Fall 2014
Sreeja Nair, a student at DePaul Institute of Science and Technology, helps former School of Public Service (SPS) student Anne Linguanti with a sari during a SPS study abroad program in Angamaly, Kerala, India. Read more about SPS on page 5.
A farewell to Dean Suchar
by Melissa Smith

Following a much-lauded career as an educator and administrator, Dean Charles “Chuck” Suchar (LAS ’67) will retire after 43 years with the university on Dec. 31. “Having spent my entire career at DePaul, I have an extremely strong attachment to the university and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences,” Suchar remarks. “DePaul has been extremely good to me and my family, and I hope that I have returned the quality of service that is commensurate with the opportunity DePaul has provided to me.”

When Suchar first stepped onto campus 50 years ago as an undergraduate, he was underwhelmed. He recalls thinking, “This is it?” With only two buildings for classes and a gymnasium that served as the hub for student activity, he remembers “the little university under the El” as being “small, quaint, [and] not much of a place.” Yet, during his stint as an undergraduate, he grew captivated. “I was very impressed with the personal attention I received from the faculty with whom I took classes, especially faculty in my major—sociology,” he says. “The care and attention given to my work and their genuine support for my learning and success as a student was very apparent to me. I came to cherish this place very much.” It was those fond memories that kept Suchar connected with the university.

Immediately upon graduation, he started lecturing part time at DePaul while working on his master’s and doctoral degrees at Northwestern University. He became an instructor in 1971 and quickly was promoted to assistant professor in 1972. Suchar received a National Science Foundation/ NATO Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Sociological Institute at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands in 1976, where he studied the response to social deviance in Dutch society. That work became the basis for his 1978 book “Social Deviance: Perspectives and Prospects.” He returned to DePaul as an associate professor with tenure in 1977 and attained the rank of full professor in 1992.

As Suchar progressed through the academic hierarchy, he navigated various administrative roles, including director of the University Honors Program (1976-1981), division head of Behavioral and Social Sciences (1981-1984), and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (1985-1993). He served as associate dean for 13 years—six years for undergraduate studies and seven years for graduate studies—before assuming the role of dean in 2005. Throughout his tenure at DePaul, Suchar helped to create various undergraduate and graduate programs, made improvements throughout the college, assisted faculty with resources for their scholarship and strengthened curricula to ensure LAS remains progressive. “My administrative and educational philosophy has always been to strive for improvement and aim toward higher levels of quality to stay competitive in higher education,” explains Suchar.

“By supporting faculty, higher levels of curricular improvement could be encouraged for the sake of the students and the overall reputation of the college and university.” In recognition of his efforts over the years, Suchar received several awards, including the College of LAS Excellence in Teaching Award, the Sears-Roebuck Teaching Excellence Award and the Campus Leadership Award (all in 1996), the Public Service Award (1997), the Spirit of DePaul Award (1999), the St. Vincent de Paul Professorship (2004) and the Cortelyou-Lowery Award (2014). In addition, Suchar served on the University Senate/Faculty Council for 21 years, including as president (1991).

Of all his accomplishments, Suchar points to two that have been the most rewarding: helping new students acclimate to the city and university by creating Discover Chicago in 1994 and assisting more than 170 peers through the tenure and promotion process as part of his work with the College Personnel Committee. “Transforming the nature of general education at DePaul to help it reflect its mission as a Catholic, Vincentian and urban institution meant that those values needed to be reflected in the basic curriculum and experience that students encountered at the very beginning of their career with us,” Suchar explains. “The Discover Chicago courses were a reflection of that idea. Supporting faculty to help them attain their career goals and recognition for their accomplishments was the best way of advancing the quality of education we offer to our students.”

Suchar also helped pioneer the field of visual sociology, serving as president of the International Visual Sociology Association (1990-1994). “I was a photographer before I became a sociologist,” reveals Suchar. “It was not until the 1980s that I finally found a way of unifying my love of photography with my love for sociology when I encountered a like-minded group of sociologists in the U.S. and abroad who were in the process of forming an international organization.” He currently serves as associate editor of the association’s journal Visual Studies. Suchar has held many photographic exhibitions and published numerous book chapters, reviews, journal articles and books over the years, including co-editing “DePaul University Centennial Essays and Images,” the institutional history published for its centennial in 1998.

