

## Dehn Recognized for Teaching Excellence

Paula F. Dehn, PhD, is the 2006 recipient of the Kenneth L. Koessler Distinguished Faculty Award. Presented by the Canisius College Alumni Association, the award recognizes a faculty member's outstanding contributions to academics and teaching excellence.



A professor of biology at Canisius, Dehn has served as chair of the department

since 1989. Throughout her tenure, "she has contributed enormously to improving the academic quality at Canisius ... and put Canisius on the science map," said Judith E. Larkin, PhD, professor of psychology.

Dehn's drive for academic excellence in the sciences led her to revamp the science curriculum, create new coursework that promotes student field trips and research, and recruit young biology faculty. Additionally, she secured millions of dollars in grants from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which have benefited the entire interdisciplinary science education effort at Canisius and enabled students to "learn science by being scientists," stated Sara R. Morris, PhD, associate professor of biology.

"As we look to the future of the college, Paula's impact will be even greater," added Harvey A. Pines, PhD, chair and professor of psychology. "More than anyone at Canisius, she has enunciated the vision of an interdisciplinary science center for the BlueCross building. This center will unite the various parts of the college around a new focus for the future, and the alumni of that future will owe a great debt to Paula's vision and her tireless efforts to help Canisius realize that vision."

Dehn's research interests include environmental toxicology, and physiological ecology of marine and freshwater systems.

## Ecology, Literacy and Robotics are Focus of New Professorships



DEBRA T. BURHANS, PhD



R. MARK MEYER, PhD



H. DAVID SHEETS, PhD



SARA R. MORRIS, PhD



GILLIAN RICHARDSON, PhD

What do ecology, literacy and robotics have in common? They are all areas of study that will be further explored under a newly-awarded round of Peter Canisius Distinguished Teaching Professorships. The three-year grants, which begin June 2006, provide some of the college's best faculty with the resources to create innovative programs that enhance undergraduate teaching through interdisciplinary projects, scholarly travel, experiential courses and the incorporation of technology into the classroom.

The 2006 recipients of a Peter Canisius Distinguished Teaching Professorship are: **Debra T. Burhans, PhD**, assistant professor of computer science and director of the bioinformatics program; **R. Mark Meyer, PhD**, associate professor of computer science; and **H. David Sheets, PhD**, professor of physics and director of the Pre-Engineering Program. They will create **Robotics Across the Curriculum**, a collaborative interdisciplinary program that includes the development of robotics courses and a robotics minor, the integration of robotics into other courses and student robotics research opportunities.

**Sara R. Morris, PhD**, associate professor of biology, will establish a program called **Experiencing the Natural World: Exploring Our Environment in Western New York and Beyond**. Students will study the ecology and organisms, particularly birds, of Western New York and other areas. Through course projects, they will prepare educational materials for the Buffalo Museum of Science.

**Gillian Richardson, PhD**, assistant professor of education and director of the college's Literacy Center, will create **Literacy as Possibility: A Student Leadership and Community Empowerment Program**. Students will explore grassroots leadership through urban literacy initiatives, visits to exemplary urban schools and programs, and a speaker and workshop series.

For more information, visit [www.canisius.edu/petercanisius](http://www.canisius.edu/petercanisius).

## In memoriam

Canisius College has lost a great professor and friend. **Thomas W. Fitzsimons '52, MA '55, PhD**, died January 25. He was 75.

Fitzsimons was a former assistant professor of education. He joined the faculty of his *alma mater* in 1964 and served the college for 35 years.

A quiet, unassuming man, Fitzsimons was known by faculty, friends and students as a devoted teacher and someone who possessed a rich sensitivity of spirit. In addition to his teaching, Fitzsimons was involved in a number of diverse roles at the college. He coordinated the secondary education program, supervised student teachers and edited the college catalog. For 27 years he served as the honorary secretary to the Dickens Fellowship. Fitzsimons also spearheaded the move to bring the historic Newgate Prison gate to Canisius. It now graces the entrance of the Bouwhuis Library.

Fitzsimons' many years and dedication of service to Canisius earned him the college's *bene merenti* award in 1989.