Craig Wedderspoon, associate professor of sculpture, was awarded this year’s Outstanding Commitment to Students Award by the College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Board. Board member Ron Davis, accompanied by Dean Robert Olin and others from Arts and Sciences, surprised Wedderspoon in the middle of the semester’s-end critique for his sculpture class to present the award. The Outstanding Commitment to Students Award is given annually in the spring to a tenure track faculty member. The award includes a plaque and $3,000. It was established by the board to recognize faculty whose commitment to students’ personal and intellectual development goes well beyond the classroom and teaching assignments. The board looks for faculty who inspire, mentor, and guide students through extracurricular organizations, service, or research projects, and mentoring, thereby expanding their horizons and opportunities for success and development. The recipient is selected by the board’s Academic Committee from nominations made by department chairs and others. The committee consists of about 35 board members.

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IN MEMORIAM

Angelo John “Jack” Granata, age 86, died March 10, 2009, at DCH Medical Center. Mr. Granata, professor emeritus of art, is survived by his wife Clara (Topsy) Granata, his daughter Diane Thompson Granata, his son Gary Granata, and his grandson Anthony (Beau) Thompson. His family was by his side when he passed away.

Granata came to the UA art department in 1949 and taught sculpture and other courses until he retired in 1988. He served as department chair from 1968 until 1981, and directed the University Art Gallery (now known as the Sarah Moody Gallery of Art) until his retirement. Before coming to Tuscaloosa, he served in the Navy during World War II for three years. After he was honorably discharged, he studied sculpture at the University of Iowa, earning BFA and MFA degrees. He married Clara Louise Woods, known to her family and friends as “Topsy,” in 1948.

Jack Granata was a productive and respected sculptor who worked in several media. He exhibited in every UA art department faculty show from 1949 to 2008. He participated in numerous invitational exhibitions, notably the Museum of Modern Art; Forum Gallery in New York; Los Angeles Museum of Art; New Orleans Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the St. Louis Museum of Art; Des Moines Museum of Art; the Davenport Museum of Art; and the Birmingham Museum of Art. His works are part of the permanent collections of Georgetown College in Kentucky, the Figge Art Museum and Grinnell College in Iowa, and UA’s Sarah Moody Gallery of Art.

As director of the University Art Gallery, Granata established and solidified its policies and procedures. Under his direction, the gallery underwent renovations and improvements, such as a new lighting system in the 1970s. He brought in many traveling exhibitions, including several from the Smithsonian, in order to expose and enrich students’ visual education. Granata also initiated the cataloging of the growing Permanent Collection, on which Rita DeWitt, his graduate assistant in the early 1970s, worked. In an interview earlier this year, DeWitt, who earned her BFA in Graphic Design in 1970 and her MFA in photography and printmaking in 1972, described Granata’s intuitive and exacting ability in hanging a show, merely “nudging” one object in a group to make everything come together: “He had great three-dimensional sense of how to arrange objects in space,” she recalled.

I have heard the word “meticulous” used a few times to describe Jack Granata’s way of working, even the way he set up his tools and workspace in his studio. At a memorial reception continued on page 6
This has been a busy year for historic architecture and preservation in Tuscaloosa, and Robert Mellown has been in the thick of it. He is currently serving on a statewide committee appointed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health to identify, document, and archive artifacts and photographs associated with UA’s 150-year-old neighbor, Bryce Hospital. The committee advocates for the protection and preservation of the historic landmark Linear-Kirkbride-style main building as the Mental Health Department negotiates the sale of portions of the Bryce property to The University of Alabama.

In April, Mellown presented a paper on the subject, “Bryce Hospital: Architecture as Therapy” at the 62nd annual conference of the Alabama Historical Association in Tuscaloosa.

In other preservation news, Mellown has been involved with efforts to preserve Tuscaloosa’s Drish House, an antebellum Italianate villa. The structure is significant not only for its architecture but also because of two iconic photographs, Tuscaloosa Wrecking Company, taken in the 1936 by Walker Evans, and another by Frances Benjamin Johnston in 1939, both pioneers of American photography.

Mellown, who wrote a detailed “Structures Report” on the Drish House for the Alabama Historical Commission, has created a series of 19th-century-esque drawings that reveal the original appearance of the 172-year-old house and some of the mysterious events that have occurred there.

As the newsletter goes to press, Alvin Sella, professor emeritus of painting, receives the Alabama State Council on the Arts’ Governor’s Arts Award. He will join past recipients Zelpha Wells, Jimmy Lee Sudduth, and Kathryn Tucker Windham in recognition for his outstanding contributions to the arts in Alabama.

Herb Rieth had works accepted into Gallery RFD’s juried exhibition Making It: The Art of Contemporary Craft, and Murray State University’s Kentucky National 2009.

In April, Cathy Pagani gave the keynote address at the University of Kansas’s annual graduate student symposium, “Nomadism in Art - The History of Art in Ages of Globalization.” The symposium was hosted jointly by KU’s department of art history and the University of Missouri-Columbia’s department of art history and archaeology.

Sarah Marshall has a piece in the exhibit, Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books, described on its website as “an intimate, economical, democratic and global exchange project,” which “investigate[s] the power of small-scale artists’ books to challenge their readers with grand, powerful, urgent, and poignant content.” Marshall’s book incorporates lithography, colored pencil, gouache, and wood. Go to http://www.flickr.com/photos/mimborg/3260968635/. The project is planning to organize exhibits in Spain, China, Argentina, and Finland.

Jerry Lamme won $250 in the 2009 Double Exposure Juried Photography competition in the Adult Division. The annual competition held by the Arts Council of Tuscaloosa (www.tuscarts.org) is in its sixth year, and is open to Alabama photographers.

Tom Barnes is the winner of the $3,000 Non-Representational Award in Energen Corporation’s 10th annual art competition, The Wonders of Alabama Art, for his work “Untitled (Two Swans with Stripes),” recently exhibited in the biennial faculty show. His work will become part of the permanent Alabama Collection displayed at Energen Plaza in Birmingham.

Amalia Amaki gave the keynote address in January for the inauguration of the first holder of the R. Anthony Askew Chair at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA, “Homily: Art, Faith, and Visual Culture.”
HONORS DAY
The department recognized achievements and awarded scholarships to students April 10 in its Honors Day ceremony at the Sarah Moody Gallery of Art. Receiving full-tuition scholarships were Catalina Bonet-Lopez (Holaday Memorial); Catherine Cooper (Bradley Endowment, Bashinsky Endowment); Jeremy Davis (Bradley Endowment, Jones Scholarship); Laura Kovalsky (Bolt Fellowship, Jim and Myra Morgan Scholarship, Bashinsky Endowment); Patrick O’Sullivan (Art Students Fund; Bashinsky Endowment); Joseph Stalnaker (Mary M. Morgan Memorial Scholarship). Students who received half-tuition scholarships were Ginger Baker (Galbraith Endowment); Amanda Barnes (Anderson Endowment, Galbraith Endowment); Micah Craft (Elmore Endowment, Galbraith Endowment); Lindsay Jones (Matthews Memorial Endowment); Tanya McDavid, Kaitlin Parker, Molly Brooke Threadgill, and Alana Woodall (Galbraith Endowment); Joseph Robertson (Society for the Fine Arts, Galbraith Endowment); Kayleigh Walder (Holaday Memorial, Galbraith Endowment); and Liz Wuestefeld (Zoellner Scholarship, Mary M. Morgan Memorial Scholarship).

Windgate Fellowship recipients Erin Redd and Stephanie Bailey gave presentations of their projects in art history. Windgate Fellows in studio art Rebecca Godfrey, Joseph Stalnaker, and Kayleigh Walder were each presented with an inscribed copy of the book of photographs, Sally Mann, in recognition of their scholastic achievements in 2008.

BFA EXHIBITION
The First Annual BFA Juried Exhibition was on view April 22 through May 8 at the Harrison Galleries in downtown Tuscaloosa. Owner Jim Harrison III gave a well-attended reception accompanied by a jazz band and catered by Venice Italian Fusion.

Exhibitors in the show were BFA art students Ginger Baker, Catalina Bonet-Lopez, Jeremy Davis, Patricia Davis, Haley Finlay, Adam Frederick, Morgan Lawrence, Virginia Leigh, Patrick O’Sullivan, Kari Panter, Joseph Stalnaker, and Molly Francis Brooke Threadgill.

ACROSS THE LINE
The University of Alabama Department of Art and Art History, and the Mississippi State University Department of Art hosted Across the Line: An Exchange Exhibition of Art between the two schools in February and March. The UA exhibited student work from MSU in the ASL Gallery in Woods Hall from February 5-27. The MSU Department of Art Gallery in McComas Hall exhibited work by UA students February 16 through March 26.

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER
Miller Mobley’s work was chosen from among 10,000 submissions to be published in the upcoming American Photography 25. The judges, from GQ, The New York Times Magazine, Conde Nast Portfolio, and the like, chose 360 works to represent the best photographs from 2008. Mobley, a senior undergraduate art major concentrating in photography, writes “Any famous photographer you can think of has most likely been published in AP. And the cool thing is that my work will be just pages over from one of the greatest photographers in the world, Annie Leibovitz.”

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!
Congratulations to the spring 2009 studio art graduates in the MA and MFA programs: Jamey Hudnall, MFA in painting; Bruce Henry and Barbara Lee Black, MA in photography; Leigh Walker, MA in printmaking; Roger Jones, MA in painting; Jason Doblin and An-
the great new things that Obama has done for the military is increase funds for art programs on bases.”

Valerie Piette, BA 2005 in advertising, minor in art history, is the Program Manager at Kentuck. She writes, “With the assistance of the Festival Steering Committee and Kentuck board of directors, I am planning the 2009 Kentuck Festival of the Arts while managing the gallery shop and exhibits.” Piette also teaches art to K through fifth graders at Crestmont Elementary school two days a week under the Northport Fine Arts Initiative.

The Birmingham Historical Society recently published Thomas Mark Shelby’s D. O. Whilldin: Alabama Architect, which was based on his 2006 art history master’s thesis. Shelby won the University of Alabama’s Outstanding Thesis Award that year. Robert O. Mellow, BA 1967, Shelby’s thesis advisor and thesis committee member John Schnorrenburg, each wrote a foreword for the book. Shelby is now in the PhD program at Georgia Tech.

At Jacksonville State University, Anita Stewart, MA 2007, is teaching an online art appreciation course she developed. She is also the assistant creative director in a collaborative artists’ group known as Jax Printmakers Ink on Public Square in Jacksonville. The group has a gallery and workspace, and will have a website up soon.

Florida A&M University in Tallahassee has named Dr. Ron Yrabe-dra, BFA 1965, MA 1967, Professor Emeritus for his 34 years of teaching and service. Congratulations!

Please send your news to The Loupe, Dept. of Art and Art History, Box 870270, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487 or rdobson@crimson.ua.edu
held at the Granatas’ home in Cottondale, Henry Betak, professor emeritus of painting, and I stood in rapt attention in a back bedroom that had been opened for visitors, where dozens of Jack Granata’s smaller sculptures lined the upper beams. They needed more room to be viewed each on their own terms, with space between them, “because each one sings,” Betak said. Each has its own vibration.

Mr. Granata’s studio in the woods was also filled with tools and equipment and metal sculptures the size of demi-gods. His son Gary talked to a group of retired professors, artists, and former students who were paying their respects. All around stood his father’s work, as if listening. Some sculptures were global, some towering, some holding simple landscapes within them, inviting us to enter and experience. At one entrance to the studio, overlooking the early spring woods, a towering piece rusting with age guarded the gateway to a world we now can only visit through memories and these giants.

I spoke to Mr. Granata only occasionally over the last several years. I was gathering information on the history of the department and he would stop in occasionally for a visit. Often he recalled the department’s history through stories of building the furniture that was needed for teaching courses: easels, classroom storage, tables, cabinets, high stools. He methodically went through pages of black-and-white University News Bureau photographs from the early 1960s, giving me as many details as he could remember: the name of this faculty member, the year of that exhibition. But it was often the furniture he and his colleagues built that sparked the clearest memories. He knew why those easels were needed, and exactly which saws and other tools had been used to make them.

At his memorial reception a table was laid with his “Frustrations” small silver-spray-painted ideas for sculpture in illustration board, now offerings for guests to take home. In several silver miniatures, I could see the same idea worked out in different ways, an angle slightly deepened or sloped more gently, or nipped or tucked like a sail reaching for the right wind. Here in these smaller versions his exacting hand was free to try a variety of solutions until he found the perfect one. --The Editor

Donations to the Angelo Granata Scholarship Fund may be made payable to The University of Alabama, memo to the Granata Scholarship, and sent to the UA Department of Art and Art History, Box 870270, Tuscaloosa, AL, 35487-0270.

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Summer 2009