafted it to be: a lesson on life and leadership.

On the radio, as in life, he says, the clock ticks and the questions arise:

- Are you prepared? Can you make yourself heard in a crowd? Do you have the courage or knowledge or grace or moxie to lead — to step up to the mike, just as one must step up in life?
- “In life we will not have all the time we need to either succeed or fail,” Nunnelly frequently tells the kids. “It’s...”
RADIO: Students carry lessons beyond station

FROM A1

what I call the 60-second commercial of life. Whether you have one minute, or two minutes or 15 seconds, you have to make the best of it.

"Hot 103 Jaaaaamz," rumbles the lead-in to the show.

Segue into a boy's voice, an intro by student guest, Robert Brown.

"Losing a parent to drug addiction is something no one has to experience. And I know, because I have," he says in solemn tones. "It leaves an empty hole in your life, and you may just find yourself trying to fill it up with anything and everything."

The room fills with applause.

"Yeah, we can clap," host Danielle Coleman, 17, of Notre Dame de Sion says, seated at a console mike. "Yes, not a nice story, but definitely poetic. Big ups to you, Robert Brown. And as you can see, we have a serious topic going down this morning. It is helping teens who have drug-abusing and incarcerated parents."

"So please stay tuned to 'Generation Rap.'"

With that comes the introduction of the "Heavy Hitters," the team of teen producers sitting at the console who worked for two weeks to prepare for this one show. None, they say, ever imagined the influence that "G-Rap" would have on their lives.

"What's up? This is Monique," says Monique Cooper, 17, of Blue Valley West, who concedes that, like many teens, she first wanted to be on "G-Rap" because she was opinionated and thought it would be a kick to be on the radio.

But after five months, she says, the experience has more than opened her eyes to new people and perspectives.

"It's like unspoken, an elegant understanding," she says. Nunnelly repeatedly tells the teens they are leaders.

"You are the best and the brightest," he says.

Somehow, the more one works on the show, Monique says, it seeps in. Confidence grows. Thinking matures.

On her recent application to the University of Kansas, "I mention Granddad and how he is a blessing to me," she says.

"Hey, this is Jordin, a.k.a. Brown Sugar," chimes Jordin Nelson, 15, of Pembroke Hill School.

She calls the show her release.

"It's made me feel like I can change things, that my opinion counts. Before I didn't even talk to that many people."

"Hey, what's up KC? This is Nycko," says Nycko Hunt, 16, a clear-voiced and garrulous sophomore from Raytown High who is convinced that "G-Rap changed my life."

Always capable of getting As — "He would watch CNN when other kids were watching cartoons," said his mother, Teesha Miller — Nycko was, by his own admission, a slacker. He'd ace tests but get C's and D's on his report card because he failed to do homework.

His grade-point average was a miserable 1.8.

"Growing up, I had been a good kid," he said. "But I didn't think it was cool to be smart. It didn't get you the attention of girls. It didn't get you the respect of guys."

A year ago in July he visited the "G-Rap" studio with an exgirlfriend.

There stood Nunnelly and a brigade of teens — many of whom, he quickly noticed, were pretty girls — opining away. They were sharp, prepared and intelligent.

"It was OK to be smart," said Nycko, who now holds a 3.0 GPA and wants to be a radio journalist.

"OK," Danielle says, launching into the topic. "I think I'm going to kick it over to Monique and Jordin now. What's up?"

Monique: "OK. What's up? To prepare for this show, we went down to the Jackson County Jail. And it was so
amazing. It was one of the best experiences of my life. We interviewed four inmates who have kids. They were in there for substance abusing. ... It was really cool because ... you don't really know how it is until you're there.”

From there the show flows: interviews with teens; insights from callers; questions for a substance abuse counselor.

“Did losing one of your parents to substance abuse make you closer to the other one?” Nycko asks at one point.

Inside, Granddad is proud.

In 1987, Carl Boyd and Prim Carter of the Carter Broadcast Group began “Generation Rap” as a show for teens, by teens and about teens. In 1990 they asked Nunnelly to help. He knew it needed to be more than a radio show.

Spouting inchoate teen feeling and opinions might create high drama, he knew, but it doesn’t create thinkers or leaders. Leaders gather facts. They don’t just talk, they listen. They roll with adversity.

A radio show seemed to be the perfect life metaphor and laboratory.

What will you do when your radio guest suddenly clams up or, worse, never shows?

“People go through life thinking there is a pre-arranged format,” Nunnelly says. “But you don’t know what’s going to emerge. Dealing with that is what leadership is.”

The best leaders, he says, always ask questions.

“If you can make up 10 questions, you will be smarter than 10 other people,” Nunnelly preaches. “It’s the questions that count.”

To foster the “Radio as Life” model, he created a hierarchy, because “hierarchies are just the funky facts of life,” he says. “There will always be someone in charge, always be somebody over you. It also gets them used to the idea of, ‘I can move up.’”

Newbies to the show start out as “background.” For three weeks, three shows, they must stand mostly silent in the throng “against the wall” — a lesson in listening and commitment. If they want to ask a question, they must be recognized by the host.

At Level 2 are “segment producers,” people trusted to introduce or create brief on-air pieces — poems, music.

At Level 3 are “show producers” such as Monique, Nycko and Jordin, charged with putting together the show: choosing the subject, setting the agenda, crafting the script and gathering information long before the show airs.