With retirement looming, Suchar looks forward to spending more time with his wife of 46 years, retired CPS teacher Edie; his two sons, attorney David (LAS ’98) and physician Adam (CSH ’02); his daughter-in-law Lisa (MED ’08); and his two grandsons, Eli and Reid. Yet, don’t expect him to slow down too much. As an avid photographer, Suchar plans to resume work on unfinished documentary photographic projects, as well as catch up on reading, traveling and biking.

Most of all, Suchar says he will miss the engagement with his colleagues—the faculty, staff, students and fellow administrators he has worked with over the years who helped him to achieve his own professional goals and those of the college and university. After he helped to shape the liberal arts at DePaul for nearly half a century, Suchar’s legacy will live on for many years to come.
New director brings fresh perspective to public service at DePaul

by Melissa Smith

In January 2010, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences launched the Bachelor of Arts in Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies (PIC)—the first major of its kind to be offered at DePaul. Four years later, the department continues to grow and build momentum with up to 120 students majoring, double majoring or minoring in PIC in the past three years. “2013 was the first time we had students declare their major during the summer before they came [to DePaul],” says Mary Jeanne Larabee, chair of the department.

Christa Kuntzelman (LAS ’13) moved to Chicago from Atlanta specifically for DePaul’s PIC program. “I have always been passionate about issues of social justice, but I didn’t know how to translate ‘I have always been passionate about issues of social justice, but I didn’t know how to translate’ into a major. When I came to DePaul, I immediately knew that I wanted to major in PIC and pursue an internship in India.”

The program is structured to help students gain familiarity with the challenges of human rights and forced displacement through both classroom studies and internship opportunities. “PIC students are required to complete one internship with 100 hours of service, and faculty members are developing a plan to include action projects or service in every course,” Larabee says. “Students are fulfilling the program’s service requirements both domestically and internationally by volunteering with private and public schools, providing microloans for youth in Chicago, participating in service-focused study abroad trips and more. ‘Hopefully, they will come out of DePaul with a basket of tools that will help them feel ready after college,’ says Larabee.

Recent graduates have applied their skills to work with such organizations as Vianney Service Corps, AmeriCorps, Jesuit Volunteer Corps and Global Brigades. In addition to program and career planning, faculty will also be advising students on how to develop service opportunities. A five-year BA in peace, justice and conflict studies and MA in journalism program is expected to be offered to students within the next year. Other five-year programs are currently being planned.

The concepts of peace and justice are quite complex,” says Kuntzelman. “I hope that each student understands that he or she is capable of enacting change.” For more information, visit bit.ly/picpsDPU.

Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies program gains traction

by Jacob Sabolo

When the School of Public Service (SPS) began in 1970, it had just one degree. Today, it’s the largest graduate program at the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, boasting an enrollment of more than 500 students, 15 full-time and 28 part-time faculty, and five degrees, thanks in part to the efforts of emeritus professor and former director the Rev. J. Patrick Murphy, C.M. (IBA ’75).

New director Robert Stokes hopes to capitalize on that momentum to usher in a new age at the school. “I want to make SPS the core unit at DePaul for public service programming, evaluation and education,” he asserts. “I want SPS to be more than a graduate-degree-granting operation. I want it to be innovative, expressive and relevant—an intellectual and spiritual hub for students, researchers, civic leaders and policy makers around a core set of values in public service.”

Stokes, a Ph.D. graduate, comes to DePaul with nearly 20 years of experience in urban policy. “I have been very interested in urban policy innovations that seek to improve the lives of citizens and the collective life of communities,” he says. “So whether it is economic development, community safety and security, environment and health, or how we plan, fund and democratically govern policy innovations, I have a keen interest in how to make places better.” What makes Stokes’ job easier is the solid foundation already in place at DePaul. “SPS already has a strong, interdisciplinary set of faculty and dedicated staff to facilitate building an intellectual center at DePaul,” he says. “My job is to seek the necessary support from within and outside the university to realize this goal.”

Professor Joseph Schwietertman, director of the Chudick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul, has watched the program flourish during his 20-year tenure. “People want to give back in a highly professional way and make the biggest impact they can through effective management of public service,” he explains. “We strive in our programs to give people the tools to be agents for change. Our students really like our curriculum’s emphasis on organizational strategy and best practices.”

