



2009 Outstanding Graduate  
Alumni Awards



Fifth Annual Outstanding Graduate Alumni Awards Program  
April 17, 2009

Welcome

Greetings from Dr. Jill F. Nilsen, Vice President for External Relations

Dinner

Greetings from Graduate Faculty:

Dr. Tina Veale, Council on Graduate Studies

Greetings from Graduate Students:

Ricel Valdes, Graduate School Student Dean

Greetings from Graduate Alumni:

Dr. Jerry Boyd, Graduate Alumni Advisory Board

Awards presented by

Mr. James Johnson, Dean - College of Arts & Humanities

Dr. Diane Jackman, Dean - College of Education & Professional Studies

Dr. Mary Anne Hanner, Dean - College of Sciences



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2008 - 2009 Graduate Alumni Advisory Board

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Sharon Jackson, Chair

Stan Adkins

Dwight Baptist

Jerry Boyd

John Dively

Michele Heidel

Marilyn Holt

Walter Knollenberg

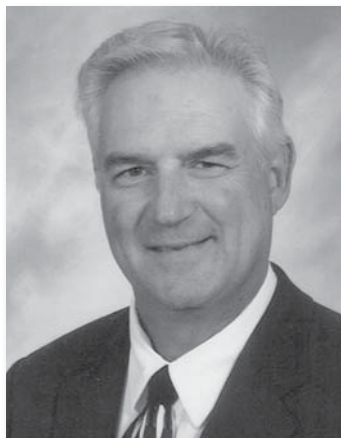
Linda Komes

Anthony Gilberti

Steven McArthur

Pam Rathjen

Jamie Willis



## David Carey

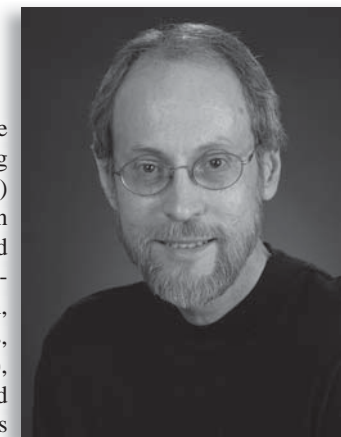
Nominated by the graduate program in elementary education

David Carey was raised in Charleston, but born in Michigan. He came to Charleston at the age of three when his father, Robert Carey, was hired as the head basketball coach at EIU. (Robert retired from EIU in 1977 after a successful career working with physical education graduate students as well as coaching basketball and golf. Robert passed away October 2008 and will be remembered at a memorial service on Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 am in the Newman Center on EIU's campus. All friends are invited to attend.) David graduated from Charleston High School in 1969 and Eastern Illinois University with a bachelor's degree in 1973

and a master's degree in 1978, both in elementary education. In 1984, he received his specialist degree in instructional media, also from EIU, and received his administrative certification in the principalship as well as the superintendency after completing coursework at EIU. He recently graduated from the University of Illinois with an Ed.S. in leadership. David spent 17 years teaching 1st-4th grades in Westfield, Sullivan, Mattoon and Charleston and was media director for one year in a Mattoon elementary school and two years at the Charleston Junior High before becoming principal/title 1 teacher at Lerna School in 1990. While at Lerna School he trained as a Reading Recovery teacher and helped to bring the Reading Recovery Program to Charleston in 1992. In 1994 he was hired as dual principal for both Lerna and Carl Sandburg Elementary schools and served in that position until 1998 when the Charleston school system was restructured. His planning team helped design and develop the current "centers system" used to organize Charleston's elementary schools. He was then named principal of the newly renovated and expanded Carl Sandburg school, which almost tripled in size. During his tenure there, he and his staff strengthened ties with EIU as a professional development school. Working closely with Dr. Brian Reid, Director of School and University Partnerships, they developed the goals of providing pre-service teachers increased opportunities for the classroom, teacher and student contact, and also provided classroom teachers and students with additional support and focused assistance. Before retiring in 2007, he and Judy Barford, EIU instructor, worked together to oversee a four-year project entitled the School-based Cohort Immersion Program. This project identified strong teaching candidates as freshman at EIU and paired them with veteran master teachers in the Charleston school district as mentors. All 20 of these pre-service candidates are now successfully regarded classroom teachers in various locations throughout the state, including two in Charleston. David is married to his high school sweetheart, Janelle, who recently retired after teaching English at EIU for 25 years. They have one son, Joshua, who lives in Villa Park, Illinois. David is currently teaching at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He and Janelle reside in Smyrna, Tennessee.