At Level 4 is the host, the show’s guide and primary interviewer.

For the show on drug abusing and incarcerated parents, Nunnelly arranged for Monique, Nycko, Jordin and two other “G-Rap” teens — Paseo High friends Taylor Brown and Essence Mitchem, who were asked to write a powerful poem for the show’s finale — to interview Jackson County Jail inmates, drug abuse counselors and Jackson County Prosecutor James Kanatzar.

In a dual role, Taylor would also be a guest on the show, talking about drug use in her own family.

“I kind of became like in my own little shell because I like refused to be hurt. ... I just don’t really trust too many people.”

In another week would come another show — with more teens asking more questions and, Nunnelly hopes, gaining the wisdom that is the hallmark of leadership.

“I now understand what I don’t know,” Nycko says. “If I can’t get it, I’ll ask for help. I used to think that asking for help was a sign of weakness. I don’t think that anymore.”

“OK, everybody out there in listener land, you’re tuned in to ‘Generation Rap,’” Danielle says, as the show winds on.

As it does, Granddad watches as a teen against the wall inches herself from the crowd and steps up to the mike.

To reach Eric Adler, call (816) 234-4431 or send e-mail to eadler@kcstar.com.
The University of Kansas is seeking to bar a doctor from its medical center after he allegedly threatened other doctors.

The University of Kansas Hospital Authority and The University of Kansas filed a lawsuit earlier this month in Wyandotte County District Court seeking a permanent injunction and temporary restraining order against Dr. Peter Karl Mygdal, 34. The university sought the orders to prevent him from entering the medical center property in Kansas City, Kan.

The suit alleges that on April 14 Mygdal threatened two doctors employed by the university, including a threat to kill the family of one doctor.

The next day, Prairie Village police arrested Mygdal outside the doctor’s former house on suspicion of criminal use of a weapon and disorderly conduct. Authorities allege Mygdal had a knife, a hammer and a BB gun with him.

Johnson County prosecutors have charged Mygdal with threatening to commit violence with the intent to terrorize or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror.

Mygdal, a radiologist, joined the hospital in 2005. He had been on leave since January.
Deferred maintenance is step in right direction

Pittsburg State is finally getting a facelift. While the $380 million, five-year plan for deferred maintenance funding approved this weekend by Kansas won’t cover all the back maintenance issues Kansas’s regents schools are facing, it is a step in the right direction.

We applaud the legislature for addressing this issue and urge the Kansas Board of Regents to take careful consideration when deciding where the money will be used. Pittsburg State ranks fourth on the list for campuses needing improvements — Kansas State is first, followed by the University of Kansas and the University of Kansas School of Medicine.

These much-needed improvements will not only improve the quality of life on campus, they will also help attract students to the school and, according to the Board of Regents, the improvements will also boost the state’s economy.

A month ago, the board released a study showing that if the $727 million in repairs were made, the state’s economy would see an increase of $1.63 billion in the economic output of goods and services, a $468.5 million increase in earnings in the state and approximately 14,000 new jobs.

We thank the legislature for finding the funds needed to start repairing these University buildings, but remind them that they cannot stop here. More money is needed to make all the necessary repairs and, more importantly, maintain the newly updated buildings. We cannot ignore our universities again. The state must make an effort in the future to keep these improvements up-to-date and avoid another multi-million dollar repair bill.

Jessica Tims, for The Morning Sun
Kansas, Emporia State react to threats

The University of Kansas and Emporia State University were on alert Friday after receiving threats.

A University of Kansas employee received a "nonspecific bomb threat" in an e-mail Friday, director of public safety Ralph Oliver said in a news release.

Oliver said the threat was generic and didn't require the evacuation of any campus buildings. KU didn't disclose the identity of the employee who received the e-mail.

Oliver said the employee opened the e-mail at 1:57 p.m. It had been sent at 6:57 a.m. Friday. The message said four pipe bombs were placed "somewhere on or around campus."

The employee notified public safety. An investigation is ongoing. The source of the e-mail remains unavailable.

Because of heightened awareness about campus safety, Oliver said the entire KU campus was notified of the threat. Oliver said it isn't uncommon for the university to receive generic threats throughout the school year.

At Emporia State, students, faculty and administrators were warned by e-mail Friday morning to be alert to any suspicious or potentially threatening behavior or statements on the campus.

Marjorie Werly, ESU director of public affairs and marketing, said a threatening message had been written on a blackboard in an ESU science class Thursday afternoon. She couldn't say exactly what the message said because it had been erased, but its threatening tone still could be recognized.

Police and campus authorities were notified and determined that the threat was baseless.

Still, Werly said, "our first concern is always the safety of our students and faculty, and we wanted them to know what had happened.” Authorities are investigating.
Miami

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Vancura Chosen To Carry Banner At KU Graduation

A Miami County man has been selected to carry the banner for the University of Kansas School of Medicine during commencement next month.

Ryan W. Vancura of rural La Cygne is a doctor of medicine degree candidate. He received a bachelor's degree from KU in spring 2000.

Banner carriers are students who have excelled academically in KU's 13 schools and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. They will lead their fellow graduates in the traditional march down Mount Oread into Memorial Stadium at 2:30 p.m. May 20 for KU's 135th commencement.