Another student favorite is the short-term study abroad program that is flexible enough to fit into a full-time work schedule. For anywhere between six and 14 days, students study abroad with a DePaul professor in a range of countries, including Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, India, Ireland and Tanzania. “Each program is focused on very specific skills that are connected to one or more courses,” says Ronald Fernandes, SPS assistant director and chair of the SPS study abroad program. With this format, up to 30 percent of students each year are able to study abroad and, in some cases, even end up working internationally. “The study abroad experience gives them exposure and opens their minds to the enormous potential and challenges of public service management and leadership worldwide,” adds Fernandes.

With exciting initiatives in the works, SPS gains inspiration from the city. “We really leverage the culture of downtown Chicago and draw on its energy,” Schwietertman says. “We began as a one-degree shop but always had a desire to build something much bigger. We’ve grown up and developed an identity that is known throughout the country. It’s exciting.”

The School of Public Service offers five degrees:

• Master of Science in Public Service Management
• Master of Science in Leadership and Policy Studies
• Master of Nonprofit Management
• Master of Public Administration
• Master of Science in Public Service Management

The school also offers a joint program with the College of Law and two degree offerings that can be completed online.

For more information, visit bit.ly/spsDPU.
Discover Chicago commemorates 20th anniversary
by Melissa Smith

As Caelin Niehoff (LAS ’14) delivered the student commencement address on June 15, she reflected on her time at DePaul. “From the moment we stepped onto DePaul’s campuses, we were thrown into this vibrant, urban center,” she said. “The city of Chicago presented itself to us, and it taught us about the realities that lie beyond DePaul’s campuses. It taught us about the lives and experiences of those who operate outside of our own realities.” On stage, DePaul University President, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., and Dean Charles Suchar (LAS ’67) shared a smile—they knew she was referring to Discover Chicago.

2014 marks the 20th anniversary of Discover Chicago, an experiential learning course for incoming freshmen that kicks off one week prior to the fall quarter. Small classes of 22 students are accompanied by a faculty member, a staff professional and a peer mentor as they explore firsthand a topic that is integral to the city. “Our first-year students chose to go to a university in an urban setting,” explains Doug Long, director of the First Year Program, the liberal studies component in which Discover Chicago courses are housed. “What we want is for them to spend their four years on campus, beautiful as it is. We look at the city as an extended classroom. This pushes them out into it and instructs them in how they can use the city in addition to enjoying it.”

Suchar conceived the idea for Discover Chicago after attending a conference in Washington, D.C. “There was a person there from a university in Sydney who said that they took their freshmen and sent them into the Outback as part of a bonding experience,” he remembers. He realized that DePaul had its own version of the Outback—Chicago’s sprawling urban landscape—that could serve the same purpose. “On the spot, I thought I would send them into the city,” he says. “I would use the city as a classroom and a discovery experience for students. I’m an urban sociologist. For me, this was something that came naturally.” After a year of meticulous planning, Suchar launched six pilot sessions, and the program has grown ever since, including developing a similar series of courses entitled Explore Chicago.

Now, more than 100 Discover and Explore Chicago classes are offered to incoming students, with topics ranging from Chicago theater and novels to the Chicago Cubs and the Chicago Marathon. “There’s not an area of Chicago that’s not tackled in some way,” Suchar asserts. “It’s fascinating to see how widespread the topics are and where students go and what they are interested in.” Long adds that “what students don’t realize is that they are getting topics their instructors love, that aren’t based on the needs of the department. We love the variety.”

One such offering is Instructor Daniel Hanichak’s (LAS ’04) Discover Chicago course, “Justice in the City.” The political science instructor calls it “a behind-the-scenes look” at the criminal justice system in Chicago. “Students get to see things that most citizens will never get the chance to see,” he enthuses. Hanichak uses his connections as a prosecutor at the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office to open doors to the Cook County Jail, the Medical Examiner’s Office, the Cook County Criminal Courts Building and the FBI’s field office in Chicago. He also invites key figures like Cook County State’s Attorney Anita Alvarez and Cook County Deputy Public Defender Pat Reardon to converse with his students on pressing topics.