## Lee Martin, Ph.D.

Nominated by the graduate program in English



Lee Martin currently chairs the Program in Creative Writing at The Ohio State University. After earning both his bachelor's (1978) and his master's (1979) in English from EIU, he went on to earn an MFA in creative writing from the University of Arkansas and a PhD in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is the author of the story collection, *The Least You Need To Know* (1996), two memoirs, *From Our House* (2000) and *Turning Bones* (2003), and the novel *Quakertown* (2002). His essays and short stories have appeared in numerous publications including, *Harper's*, *Ms.*, *Creative Nonfiction*, and *The Georgia Review*. He has won various fellowships for fiction and nonfiction and for his teaching, notably the 2006 Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award at OSU. His novel, *The Bright Forever*, was a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and his most recent novel is *River of Heaven*. In his own words, Lee shares his memories as a student at EIU~ *My first year at Eastern was my junior year since I was a transfer student from Olney Central College. It wasn't, alas, a successful year. Unfortunately, I spent too little time in class and too much time in the Student Union playing pinball, or at the Rathskeller listening to live music, or at Lantz Gym either watching the Panthers or playing a pickup game of basketball. I have to admit that when the end of that first year came, my grades were so bad, staying in school wasn't the best option. Or perhaps, ala Richard Nixon, who at the time of Watergate, said, "mistakes were made," thereby using the passive voice to avoid personal responsibility, I'll just say that the decision was made that I would leave Eastern. I spent a year and a half working at a tire repairs manufacturing plant in Olney, and after a few weeks of operating a press machine, I knew I had to get back to Eastern, and, when I did, I'd make sure to work hard. The little boy who lived in the next-door apartment was privy to my late night studying because his bedroom shared a wall with the room where I typed my papers. One night he called me and asked me if I would please stop. He needed his sleep, he said, so he could do well in school. I moved my typewriter to another room. He went to sleep. I kept writing. I've never stopped. Six books and many stories and essays later, I still recall with much gratitude the professors in the English Department at Eastern, people like Jim Quivey, Dick Rogers, Carol Elder, Bruce Guernsey, Robert Wharton, George Rommel, Walter Lazenby, Asa Baber, Jack Kelleher, and Lucy Gabbard, all of them passionate teachers, scholars, and writers. They modeled a life I wanted for myself—a literary life—and with their guidance and their selfless giving of time and energy—I began the journey that continues today in my own classrooms with my students, who go on to publish books and have teaching careers, and when they share word of their successes with me, I often think of how close I came to throwing away my own opportunity, how easily I could have gone on year after year in that factory and never have become the writer and the teacher I always wanted to be. My time at that factory, though, gave me motivation, as did my father, who was fond of saying, "Can't never did anything." My mother, the first Eastern grad in her family—the first graduate from any university, for that matter—and a grade school teacher for thirty-eight years, never lost faith in me, and, when I was finally ready to apply myself, there were professors, my own newfound commitment, and the joy that literature gave me to help me on my way.*



## Nancie King Mertz

Nominated by the graduate program in art

Nancie King Mertz came to graduate school at Eastern Illinois University after earning a BFA in painting at the University of Illinois. She completed her master's degree in art at EIU in 1979. Since then Nancie has been actively involved in the visual arts as both a creative artist and a small business owner. She and her husband, Ron, own and operate the gallery and frame shop, ArtDeTriumph & Artful Framers Studios, in Chicago's Lincoln Park. Chicago's Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce named

Nancie "Business Person of the Year 2008" and awarded her studio "Small Business Entrepreneur 2000". In 1999, the Network of Women Entrepreneurs honored her with the "Entrepreneurial Achievement Award". She was named "Artist of the Year" for the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau for two terms. She has exhibited in over 40 one-person shows in Chicago since 1988 as a result of painting trips to Hong Kong, England, Scotland and Wales, Austria, the Czech Republic, Spain, France, Amsterdam, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Mexico, China, and the Bahamas. Her award-winning originals are in galleries in the Midwest such as, Edgewood Orchard, Studio B, Joseph Layton, and ArtDeTriumph. Nancie joined other plein air painters in April 2008 to travel to China, hiking into remote mountain villages to paint the locals and the daily lives, which resulted in several exhibits. The University of Illinois Alumni Center hosted a one-person exhibit of her work in early 2008. She produces over 100 original oils, pastels and watercolors annually, of which half are plein air. Her work has graced magazine covers and catalogs, and has been featured in national art magazines and published as posters for many Chicago fund-raising events. Two recent books, *Pure Color: The Best of Pastel* and *Best of America Pastels*, include her work. Nancie will be traveling to Peru in April 2009 to teach and volunteer in some of their poorest communities. While there, she will be painting for a show that opens June 5th, 2009 at her gallery. In her words, Nancie describes her painting philosophy~  
*Shadow, shape, color and composition govern my view of the world. I'm fascinated with the beauty of urban environments as well as pastoral scenes, both here and abroad. Fortunately, my work enables me to travel the city and the world with brush and paint and explore, Plein-air. It is my hope that the viewer can witness the story or beauty I strive to convey in each image.*

## Mythili Rundblad

Nominated by the graduate program in political science



Mythili Rundblad came to the United States after receiving her bachelor's degree in economics and political science from Bombay University. At Eastern Illinois University, she earned a master of arts degree in political science in 1991 and a master of science in education degree in guidance and counseling in 1992. Her academic excellence, civic involvement and leadership at EIU was recognized with the Presidential Award for Outstanding Graduate Student as well as the Glen Hubele Award. In 1994, Mythili was selected from a nation-wide search and hired as Coordinator of International Students and Scholars Office at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She later accepted the position of International Student Advisor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. In 1999, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, selected her for the position of Coordinator of Student Development to oversee the area of volunteerism and civic engagement of students. Under her leadership the number of students in the volunteer program has doubled to over 5500 students each year and the Land of Lincoln AmeriCorps grew from one school to five school districts, as well as the Boys and Girls Club. Mythili serves on advisory councils regarding student civic engagement, and has presented at various professional conferences. She received the Outstanding Central Region Advisor from the Golden Key Honor Society and twice was honored with the Ethics of Service Award from AmeriCorps. In 2006, she authored the winning application that led to SIUC receiving the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for exemplary campus-community partnership in Illinois. Mythili was appointed to the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service in 2007. Outside of her professional work, she is also active in the community of Carbondale. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Boys and Girls Club, the Advisory Council for the Land of Lincoln AmeriCorps, and the Jackson County Habitat for Humanity.



## Jonathan Schwabe, DMA

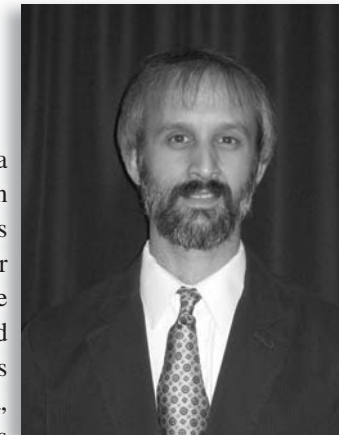
Nominated by the graduate program in music

Jonathan Clarke Schwabe is currently a professor of theory and composition at the University of Northern Iowa where he also chairs the composition and theory area. Jonathan earned his bachelor's in music at the University of Tennessee and graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a master of arts in music in 1988. He received the doctor of musical arts from the University of South Carolina. His works have been premiered at

the Spoleto Festival, the Eastman School of Music, the Society of Composer's Midwest Festival, the Conductor's Institute, and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Festival. His orchestral work, "As I Remember," was performed at the Kennedy Center in the summer of 1999 and has received numerous subsequent performances throughout the United States and Europe. In 2000 and 2004, his operas, "The Hard Years" and "The Sojourner" were premiered at the Maude Powell Music Festival under the direction of Kevin MacMahon. Jonathan's works have been commissioned by the International Arts Chamber Orchestra, the Iowa Composer's Forum, the Palmetto Arts Trio, Dance Works, the La Ste Duo, Illinois Valley Symphony, the Maude Powell Music Festival, and the Indiana Ballet Theatre. His principal composition teachers are Samuel Adler, John Anthony Lennon, and Peter Hesterman (EIU music faculty). He has participated in master classes with David Diamond, David Amram, and Karel Husa among others and his music is published by Musikverlag Bruni Uetz and Alafia Press. Jonathan has returned to EIU nearly every summer for the past two decades to work with the summer jazz camp for high school and middle school students.

## Sean Tomer

Nominated by the graduate program in economics



Sean Tomer earned a bachelor's in 1993 and a master's in 1998, both from EIU and both in economics. Since then, he has enhanced his studies by completing course work at Keller Graduate School in Chicago. For the past decade Sean has worked as a project manager and consultant for many major corporations, such as Citigroup, William Wrigley Company, Hospira, Swift, Inc., Ameritech Corp, SBC. He has chiefly been responsible for defining, building, and operating project management offices for many large and complex US and International projects. He has also run his own independent consulting firm specializing in project management and project office execution. He is currently working in the Global Center of Excellence as a Deployment Manager for a business transformation project at PepsiCo International. Sean's management projects and independent consulting have led him to reside and travel all over the world, throughout Europe and Asia, and most recently in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Sean is a member of the Project Management Institute, and is currently completing the Project Management Professional certification program. He is a certified expert in the Microsoft Office Suite and in Microsoft Project business applications, and is a certified NetAnalyst by the Pine Mountain Group. In December 1996, he received the Ameritech Excellence Award for supporting the Consumer Services Computer Telephony Integration Project and again in 1998, for the Consumer Services Call Flow Enhancement Project. Sean gives credit to the EIU economics program~ The economics program at EIU has given me the skills and the knowledge to be able to successfully compete for project leadership roles throughout my career. He was raised in nearby Mattoon, and currently resides in Lake in the Hills, Illinois with his wife Jodi and their 11 year old twin boys, Gabriel and Brennan, as well as their 4 year old puggle, Gingerbread.





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