KU business school nominates five students for national exam scholarship

LAWRENCE — Five business students at the University of Kansas have been nominated for scholarships for the Chartered Financial Analyst exam taking place in June.

Among the students is Ryan J. Peschka, master's student in business administration, son of Randy and Nancy Peschka; bachelor of general studies from KU, 2003; Ellsworth High School.

The CFA Program is a three-year graduate-level program for investment professionals. Candidates for the program must pass three levels of exams to earn a CFA charter. Exams are held at locations around the world, and fees for each level of the exam range from $600 to $1,395.

"With this outstanding group of CFA candidates, we are putting the spotlight on some excellent students," said Mark Hirschey, director of KU’s CFA Program. "They reflect the best of what KU has to offer in business education, and stack up well against top candidates from the very best business schools."

More than 30 students from KU applied for a nomination, and five students were chosen on the basis of their GPAs and professional potential. The national CFA Institute awards the scholarships, which allow the students to take the CFA Level I exam.

The CFA charter is the designation of excellence in the investment community and reflects a fundamental knowledge of investment principles that are relevant in financial markets around the world.

The CFA Institute is the world's oldest society for investment professionals. It has more than 90,000 voting members and 135 societies worldwide. For more information on the institute, visit cfainstitute.org
Indianapolis Star editor taking position at KU

LAWRENCE (AP) — A former Pulitzer Prize juror and current managing editor of The Indianapolis Star has been named Knight Chair at the University of Kansas School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Pam Fine, whose last day at The Star will be April 4, will be Knight Chair on News, Leadership and Community, a tenured professorship established in 1990.

“For me, it’s a terrific opportunity to blend my years of experience with my interest in exploring what’s new and working with students,” Fine said Thursday.

Ann Brill, dean of the journalism school, said Fine starts at Kansas in August when the fall semester begins. In addition to teaching, Fine will work on local journalism initiatives and programs.

“We’re just very excited we have such a respected and innovative journalist coming to work with us,” Brill said.
Ashly LoBurgio Basgall graduated in 1997 from Great Bend High School. She graduated in 2001 from the University of Kansas with honors. Her bachelor’s degree was in English and anthropology. She then graduated with her master’s from the University of Wyoming in Laramie in December 2007. Her thesis title is “Northwest Plains Indian Women: A Bioarchaeological and Ethnographic Assessment.” Dr. George Gill of the Anthropology Department hooded her. He is originally from Sterling and graduated from the University of Kansas.

She is now in Lecce, Italy, studying intensive Italian at the University of Salento. She will also be visiting her Italian and Sicilian relatives while she is there. She will return to the states in June.

In addition, she recently contributed to a book “Medicine Lodge Creek — Holocene Archaeology of the Eastern Big Horn Basin, Wyoming Volume I,” by George C. Fison and Danny N. Walker.

She recently was accepted at the University of Kansas Law School for the fall semester of 2008.

She is the daughter of Jeanette LoBurgio of Shawnee, formerly of Great Bend, and Timothy Basgall of Santa Cruz, Calif. Her grandmothers are Betty LoBurgio of Ellinwood and Jo Basgall of Gardner, formerly of Ellinwood.
Two University of Kansas debate teams have been selected to compete in the National Debate Tournament, which will take place March 27-31 at the University of California-Fullerton.

Brett Bricker, a Wichita senior, Andrew Jennings, Silver Lake senior, Nathaniel Johnson, Manhattan senior, and Christopher Stone, Derby sophomore, will represent KU at the 62nd NDT. Jennings, senior in political science, is the son of Joe and Kathy Jennings.

Both KU teams were among the top 16 individual teams ranked by the NDT selection committee and given automatic or at-large bids to nationals. Although KU regularly sends two teams to the tournament, this marks the first time since 1998 that two KU teams have received first-round at-large invitations. This is the 40th consecutive year that KU has qualified teams for the NDT, the second-longest streak in the country behind the University of Southern California. KU has won the NDT four times and advanced to the Final Four 13 times.

The first step in filling the 78-team field for the NDT is the selection of the top 16 two-person teams in the country based on performance during the season. The rest of the field is filled through qualifying tournaments.

Three other schools have two teams in the top 16: Harvard University, Emory University and Northwestern University. Schools with one team are the University of California-Berkeley, Dartmouth College, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Missouri State University, the University of Southern California, Wake Forest University and the University of West Georgia.