“Our criminal justice system is the greatest in the world,” Hanichak stresses. “When you have police working hard to serve and protect us, prosecutors willing to fight on behalf of victims, defense attorneys willing to fight to protect the rights of their clients and social workers helping to rehabilitate offenders, then justice can be achieved.”

Sophomore Renee Menart describes her experience in Hanichak’s class as “eye-opening.” “There is no easy good and bad, victim and perpetrator—not even in the realm of justice,” she explains. “This course brought the complexity to the surface so we could begin to build an honest understanding of our justice system for ourselves.” In addition, it prepared the political science major for her future at DePaul. “The course stretched me in the areas that will carry me forward in my college classes: critical thinking and comprehensive problem solving,” she says.

Discover Chicago and the First Year Program as a whole set the scene for students’ future success at the university. Suchar couldn’t be more pleased with what the program has accomplished over the past 20 years. “I’m proud of the First Year Program because it really is the entry portal for students at the university,” he says. “Working on a program that frames the university learning experience for our new students was really satisfying. We’re giving them that very first impression of who we are as a university. These are the first courses they encounter, and it sets the stage for what’s to follow in terms of skill, curiosity and intellectual development.”
Exchange opportunities abound between DePaul, Fudan universities

by Melissa Smith

Junran Chen, a philosophy exchange student from Shanghai’s Fudan University, came to DePaul to decide whether she wanted to pursue an advanced degree in America. She devoted most of her time to studying, perfecting the art of writing academic papers in the Richardson Library. “At Fudan, professors care more about the content of the paper than the format,” Chen explains. “In contrast, professors at DePaul tirelessly repeated the format. It helped me better organize a paper and express meaning more clearly—it is a skill that I will use the rest of my life.”

She thought she knew Chinese philosophy better than most, but it wasn’t until joining Professor Franklin Perkins’ reading group that Chen learned differently. “We read texts, did translations and debated the meanings of sentences,” she recalls. “It was quite impressive for a Chinese student to talk with a professor who had a deeper understanding of ancient Chinese philosophy than me.”

Chen was one of two Fudan students who studied at DePaul during the fall 2013 quarter. In exchange, DePaul sent two graduate students to Fudan. “The student exchange grew out of a contact with new perspectives.”

Perkins explains. “In a broad sense, people realize things going on in China are really important to think about when trying to understand the contemporary world.”

When he’s not concentrating on philosophy, Perkins is one of several DePaul professors who leads summer language courses in Shanghai for DePaul students. “Being in China has made such a huge impact on my life,” Perkins enthuses. “It’s always exciting to find the proper word, my students would tell me to use this word to translate that.”

Wang, too, had to adjust to the different teaching style preferred at DePaul. “If I teach too little, excellent students will feel bored, but for the slower students, it seems challenging,” she explains. “The gap is so big. Back in China, if I teach a literature class, I don’t need to take care of the practical pedagogical techniques.”

After her experiences here, Wang has learned to be more understanding of varied student needs. Wang relishes her experience at DePaul, especially how she developed her vast expertise with students and colleagues alike but also learned from them. “Each time when I tried to find the proper word, my students would tell me to use this word to translate that,” she says. “I learned a lot, and it’s been a very exciting experience for me.”

For those unable to travel to Fudan, language and culture courses are offered at DePaul. “We offer a full range of beginning, intermediate and advanced language courses, but our content courses are enriched by the presence of our Fudan faculty member,” she explains. “The visiting faculty allows us to offer courses on Chinese literature in Chinese.”

For the past two years, visiting professor Baihua Wang has done just that. “Because my focus is comparative literature, I use rhymed poetry to let students get an idea of sounds and pronunciations,” Wang says. “I try to use as much as I can to make them know a little Chinese literature while at the same time figuring out how to pronounce words correctly and memorize.”

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In brief

1. PROFESSOR NAMED CHEVALIER
Pascale-Anne Brault, professor and director of the French program, was designated a Chevalier de l’Ordre National du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit) by the French government. This honor recognizes individuals for at least 10 years of foreign and domestic service that enhance French awareness, culture and relationships with other countries. [Photo Credit: DePaul University/Jamie Moncrief]

2. VISITING SCHOLAR
Boston College appointed English Professor James H. Murphy the Burns Library Visiting Scholar in Irish Studies, effective fall 2015. This distinguished position recognizes esteemed scholars, writers or artists who have made significant contributions to Irish cultural or intellectual life. Mary McAleese, former president of Ireland, was a previous scholar.

3. TOMODACHI INOUYE SCHOLARS TRAVEL GRANT
Kathryn Ibata-Arens, associate professor of political science and director of Global Asian Studies, received a $125,000 grant to support 23 students and two faculty members who traveled to Japan in June 2014. The Tomodachi Inouye Scholars program is supported by Fulbright Japan, the Japan Foundation, the U.S.-Japan Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. DePaul was one of four American universities that received the grant. In 2015, 100 Japanese students will travel to the United States as part of the Tomodachi Inouye Scholars exchange program. Visit japan2014.depaul.edu or tomodachi-depaul.com/blog for more information. [Pictured: Scholars at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo with Japanese Tomodachi alumni]

4. JOURNAL OF VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHY
Earlier this year, Greg Scott, associate professor of sociology and director of the Social Science Research Center, launched the online Journal of Video Ethnography. The first-of-its-kind journal uses peer-reviewed films and videos (as opposed to print articles) to explore human society, systems and cultures. He hopes to advance the use of video in social scientific settings. Learn more at videoethno.com. [Photo Credit: Ron Harpelle]

5. COMMENCEMENT
The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences presented the Rev. Larry Snyder (DHL ’14) with an honorary doctorate at the 116th commencement ceremony on June 15. Snyder is the president of Catholic Charities USA, which serves more than 9.25 million people annually through various humanitarian efforts. Caelin Niehoff (LAS ’14) delivered the student address.

6. MELLON PROFESSOR
Paul B. Jaskot, professor of history of art and architecture, was named the 2014-2016 Andrew W. Mellon Professor at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The Mellon honor is given to one art historian every two years to acknowledge significant contributions to the discipline. During his tenure as the 11th Mellon Professor, Jaskot will pursue independent research on the German building industry between World War I and World War II. [Photo Credit: DePaul University/Jeff Carrion]

7. ALUMNI RECEPTION
On April 29, more than 120 alumni and friends gathered at the Berghoff to catch up with classmates over beer, wine and hors d’oeuvres at a special reception for LAS alumni. Dean Charles Suchar (LAS ’67) offered remarks, updating guests on the latest news from the university.
**Fulbright Fellowships**

Peter Dziedzic (LAS ‘13) will apply his dual focus areas in religious studies and Islamic world studies to the educational and spiritual formation of Moroccan youth in the Daqawayh and Boutchichiya Sufi orders.

Miriam Keep (LAS ‘14) will study Cities Without Slums, a Moroccan government program that relocates residents of informal housing to social housing. By conducting interviews with program planners and participants, Keep hopes to understand how participatory planning has affected the program’s success.

Veronica Lalov (CSH ‘14) will be working as a teaching assistant at the English Language School in Haskovo, Bulgaria, where she will teach high school English for the 2014-15 school year. Lalov double majored in psychology and French while at DePaul.

Utilizing her double major in English and Arabic studies, Amanda Samawi (LAS ‘14) will meet with Bahraini authors and translate their works from Arabic into English. By doing so, she hopes to make Bahraini literature accessible to non-Arabic speakers.

Washington University Model United Nations Convention

DePaul’s Model United Nations Team won the Outstanding Delegation Award at the Washington University Model United Nations Convention held in St. Louis in February. The meeting draws nationwide participants and helps sharpen debate skills in crisis settings. Ricky Gandhi (LAS ‘14, CSH ‘14) and Deepak Ies received Outstanding Delegate Awards, while Harald Kim and Michael Hopennrah received honorable mentions.

**United Nations Presentation**

Lauren Shuler presented “Internship of Mayors for Peace and the 2020 Vision Campaign” at the Mayors for Peace Youth Forum at the United Nations on April 29. The forum was preparation for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2015. Shuler was an intern at the Mayors for Peace European office while studying abroad in Paris.