The ranking order of the 16 teams is not revealed until the tournament. Awards are given to the top five first-round teams.

Last year, Bricker and Jennings received the award as the third-ranked first-round at-large team. Bricker and Jennings advanced to the Elite Eight, and Johnson was in the Sweet 16 in 2007.

"It is a tremendous achievement to have two teams in the top 16," said debate coach Scott Harris. "We are very proud of the squads' performance so far this year. They are among the hardest working debaters we have ever had at KU."
Flora, Vegetation of Flint Hills For Next Kaw Council

Simple Sublime Statistics: The Flora and Vegetation of the Flint Hills will be presented Saturday by Dr. Craig Freeman for the second program in the Kaw Mission Councils 2008 educational program series, Our Fabulous Flint Hills: The Hills Are Alive!

Programs are scheduled at 3:30 and 7 p.m., at the Kaw Mission State Historic Site. Kaw Mission Councils programs are free and open to the public.

Grasslands -- one of four major natural vegetation types on Earth -- cover 24 percent of the planet's terrestrial surface. Historically, they were among the dominant vegetation types in North America, covering more than 30 percent of what poet and essayist, Walt Whitman, called the prairie and plains, America's characteristic landscape.

The Flint Hills region of Kansas and Oklahoma is one of the largest, intact remnants of native grassland in the U.S.

Dr. Freeman will provide an overview of prairie as a vegetation type, its significance globally and regionally, and examine how geology, climate and ecology have influenced vegetation patterns in the Great Plains and, more specifically, the Flint Hills.

With photographs and facts, he will provide vignettes of some of the nearly 1,000 species of grasses, forbs and woody plants in the Flint Hills.

Dr. Freeman is a research scientist at the University of Kansas, joining the staff of the Kansas Biological Survey in 1988 and the staff of the R. L. McGregor Herbarium in 1992.

He has more than 20 years of botanical field experience in the Great Plains, Midwest and Rocky Mountains, conducting research and publishing on topics in plant systematics, floristics and prairie conservation.

Friends of Kaw Heritage, Inc., and the Kansas Historical Society sponsor the Kaw Mission Councils educational program series. Free refreshments are compliments of Friends of Kaw Heritage.
Grant aids in substance abuse prevention

Times News Report
editor@eldoradotimes.com

The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) has been awarded a $2,500,000 grant from the Administration for Children and Families to provide services to families and youth affected by methamphetamine or other substance abuse.

The program has two areas of focus. The first will provide services to substance-affected families with children who have been placed in foster care or are at risk of out of home placement. These families will receive targeted training on parenting, children’s living skills and family skills.

Skills training will be provided through a model program of the National Institute of Drug Abuse and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – the Strengthening Families Program. Kansas is the first state in the nation to implement the Strengthening Families Program statewide. These services are now available.

The second focus area will target youth ages fifteen and older in foster care, or former foster children currently receiving independent living skills. Beginning in 2009, a web-based program will be launched to integrate substance abuse prevention with life and independent living skills.

“We must continue to help families impacted by substance abuse,” said Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. “I’m proud Kansas is the first in the country to implement the Strengthening Families Program statewide and hope it makes a real difference – especially for the children.”

See Grant, page 3

Grant: To aid in substance abuse program

from page 1

Partner agencies involved in the Kansas initiative, Kansas Serves Substance Affected Families (KSSAF) include:

- University of Kansas,
- School of Social Welfare
- Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children
- KVC Behavioral Healthcare, Inc
- TFI Family Services, Inc.
- St. Francis Community Services
- Youthville, Inc.
- DCCCA, Inc.
- LutraGroup
- inDepth Learning.
March 10, 2008
www.jerrymoran.house.gov
Welcome to “This Week in Congress.” I hope you find this newsletter useful.

**Asking the Secretary of Defense to Suspend Tanker Contract**

I joined the Kansas congressional delegation this week in asking Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to suspend the Air Force’s new air refueling tanker contract with Northrop Grumman and European Aeronautic Defence and Space (EADS) until Congress can thoroughly review the decision and take appropriate action. Especially during this time of economic uncertainty, we should not be sending thousands of jobs overseas. In Kansas alone, Boeing’s proposal would create or sustain 3,800 jobs and is worth $1.45 million annually. Important investments that Europe now stands to gain.

The Air Force has a great deal of explaining to do. In addition to pointing out the harm to our country’s national and economic security, we also expressed to Secretary Gates our concerns that the tanker selection competition was unfair to Boeing and poorly executed. For example, the Air Force failed to account for foreign government subsidies, which made the cost of the Airbus tanker more competitive and biased the results against the domestic manufacturer. Go to my website to read the letter to Secretary Gates.

On Wednesday, I attended a House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee hearing where Members of Congress began to question Air Force officials about the tanker contract. In the coming days, I am committed to working to ensure we make the right choice for Americans and America’s military.

**House Approves Measure Aimed at Providing Mental Health Services**

Kansans need access to mental health and addiction services and Congress should help make sure these services are available. On Wednesday, the House passed the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. This legislation would require health insurers to offer mental health benefits equal in cost and scope to medical and surgical benefits.

While I support the concept of this legislation and voted in favor of parity while in the Kansas Senate, I voted against this bill because of a provision that allows the federal government to preempt state laws. Kansas already mandates that all employers provide mental health coverage for severe mental health problems. This preemption could be detrimental as employers would not be required to provide these benefits and might all together opt-out of providing mental health coverage. The Senate’s version of this legislation does not include this provision. My hope is that the provision can be corrected and I can vote in favor of the final legislation.

**Encouraging New Veterans Affairs Secretary to Support Kansas Veterans**

I met with new Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) James Peake this week to discuss the importance of strong VA services for Kansas veterans. Secretary Peake began overseeing the VA in December and our meeting gave me a good opportunity to make the Secretary aware of issues important to Kansas veterans as he begins his tenure.

The Secretary and I talked about a number of issues affecting Kansas veterans, including ensuring resources for VA hospitals across the state, increasing access to medical care in rural areas, improving the timeliness of disability claims decisions and providing mental health services for soldiers returning from combat overseas. I appreciate Secretary Peake’s commitment to improving care and services for our veterans and look forward to working with him. Go to my website to read more about my visit with Secretary Peake.

**Grant Awarded for Construction of Fort Riley Veterans Cemetery**

This week, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) awarded a second and final grant to the State of Kansas to be used for completing construction of the Fort Riley State Veterans Cemetery. State veterans cemeteries provide burial space for those who have served a term of active duty and been honorably discharged from the military, reserves or National Guard, as well as their dependents.

This funding completes the total award amount. It is good to see all of the pieces in place for construction of the Fort Riley State Veterans Cemetery. Once complete, it will provide honorable burial space for thousands of Kansas veterans. Go to my website to read more about the Fort Riley State Veterans Cemetery.

**Kansas Communities Receive Grant to Fight Hunger and Homelessness**

...
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) this week announced that 26 Kansas counties have received federal grants to strengthen local efforts that provide food and shelter to the hungry and homeless in Kansas. Counties received grants based on a formula that takes into consideration the current population, unemployment and poverty levels. FEMA’s Emergency Food and Shelter Program provides supplemental funding to things such as soup kitchens, shelters and food banks.

In Kansas, we look after our neighbors. Across our state, kind individuals, caring groups and churches help families struggling to make ends meet. These funds will support local projects that serve Kansans in need. Go to my website to access the list of counties.

**Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee Reviews the Railroad Industry**

On Wednesday, I attended a Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads hearing about investment in railroad companies. Our railroads provide many public services and a very efficient mode of transportation to get products to market. With a weakened dollar there is some concern that foreign entities can invest in our nation’s infrastructure at exceedingly discounted prices. The subcommittee also heard concerns about the potential impact of hedge funds investing in railroads.

**Visiting with County Officials from across the State**

I joined county officials from across the state this week to discuss many current issues during the annual Kansas Association of Counties visit to Washington, D.C. We had a discussion about restoring the partnership between federal and local governments. It was great to see so many friendly faces in our nation’s capital. Thanks to Executive Director Randy Allen for inviting me to speak to the group.

**Attending the Kansas Prayer Breakfast**

On Friday morning, I joined members of the Kansas legislature and other Kansans at the annual Kansas Prayer Breakfast in Topeka. For 47 years, state and community leaders have come together to experience the comfort and encouragement that comes from prayer. In addition to prayer, scripture readings and music, we heard from Carey Casey, CEO of the Kansas City-based National Center for Fathering. The Prayer Breakfast, sponsored by Topeka Fellowship Inc., was a good time for folks to come together to recognize the power of prayer.

**Discussing Chiropractic Issues at Cleveland Chiropractic College**

Before traveling back to Washington, D.C., I visited Cleveland Chiropractic College in Overland Park to meet with Dr. Carl Cleveland, President, and Dr. John Nab, Vice President of Alumni Service. Dr. Cleveland and Dr. Nab gave me a tour of the college and talked about many issues facing chiropractors in Kansas. We also discussed my efforts to allow veterans enrolled in the VA system to have access to chiropractic care and legislation before Congress to expand this benefit. The college recently moved to a new Kansas campus and I welcome them to our state.

**Discussing Jobs in Rural America at Hodgdon Powder Company**

After visiting Cleveland Chiropractic College, I stopped by the headquarters of Hodgdon Powder Company in Shawnee Mission to meet with Bob Hodgdon. Hodgdon Powder is a leader in gunpowder and provides propellants and other products and services to sportsmen and other businesses. I visited the company’s Morris County plant in 2003 where many rural Kansans are employed. I enjoyed visiting with Mr. Hodgdon about their expansion and investment in safety and environmental quality and regulatory issues.

**Big First Listening Tour Continues**

From Capitol Hill to Bunker Hill, I continued my Listening Tour this week with stops in Marion, Chase, Waubonnee and Dickinson Counties. After my stop in Dickinson County, I met with Herb Graves of the State Association of Kansas Watersheds to discuss the funding difficulties faced by watershed districts. My listening tour will continue next week. Go to my website to view my upcoming schedule.

**In the Office**

Jack Taylor of Liberal was in with S.P.I.R.I.T. to discuss the widening of U.S. Highway 54 from two to four lanes. Jeff Seibel of Hays was in with Edward Jones to discuss data breach legislation and legislation that would allow an optional federal charter for insurance. Judy Billings of Lawrence was in with the Lawrence Convention and Visitor’s Bureau to discuss the Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area. Steve and Cynthia Haynes of Oberlin were in with the National Newspaper Association to express their support for a reporter’s shield law and talk about improvements to the Freedom of Information Act that passed last year.

Members of the Kansas Credit Un-
Council Grove Republican Council Grove, KS Circ. 2037
From Page: 3 3/11/2008 31138

ion Association were in to discuss legislation that would provide regulatory relief to credit unions. In with the group from Wichita were Duane VanCamp, Gary Regoli, Ken Greteman, Stephanie Farber, Marilyn Wells, Lee Williams, Mark Bowman, Larry Damm, Bob Thurman, Larry Eisenhauer, John Davis, Marla Marsh, Jim Holt, Mike Welli and Sue Shelby. Also joining them were Raymond Stroud of Dodge City, Eric Schaefer of Garden City, Todd Brunner of Hutchinson, Mark Kelig of Norton and Robert Reeves of Manhattan.

Eileen Arnhold of Dorrance, Judy Smith of Muscotah, Randy Caprez of Russell and Janet Harness of Troy were in with the National League of Postmasters to talk about keeping rural post offices open and allowing voters to cast ballots by mail. Patrick Zollner of Topeka was in with the Kansas State Historical Society to talk about preservation efforts in Kansas. Allan Fritz of Wamego was in with the National Wheat Improvement Commission to discuss wheat research projects that affect Kansas. President and CEO Bill Moore and Jim Ludwig of Topeka were in with Westar Energy to talk about Westar Energy’s future plans for electric generation and distribution in Kansas.

Jim Crosby of Pomona and Max Miller of Topeka were in with the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States to share their support for earlier retirement eligibility for members of the National Guard. Members of the Disabled American Veterans were in to discuss the VA budget and veterans benefits. In with the group were Franklin and Veronica Bergquist, Yorkie Smith, Curtiss Smith and Charles Loring of Wichita; James and Ellen Price of Salina; Ken Ketchum of Lansing; Esther Dean-Zime of Leavenworth; and Christian Kramer of Topeka.

Bob and Lori Shrock of Kiowa, John Haas of Larned, Bill Heer of Hutchinson and Mike Stamm of Manhattan were in with the U.S. Canola Association to visit about canola breeding research programs and our nation’s farm policy. Dave Ragan of Kansas City, Douglas Moorman or Leawood and David Foran of Lenexa were in with the National Treasury Employees Union to talk about the privatization of federal jobs and health care insurance for federal workers. Jane Rhys of Topeka, Leon Ostrander of Great Bend and Scott Shepherd of Overland Park were in with the Developmental Disabilities Council to discuss the Americans with Disabilities Restoration Act and the need for long term care services and support. Ginger Lewman of Emporia and Elaine Wellborn of Topeka were in representing the Kansas Association for the Gifted, Talented, and Creative to discuss the need to train teachers to identify high ability students. Dr. Gail Hansen of Lawrence was in with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists to talk about workforce development issues and the need to create national reporting standards.

Scott Henson of Avondale West Elementary School in Topeka was in with the Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals to talk about the No Child Left Behind Act and the importance of supporting successful school programs. Representatives from the Kansas Association of Community Action Programs were in to discuss the importance of the Community Services Block Grant and federal support for other social programs such as Head Start. In with the group were Steven Lohr, Jamey Whitney and Linda Broyles of Girard; Tawny Stottemire of Topeka; Tracy Ball of Welda; Jim Baze of Ozawkie and David Shrum of Garnett.

Dr. Kristin Bowman-James and Doug Byers of Lawrence were in with the University of Kansas to discuss National Science Foundation Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research and National Institutes of Health Institutional Development (IDeA) grants. Funds awarded through these grants have helped further research at KU and Kansas State University. Kevin Dobbs of Lawrence was in with the Kansas Biological Survey to discuss how satellite imaging and research provided by the KansasView program helped during the tornadoes and flooding of 2007. KansasView is a program that allows satellite images to be converted into usable data for research, teaching and learning. Velma Goertzen of Inman and J.D. Rein of Great Bend were in with the American Association for Homecare to tell me about the importance of durable medical equipment, oxygen therapy and homecare to Medicare beneficiaries.

Larry and Sharolyn Jackson, Fred Cholick and Steven Graham of Manhattan; Steve Irisk of Garden City; and Connie Pelton of Pittsburg were in with the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges to explain the importance of extension services and research provided by land-grant colleges across the state. Ken and Mary McCauley of White Cloud were in to discuss the status of the farm bill. Ken is currently serving as Chairman of the National Corn Growers
Association. Anita Raghavan of Wichita was in with the Food Research and Action Center to explain how issues before Congress will affect Kansans experiencing hunger.

Sandy Johnson of Olathe and Susan Estes of Kansas City were in with the Mid-America Manufacturing Center to talk about the importance of American manufacturing to our economy and how the center helps small manufacturers learn to adapt, survive, and continue to employ American workers. Joining them were Bill Schutte of Lenexa and David Doherty of Fort Scott to share their experiences working with the center. Christina Beasley of Smoky Valley High School in Lindsborg was in with the Congressional Youth Leadership Council to learn about the federal government.

Vernon and Nancy McKenzie of Emporia were in with the National Pest Management Association to explain how legislation currently in Congress could negatively affect this industry. Wally Kearns and Stan Compton of Topeka were in with the Kansas Small Business Development Center to share how this organization produces returns for our state by providing management and technical assistance to Kansans wishing to start, save or expand a small business. Steve Roberts, a Brown County Commissioner, of Hiawatha also stopped by to visit.

Several Kansans visited my Washington, D.C., office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol building, including Bernie and Rita Homer of Phillipsburg, James and Carrie Evins of Great Bend, Michael and Suzanne Bollig of Hays, Connie Vogts of Sublette, Cindy Jones of Kansas City, and Kathy Sanko of Liberal.
TOPEKA (AP) — Supporters of a proposed shield law for Kansas say it's needed as protection for confidential informants just as much as for the journalists who don't want to identify their sources.

The Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony Monday about the bill, which introduced last year. It would provide some measure of protection so reporters won't have to reveal information, such as confidential sources or their notes, unless ordered by a judge.

Committee Chairman John Vratil, a Leawood Republican, said he didn't know when the committee might vote on the bill. But the sponsor, Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, told reporters he will ask Vratil to give the committee a chance to vote on it.

"This isn't about reporters. It's about citizens who have information that needs to be in the public discussion, but they are reluctant to provide it," said the Independence Republican.

Doug Anstaett, Kansas Press Association executive director, voiced similar sentiments.

"It's to protect those who have something to tell us," Anstaett told the committee.

No one spoke against the measure during Monday's hearing.

The Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press says 34 states and the District of Columbia have some type of shield law. The state of Washington enacted its law last year, and the Utah Supreme Court in January made one part of its rules.

The legislation would allow a judge to order reporters to release information only if it has been shown by "clear and convincing evidence" that the information is relevant to the controversy, can't be obtained any other way, there's a compelling and overriding interest for the information and it's needed "to secure the interests of justice."

Mike Kautsch, a University of Kansas law professor, said that would make it easier for courts to balance the interests of reporters exposing corruption with the help of confidential sources and law enforcement officials wanting to uncover evidence of criminal wrongdoing. Vratil questioned why the bill has such a high burden of proof to be met before a judge can order a reporter to reveal information.
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See Senate on Page 2
Senate Continued from Page 1

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Vratil questioned why the bill has such a high burden of proof to be met before a judge can order a reporter to reveal information. Kautsch said it was "because of the impact on the First Amendment."

Vratil also asked if Kautsch could point to any cases in the past 50 years of reporters being ordered to turn over information. Anstaett said he only was aware of a 2000 case in which a judge ordered a Wichita Eagle reporter to turn over notes from a telephone interview with a man charged with murder. The Eagle surrendered the notes after posting them on its Web site.

"My concern is rather than waiting for something to happen, to have something in place," Anstaett replied.

Kautsch told the committee a shield law would reduce concern about law enforcement using a subpoena to seize written notes, audio or video tapes from a reporter.

"If police have power to indiscriminately acquire journalists' materials, then the journalists become an arm of law enforcement," he said. "Moreover, journalists' sources will get a clear signal that anything they say could be discovered by law enforcement."

Kautsch also said it would eliminate the uncertainty that has surrounded a reporter's right to not reveal sources or information since a 1978 Kansas Supreme Court ruling that he said didn't clearly set up the requirements for overcoming a reporter's privilege.

Also supporting the bill was Kent Cornish, president of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters.

"This bill would protect reporters' ability to report on the workings of government and thus keep the electorate informed," Cornish said.

After the hearing, Kautsch said, "The entrenched problem in the state is that unless somebody is in jail or paying huge fines, it's not a problem."

Anstaett said 90 percent of Kansas newspapers couldn't afford to go to court and defend themselves against efforts to force information from a reporter.
Little did David Parks likely know when he was at his father’s side as a boy and later that he would have people so hungry to hear the stories of who he met and saw.

Accompanying the late Gordon Parks on photography assignments for Life magazine, helping him on the movie set of “The Learning Tree” and “Shaft” and just tagging along in life as a son does with a father has made the younger Parks “a living, breathing extension of his father and all of that history.”

That is how he was introduced by Longtime friend Mike Roach to about 30 people Sunday afternoon at an Iola Reads program. They were assembled in the Bowlus Fine Arts Center’s Creitz Recital Hall to hear David Parks’ remembrances of his legendary father and his take on “The Learning Tree,” the spring selection in the One Book, One Community project.

Earlier Sunday, Roach was honored at an artist’s reception in the Mary L. Martin Art Gallery with his photography exhibit “Gordon Parks: Family and Man.” The Wichita photographer spent much time with the Parks family the decade before the elder Parks’ death in 2006 and shares in the show that runs through April 18 some images from those meetings in New York City, Los Angeles and Fort Scott, Parks’ birthplace.

David Parks said Sunday’s setting wasn’t new to him, as he has toured much of Kansas discussing “The Learning Tree” for the One Book, One Community initiative.

“Before he died, my old man said, ‘I have a lot of work for you to do,’” Parks said. “The past two years, I’ve learned what he meant.”

In addition to the book tour, Parks

(Cont. page 9, col. 1)
**Influence**

(Continued from page 1)

family members have attended dedications of schools named for the late author, filmmaker, photographer, artist and composer in Kansas City, Wichita, St. Paul, Minn., New York and New Jersey.

“I wish he was around to see it,” Parks said Sunday. “He had a special place for kids, which is why the schools and academies being named for him has been so nice, and ‘The Learning Tree’ is an example of that.”

The book, while Iola Reads’ adult book selection this spring, also is directed at young audiences as it tells of a young black boy growing up in 1920s segregated Kansas. Newt, the main character, is Gordon Parks’ autobiographical self, his son noted, and the setting, Cherokee Flats, is Fort Scott.

“All of it was true, every bit of it happened,” Parks said. “Almost all of my dad’s work was non-fiction — ‘Shaft’ was a true story — and the only time he tried to write fiction, it really didn’t work that well.

‘The Learning Tree’ was completely autobiographical, and he wrote about four autobiographies because he’d forget to put something in the last book he’d written so he’d have to write another one. ‘Hungry Heart’ was the last of his autobiographical ones, and it’s a beautiful book.”

“The Learning Tree,” Parks pointed out, was deemed one of the 10 most important American books in the 20th century by the Library of Congress. “It’s been published in about 12 different languages, and it’s still being published today,” he said.

“The fact that we’re here talking about it today, that the Bowls invited me, would have made my father very happy,” Parks added. “This is a unique part of the world. I see more progress here than I do in a lot of instances in New York City. I’m proud of you all.”

FOR MORE THAN AN hour, Parks captivated his listeners with stories of what his father did, who he met and how he influenced photojournalism, the film industry, his family and countless Americans he touched with his art.

A favorite childhood memory of the speaker was accompanying Life’s senior photographer to “shoot” Dwight D. Eisenhower, World War II general and former U.S. president who also was a Kansas native.

“That was the most incredible experience I ever had,” Parks said. “They kicked me out of the room after just a few minutes, because the old man needed to work, but after Gen. Eisenhower found out he was from Kansas, he spent two hours in his office — just to do a portrait.”

Alfred Hitchcock was another memorable photo subject of his father. “I was scared when I went with him to that one, because I’d seen all of his movies. I got out of the room pretty fast on that one,” Parks said.

Other stories recalled Muhammed Ali and Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam leader who was assassinated in 1965. The elder Parks spent time with him the night before he was killed, his son said, and a special article written for Life after the Muslim leader’s death brought death threats to the photographer and his family.

“We were sent away to Jamaica for our protection, and had to stay in the hills, but we finally said ‘enough of this’ and returned to civilization,” Parks said. “After we came back to the states, we still had security, but on St. Patrick’s Day (1966) my father sent some food down to the officer that was protecting us and he was asleep, so he said, ‘That’s it. We don’t need this kind of protection anymore.’”

“The Learning Tree” was made into a movie in 1969, and the elder Parks directed it, wrote the screenplay and music for the film and produced it as it was shot in Fort Scott. “There are scenes that were shot right here, between Iola and Fort Scott, because my father wanted to include his childhood in the film, and besides, this is where it took place,” Parks said.

The movie and others like “Shaft” and “Shaft’s Big Score,” as well as public television documentaries, his 17 books, music compositions such as “The Martin Luther King Ballet” and other works “are going to come back,” Parks said. “It’s already started. It’s still out there, and it’s all important.”

Posthumous work to preserve, catalog and make the vast collection of Gordon Parks writings, photographs, films and music available for future generations to enjoy has begun, his son noted. The Gordon Parks Foundation was started in New York City upon his death, and Fort Scott, where Parks was buried, has honored him with a theater dedication and community college Center for Culture & Diversity.

Wichita State University purchased his collection of writings — 150 boxes were carried from his Manhattan apartment to the school — and the younger Parks said Sunday he saw opportunity for the University of Kansas — “the state’s film school” — to do the same for his father’s movies and perhaps Kansas State University to keep his musical collection.

“This is where he came
from,” Parks said. “It makes sense that his work would end up here, too.”


He was instrumental in the filming of the “Shaft” films with his father and of “Superfly” by his late brother Gordon Parks Jr. A resident of Austin, Texas, he has had his own career as a documentary filmmaker.

Today, he’s kept busy carrying out his role as “a living, breathing extension of his father and all of that history,” a charge made evident to him only after the elder Parks’ death.

The Iola Reads program was funded by The Sleeper Family Trust. Gail Dunbar, curriculum coordinator for USD 257 and chairman of the One Book, One Community project, announced next year’s Iola Reads selection would be “Peak” by Roland Smith in the fall and “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee in the spring.