**The Life of Anne Damer: Portrait of a Regency Artist**

English Professor Jonathan Gross explores the life and legacy of England’s first significant female sculptor in “The Life of Anne Damer: Portrait of a Regency Artist.” Best known for her busts of Charles James Fox, Horatio Nelson and King George III, Damer inherited the Gothic mansion Strawberry Hill from Horace Walpole and wrote the novel “Belmouz.” Her art stands at the transition between neoclassicism and romanticism, while her life, particularly her friendship with actress Elizabeth Farren, caught the attention of contemporary novelist Emma Donoghue, who used it as the basis for “Life Mask.”

**Archaism and Antiquarianism in Korean and Japanese Art**

Elizabeth Lillehoj, professor in the Department of History of Art and Architecture, edited and contributed a chapter to “Archaism and Antiquarianism in Korean and Japanese Art,” which explores the importance of representing the past in East Asian art. Using textual sources, archaeological materials and works of various artistic forms, the authors demonstrate a wide range of engagement with sites, artifacts, themes and styles that resulted in continuously changing perspectives on the past and varying approaches to artistic production.

**The Prophet and the Bodhisattva: Daniel Berrigan, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Ethics of Peace and Justice**

In “The Prophet and the Bodhisattva: Daniel Berrigan, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Ethics of Peace and Justice,” Charles Strain, professor of religious studies, examines the lives and writings of Daniel Berrigan, Jesuit priest and political activist, and Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and leading figure in “engaged Buddhism.” By examining their nonviolent activism, Strain posits that religious individuals and communities can learn from each other in ways that will lead them to collaborate to address ethical challenges in today’s society.

**Rousseau’s Social Contract: An Introduction**

In “Rousseau’s Social Contract: An Introduction,” David Lay Williams, associate professor of political science, analyzes one of the most celebrated and denigrated books in the history of political thought—a book that was burned in French and Swiss town squares shortly after its publication in 1762. Williams dissects many of Rousseau’s well-known paradoxes, including his insistence that citizens must be forced to be free. The book also includes an extended account of Rousseau’s general will, which inspired the French Revolution and generations of subsequent criticism. This is his second book on Rousseau.
Scholarship success story | INSIGHTS

DePaul prepares alumnus for future in government, housing

by Jamie Sokolik

As a recent graduate of the master’s in international public service program, Alyssa Rickman (LAS MS ‘14) has goals one might call lofty. She wants to end food insecurity for everyone. “I want to be a part of the group of people who put an end to world hunger,” she explains. “I feel like I can be at the forefront of that solution.”

However, this was not how she initially saw her career unfolding. As a student in Spring Arbor, Mich., working toward a bachelor’s in psychology, she planned to go on to graduate school and eventually open her own practice. But upon graduating, she felt she was called to do something more. “I grew up poor with a single mom who worked really hard, holding at least three jobs at a time to raise my sister and me,” she says. “My mom did a fabulous job. Because of those experiences, I feel I have a greater perspective on the world and the needs of others.”

Rickman was looking into public service programs across the country when she found DePaul. The international focus as well as the university’s Catholic identity and Vincentian mission resonated with the aspiring activist. She flourished in the program, but during her last year, she found herself in need of financial assistance to finish her last few classes. She gained that support from a DePaul scholarship, generously funded by alumni and friends of the university who help students like Rickman make a difference in the world. “It was very helpful,” she says. “I would have needed to get a second job, but the scholarship allowed me to focus on my studies. I was very grateful for it.”

Now applying for jobs in the Chicago area, Rickman plans to use the skills she honed at DePaul. “I want to focus on how the private, public and nonprofit sectors can work together to eradicate world hunger,” she says. “If I hadn’t come to DePaul, and I hadn’t found my passion in human rights and social justice, then I would be missing out on what I’ve been called to do. I just want the world to be a better place.”

Rickman plans to return to graduate school and eventually open her own practice. But upon graduating, she felt she was called to do something more. “I grew up poor with a single mom who worked really hard, holding at least three jobs at a time to raise my sister and me,” she explains. “My mom did a fabulous job. Because of those experiences, I feel I have a greater perspective on the world and the needs of others.”

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DePaul prepares alumnus for future in government, housing

by Jamie Sokolik

Nkosi Bradley has always had a symbiotic relationship with the city in which he lives. It’s part of the reason he chose DePaul University, and it’s the thread that ties together his otherwise diverse career. In his current role as director of government affairs for the District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA), Bradley monitors, evaluates and advocates on behalf of the agency for legislation and policy that effects change for families in need of affordable housing. “What I love about this job is the vantage point I have,” Bradley says. “I have a front-row seat to the policy, the legislation, the cause and the effect on the people and the community. You start with these global concerns, but when you’re finished, it results in clean, safe and affordable homes for people who need them.”

Yet, working in this capacity wasn’t always the plan. After DePaul, Bradley went on to law school in New York, but returned to Chicago after graduation. While searching for jobs, he volunteered on Congressman Bobby Rush’s election campaign in 2000. When the campaign ended, he accepted a position with the state’s attorney’s office. He was there just two weeks when he got a call that would change the course of his career forever. “Congressman [Rush] asked if I’d come to work on [Capitol] Hill as legislative counsel,” Bradley explains. “Politics wasn’t in my plan, but it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I wasn’t expecting it, I wasn’t looking for it, but life took me that direction.”

Barely out of law school, Bradley moved to D.C., where he wrote speeches, helped craft legislation and was on hand for some of the biggest moments in modern-day politics. “I saw the crafting of legislation that resulted after Sept. 11 and the Enron scandal, and I assisted in preparing for the related hearings,” he says. “It was an amazing experience.”

His job was exciting, but Bradley started to feel disconnected from the communities he wanted to help. “The irony of working in D.C. is that you’re affecting the lives of people at the ground level, but your ability to interact with those folks is limited,” he explains. After three years in Washington, Bradley landed the opportunity with DCHFA and returned to Washington. Despite departing from his initial path, Bradley is grateful. He feels that his career has come to reflect his values—values that made DePaul feel like home. “It goes back to that first DePaul experience,” he says. “Seeing not only how physically integrated the campus is, but also how seamlessly it’s woven into the social fabric of Chicago. That longing, that urge to be connected to people, the prevailing idea that you’re not only going to work, but you’re going to make a difference—that was solidified for me at DePaul.”

Nkosi Bradley’s tips for recent graduates:

Move on and up. Until a time machine is invented, you can’t go back. Do your best not to wallow in past mistakes, because guess what—most of them set you up nicely for future success.

“The plan” might not exist, and that’s OK. Plan and prepare, but cultivate that tiny voice in your head that reminds you that there is likely something unforeseen and much more interesting than what you had in mind.

Do what you love. It’s nice to have a job that everyone else thinks is cool. It’s even better to have one that YOU think is cool.

Respect everyone. Don’t waste time trying to figure out who will be in charge five years from now. Cover your bases by being respectful of everyone.
We welcome your story ideas, questions and comments. Please contact Melissa Smith at (312) 362-5266 or msmit134@depaul.edu.

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Calendar of events

sounds Generated with Almost Nothing from a Fully Corrupted Material—Samuel Beckett’s Happy Days
Monday, Oct. 6, 7–8:30 p.m.
Student Center
2250 N. Sheffield Ave., Room 120
Enjoy a soundscape deconstruction of the classic Beckett presented by Chicago’s Theatre Y.

Follow Me Down: Portraits of Louisiana Prison Musicians
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 6–8 p.m.
Student Center
2250 N. Sheffield Ave., Room 120
Catch a screening of a documentary on music in prisons, featuring a Q&A with the film’s director, Ben Harbert.

The Horror of the Humanities 2
Wednesday, Oct. 29, 6–9 p.m.
Student Center
2250 N. Sheffield Ave., Room 120
Celebrate Halloween by viewing horror exhibits and screening of the cult masterpiece “Kill List,” with a Q&A with the film’s director, Ben Wheatley.

The Scholar’s Improv
Wednesday, Nov. 5, 7–8:30 p.m.
Student Center
2250 N. Sheffield Ave., Room 314
Professors and a troupe of Second City comedians go toe-to-toe, as the comedians perform improv and the professors are challenged to lecture extemporaneously on surprise topics.

An Evening with Edgar Oliver
Wednesday, Nov. 12, 7–8:30 p.m.
Student Center
2250 N. Sheffield Ave., Room 120
Broadway legend and NPR regular Edgar Oliver offers his distinctive voice for a night of stories and performances.

All Humanities Center events are free and open to the public. For more information, visit las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter.