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E G R E T

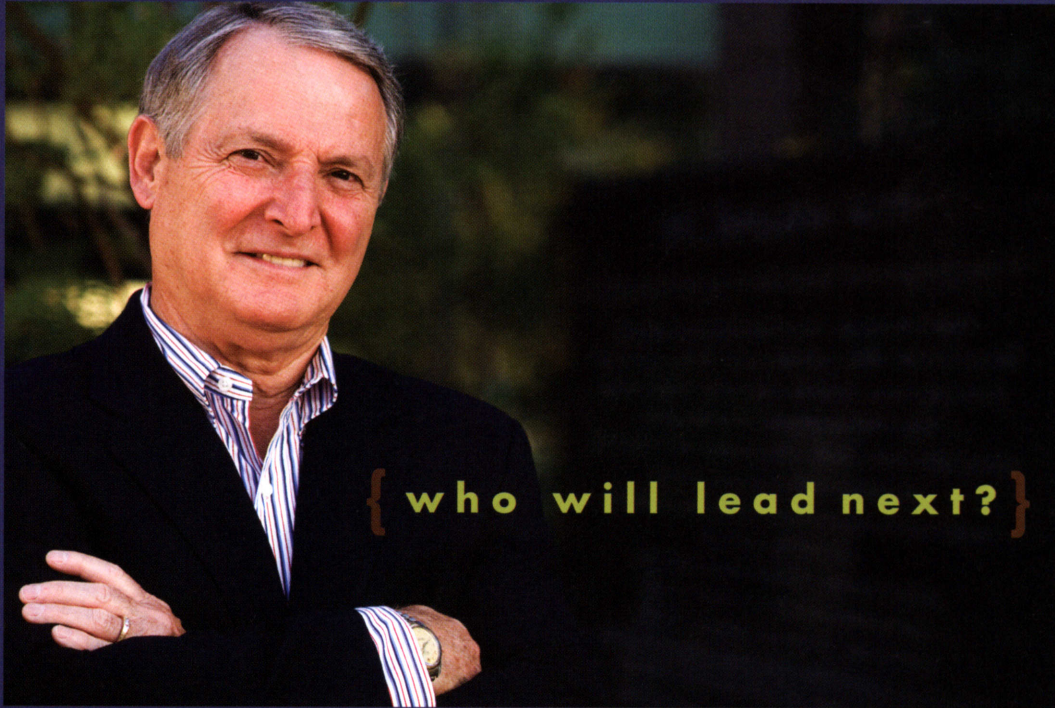
**inside:**

- after ike
- career services
- lucky star

**THE  
LEADERSHIP  
ISSUE**

10 who make a  
difference





**L**eadership, whether in a business environment or in your community, is the ability to unite people in pursuit of the achievement of a common goal. Leadership requires the ability to reach a compromise without giving up the basic core of your belief. Leaders must be willing to listen to other people's ideas and improve upon those ideas together as a team.

Having achieved the position of president of a Houston-based, export crating company by the age of 36, I was approached by UHCL in the mid-1980s to be a member of the founding board of directors of the UHCL Alumni Association. I volunteered to be president of the association because I strongly believe in the value of education.

Those formative years of the UHCL Alumni Association took strong leadership skills because of financial worries, direction of the association and how to achieve permanence within the UHCL structure. However, in less than seven years, this inaugural group of dedicated UHCL graduates founded the Distinguished Alumni Award, had a membership of 12,000 graduates and established the Alumni Scholarship Endowment Fund, which is now at \$600,000 and generates more than \$47,000 a year in student scholarships.

People ask, "Can I be a leader?" Many UHCL community leaders are not the senior executives of big corporations but are individuals who have a gift to energize people to work together to achieve a common goal. YOU can be a leader of the next generation at UHCL if you feel strongly about a project and can work together as a team. Just step forward and volunteer to help.

By Mike Reeves

Mike Reeves, '77 MS, is business development manager for Anadarko Industries. He is past president of the UHCL Alumni Association and received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1988.

**ON THE COVER:** Current student Michelle Espinoza-Flores followed her heart to the field of special education, where she is working to become a leader. Two covers were printed for Egret's leadership issue. The other cover features current student Stanley Mukundi. View it online at <http://www.uhcl.edu/egret> or request a copy by calling 281-283-2015. Photo by Beryl Striewski.



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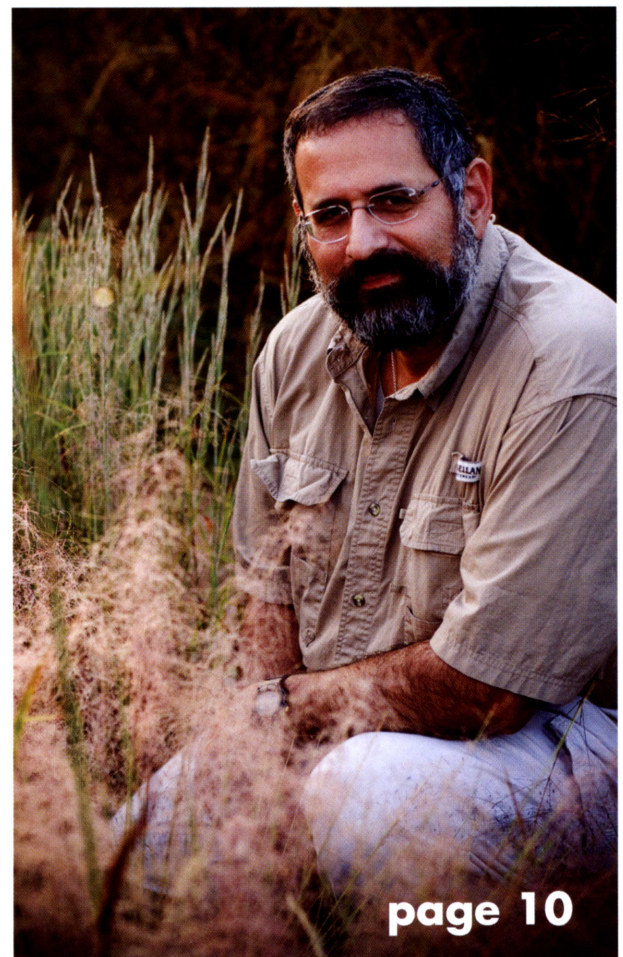
**FEATURE SECTION**

**PORTRAITS IN LEADERSHIP: 10 WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE 5**

Students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors and partners are represented in this selection of extraordinary individuals who choose to transform life's ordinary tasks into opportunities to lead.

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## { noteworthy }

### NEW AVP FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS NAMED

**Mrinal Mugdh**, former director of institutional research and planning for the University of Texas at Brownsville, joined UHCL as associate vice president for academic affairs. Mugdh earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree and a doctorate, all with a focus on anthropology, from University of Delhi in India. He also received his Master of Business Administration from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.



Mrinal Mugdh

### INNOVATIVE LIBRARY TRAINING FUNDED

The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded a \$906,104 Laura Bush 21st Century Library Program grant to Jane Claes, assistant professor of school library and information science, for her proposal "School Librarians and Administrators Working Together: A Key to Student Success, Collaborative School Librarian Training (CSLT II)."

### GRANT GOES TO ERGONOMICS PROJECT

Assistant Professor of Psychology Camille Peres received a Schlumberger Collaborative one-year award in the amount of \$66,700 for her project titled, "Software Ergonomics Assessment Tools." Peres will work with Assistant Professor of Industrial Hygiene and Safety Magdy Akladios and their students to identify time requirements and muscular strain associated with different methods of working in Microsoft Word.

### EXTERNAL FUNDING ASSISTS MANY INITIATIVES

Anne Coppenhaver, director of Center for Educational Programs and lecturer in educational leadership, received a \$16,569 award from the Texas Workforce Commission for her proposal, "Summer Merit Program at UHCL." Assistant Professor of Economics Valery Lazarev received a \$12,888 award from a UH Subcontract/National Science Foundation project, "The Political Economy of Repression: Stalin and His Organs of State Security." A \$4,950 grant from the Kinder Morgan Foundation went to Director of The Art School for Children and Young Adults and Lecturer in Applied Design and Visual Arts Ann Waltz to support students and teachers.

## NEW DEGREE PREPARES LEADERS

Looking to the future to provide students with the skills and education to lead and serve in society, UHCL added the Bachelor of Science in Public Service Leadership to its degree roster. The program gained acceptance from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board earlier in the spring with classes for the program beginning this fall.

"The largest employer in the United States is the government," says program coordinator and Lecturer in Public Service Leadership Vicki Chadwick. "What better career preparation than a generalist degree that will prepare students for a professional career in leadership and management in the public sector? UHCL's public service leadership degree provides students with a sound theoretical framework and an interdisciplinary orientation within a positive learning environment."

Many of the classes in the program are available online and graduates of the program will be prepared for careers in politics, government, law and the civil service arena. Specifically, Chadwick believes that graduates will fill such positions as teachers, administrators and directors in public service, fire fighters, emergency management professionals, budget analysts and urban planners as well as serve in multiple positions at the city, state, federal and global level.

"Employers in the public sector state their biggest challenge today is to find qualified people with a solid work ethic and strong people skills. Often professionals sit around a conference table unable to collaborate, reach consensus or work through conflict mediation and resolution.

"The public service leadership degree offers a combination of leadership, management and strong people skills for multi-tier positions on the career ladder in government and non-profit positions in public service today," she says.

Associate Dean for the School of Human Sciences and Humanities Howard Eisner agrees with her assessment.

"By adding this degree, we are educating our future community leaders and providing them with the basics on how to take our organizations to the next level of success."

To find out more about the Bachelor of Science in Public Service Leadership, visit <http://hsh.uhcl.edu/psl> or call 281-283-3333.

## GRANT BENEFITS PROGRAM CELEBRATING OUR ELDERS

UHCL received a \$25,000 grant from the Greater Texas Foundation Rising to the Challenge Scholarship Program to be used for the Celebrating Our Elders program scholarship awards.

Headquartered in Bryan, Texas, the Greater Texas Foundation supports excellence in education by increasing access as well as improving quality through partnerships between public and private entities.

"The Greater Texas Foundation has been a stalwart friend to University of Houston-Clear Lake," says Dion McInnis, UHCL associate vice president for university advancement. "We have changed over the years, as has the foundation, and our visions still overlap in many areas that are important to education and to Texas. We look forward to continued partnership as together we address many of the issues important to both the university and the foundation."

The \$25,000 award will be used to fund scholarships through the Celebrating Our Elders program that can be awarded to community college students and other first-generation college students who are planning to attend UHCL. Celebrating Our Elders was created in 1994 to attract first-generation college students to higher education. Scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$2,000 per year.

"Celebrating Our Elders provides future university students with a unique opportunity to submit essays on how an African-American or Hispanic elder has influenced and inspired their lives," says McInnis. "Outstanding essays, combined with financial need, are the main criteria. Scholarship winner essays are showcased in a formal exhibit opened to the entire community."

For more information about Celebrating Our Elders, call the Office of Intercultural and International Student Services, 281-283-3373, e-mail [IISS@uhcl.edu](mailto:IISS@uhcl.edu) or visit <http://www.uhcl.edu/intercultural>.

## DEGREE CHANGES APPROVED

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recently approved changes to several UHCL degree and certificate programs.

The Bachelor of Arts in Applied Design and Visual Arts has changed to a Bachelor of Fine Arts, effective in July 2008.

Programs leading to Texas teacher certifications that were approved in July are the B. A. in Biological Sciences with 8-12 Life Sciences certificate; History with 8-12 History or 8-12 Social Studies certificate; literature with 4-8 or 8-12 English Language Arts and Reading certificate; and Mathematical Science with 4-8 or 8-12 Mathematics certificate. Also approved were the Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Science with 8-12 Mathematics certificate; Geography with 8-12 Social Studies certificate; Physical Sciences with 8-12 Physical Science certificate; and Interdisciplinary Studies with the EC-6 designations for generalist, bilingual generalist, ESL generalist and reading generalist. Additional certificates for the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies that were approved are EC-6 Generalist and EC-12 Special Education, 4-8 Generalist and EC-12 ESL and 4-8 designations for generalist, science and social studies.

Donations of food, clothing and toiletries stack up in the UHCL human resources department conference room to be sorted by Worklife and Employment Coordinator Nichole Eslinger (l) and Human Resource Assistant Carmen Conley. The donation drive was just one of the Hurricane Ike recovery efforts coordinated within the UHCL community.



Effective in August 2008, the undergraduate and graduate degrees with majors in behavioral sciences and programs in psychology, clinical psychology, school psychology, anthropology, sociology and family therapy change to the B.S. and M.A. in Psychology; the M.A. in Clinical Psychology; the M.A. in School Psychology; the B.S. in Anthropology; the B.S. and M.A. in Sociology; and the M.A. in Family Therapy.

## UHCL AFTER IKE

Across the university community, departments, employee and student organizations and individuals came together in the days and weeks following Hurricane Ike to assist in a variety of recovery efforts.

A donation drive for food, toiletries and other necessities was organized through the Office of Human Resources as well as assistance with temporary housing and generators for those with more serious needs. Counseling Services offered information about support groups and stress relief and student groups volunteered and collected donations. For community members who were able to help, the Office of Student Life compiled a database of volunteer opportunities specific to Hurricane Ike recovery efforts.



{ what's  
online? }

[www.uhcl.edu/egret](http://www.uhcl.edu/egret)

**LEADERSHIP LEARNING** opportunities are available to the Bay Area community, current UHCL students, alumni and UHCL faculty and staff. Find out about courses, seminars and workshops that are designed to enhance leadership skills and open doors to leadership positions.

**NEW FACULTY** members joined UHCL at the start of the 2008-09 academic year. Five faculty members are new to School of Education this fall. School of Human Sciences and Humanities welcomed eight professors. In School of Business, three new faculty members are settling in. Finally, the School of Science and Computer Engineering added four new faculty members.

**TWO EXHIBITS** have opened to display the paintings and prints of UHCL Professor of Fine Arts Sandria Hu, one in Texas and one in Czech Republic. This is the first time in her 30-year career that Hu has had two simultaneous one-woman shows.

**VETERANS DAY** was celebrated at UHCL on Nov. 11. View pictures from the annual event, which includes a variety of displays, an honor guard by Clear Lake High School's Junior ROTC and presentations from veterans as well as active military.

**SHORT TAKES** are a great way to stay connected to UHCL. The regular feature on the university's home page provides in-depth calendar listings and a quick link to university news. Weekly updates keep alumni, students and university friends in the loop.

**AND MORE!** Find out about other UHCL news and events.

{ song and dance }

The high-energy sounds of the Hunt Family Fiddlers can be experienced first-hand at the group's UHCL concert in March 2009. This amazing family of nine performs Celtic, bluegrass, inspirational and popular tunes with their fiddles, voices and Irish step dancing.

Native Houstonian Sandy Hunt, her husband, Clint, and their seven children have performed across the United States and throughout the world. In addition to their step dancing and fiddling, their talented brood plays the drums, accordion, keyboard and guitar. Several of the children are ranked Irish step dancers, including son Jonathan who was ranked 38th in the world for Irish step dancing when he was just 10 years old.

Sponsored by UHCL's Cultural Arts, the Hunt Family Fiddlers performance will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 13. A complimentary reception will be held after the performance.

Tickets can be purchased before the show for \$10, \$6 with UHCL I.D., or at the door for \$12, \$8 with UHCL I.D. For more information, call 281-283-2560 or e-mail [Reitberger@uhcl.edu](mailto:Reitberger@uhcl.edu).



The Hunt Family Fiddlers will sing, fiddle and dance March 13 as part of UHCL's Cultural Arts Series.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**November 3, 2008 – January 5, 2009**

"Life Along the Rio Grande: A New World Becoming," featuring the photography of Van Edwards and Leslie Plaza Johnson, Bayou Building, Atrium I, Level 2. 281-283-3311.

**November 14 – January 16**

Spring Open Registration and Advising. 281-283-2500.

**December 4**

"The Science of Happiness," by Associate Professor of Psychology Robert Bartsch, Ph.D., CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**January 1 – March 31, 2009**

Vladimír Suchánek art exhibit, Bayou Building, Atrium I, Level 2. 281-283-3446.

**January 8**

"Astronaut Training: What It Takes To Be an Astronaut," by NASA Simulation Supervisor Henry Lampazzi, CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**January 17-27**

Spring Late Registration. 281-283-2500.

**January 22**

"Texas EquuSearch: Standing Ready to Find the Lost," by Tim Miller. CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Garden Room, Bayou Building. 281-283-2021.

**January 27 and 29**

"Memories to Memoirs I and II," by Dion McInnis, CLASP Daytime Mini-course, 10:30 a.m. - noon, Bay Area Community Center. 281-283-2019.

**February 3**

"Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership: The Past, Present and Future of Our Bay Area," by Jim Reinhartsen, CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**February 7**

UHCL Spring Community Outreach Day. 281-283-2611.

**February 7 – April 9**

Art Classes for Children and Young Adults featuring "Art of the Vikings," Arbor Building and CCISD elementary schools. 281-283-3344.

**February 15**

Mercury Baroque Ensemble performs "Birds, Bees and Brandenburg," 2 p.m., Bayou Building, Bayou Theater. 281-283-2560.

**February 19**

"Taiwan and the International Education Experience," by Louis White, Ph.D., CLASP Visions in Our Midst

Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**February 28**

Martha Kemper in the one-woman show, "Me, Miss Krause and Joan," 8 p.m., Bayou Building, Bayou Theater. 281-283-2560.

**March 5**

"Meteorites and Cosmic Dust: Visitors from Outer Space," by Michael Zolensky, Ph.D., CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**March 13**

Hunt Family Fiddlers, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Building, Bayou Theater. 281-283-2560.

**March 26**

"The Iditarod: The Last Great Race on Earth," by Veterinary Specialists Bill Daly, DVM and Kyle Brayley, DVM, CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**April 2**

"TV Violence is Good for You," by Jib Fowles, Ph.D., CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**April 4**

21st Annual Chili Cook-Off, noon-4 p.m., Student Services and Classroom Building lawn. 281-283-2560

**April 13-23**

Summer Early Registration and Advising. 281-283-2500.

**April 24 – June 5**

Summer Open Registration and Advising. 281-283-2500.

**May 7**

"How to Effectively Protest Your Property Values for Taxes," by Cheryl E. Johnson, Galveston County Tax Assessor-Collector, CLASP Visions in Our Midst Lecture Series, 5:30-7 p.m., Bayou Building, Garden Room. 281-283-2021.

**May 17**

Mercury Baroque Ensemble performs "Lully's Armide," 2 p.m., Bayou Building, Bayou Theater. 281-283-2560.

*Dates and times are subject to change; please confirm event details by calling the telephone number listed or visiting UHCL's Web site at [www.uhcl.edu](http://www.uhcl.edu). Individuals who wish to participate in any of the events listed and who need special accommodations to do so, should contact the university's American Disabilities Act coordinator at 281-283-2626 at least two weeks before the date of the event.*

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## WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Portraits in leadership from  
the UHCL community

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True leaders are able to give whatever the situation demands, and the needs of a situation can vary dramatically whether the circumstances are military, team, business or educational. In choosing the following 10 leaders from among UHCL's students, alumni, partners, donors, faculty and staff, leadership models from a variety of sources were considered. The U.S. Army, the Girl Scouts, business books like "Seven Habits of Highly Successful Leaders," strategy texts like "Art of War" and theories of leadership such as the theory of servant leaders used by UHCL's Center for Student Leadership and Community Engagement all paint the portrait of a leader according to a specific situation. But some traits of leadership stood out as universal, and it was these traits that guided the choice of leaders on the following pages: experience, vision, the ability to follow through, a desire for challenges, a desire to take responsibility, an ability to communicate and a sense of fairness and ethics. Through these distinct character traits, ordinary people, like those on the following pages, are transformed into leaders who inspire, create and make a difference wherever they go.

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## THE ENTREPRENEUR

Richard Cilento Jr., '94 MBA

Like many successful entrepreneurial leaders, Richard Cilento Jr.'s passion for starting and running businesses is an essential part of who he is. Even before he finished his bachelor's degree at University of Illinois, Cilento had launched his first business: a bagel cart placed outside of local bars and clubs from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. to satisfy revelers who had nowhere else to go. "My first business venture proved to be very successful, which encouraged me to start other businesses and obtain my MBA from UH-Clear Lake," Cilento says. A member of NASA's space shuttle team in the 1990s, Cilento's entrepreneurial spirit ignited during the technology and Internet boom. He left the space industry to venture out on his own. A combination of Cilento's technological savvy and strong leadership has propelled his company, FuelQuest Inc., to become the largest fuel-management technology network in the United States. He also is co-founder of The Bollard Group, an organization that provides investment-banking services to energy companies and high-growth business ventures, and serves on the board of Momentum Biofuels Inc., a biodiesel production and marketing company. In addition to his businesses, Cilento is a dedicated member of The CEO Group, where he mentors nine small-business owners. He encourages these new leaders to always do the right thing and lead by example. "Every time I've started a new business, I've been fortunate that people I've worked with in the past join me in my new venture because they trust my professionalism, honesty and dedication to my business and employees," says Cilento. "It's imperative to be a consistent leader time and time again so you can be successful with every new venture." — Heather Wiederhoeft



## THE ENGINEER

**Rose Zarcaro**, *president and CEO of GeoControl Systems Inc.*

As her company prepares to celebrate its 25-year anniversary, GeoControl Systems President and CEO Rose Zarcaro is proud of what her engineering company has accomplished. She also is eager to lead her team into the future and to strengthen the Bay Area community through innovative programs that inspire youth to become involved with the space program. Zarcaro's vision for a company that gives back to the community led GeoControl to be one of the early members of the Historically Underutilized Business Zone program administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration. HUBZone focuses on stimulating economic development and creating professional jobs in urban and rural communities via federal contracting. Zarcaro and her GeoControl team embraced this concept that leads to economic stimulus and received recognition for their efforts as the 2006 SBA Prime Contractor of the Year for Region VI. With a strong passion for both the community and the aerospace industry, Zarcaro has applied her commitment to future space endeavors through donations to UHCL and with the creation of GeoControl's "Launch" educational outreach program. "Launch" motivates high school students to pursue college-level studies in engineering and science disciplines through relevant training, employment and scholastic assistance. "Not only are we assisting the underprivileged, but we are helping the inner city community one step at a time as a HUBZone certified company and with 'Launch,'" says Zarcaro. "My hope is that we are developing future engineers for NASA and for that, I can smile." - HW



## THE MENTOR

**Shreerekha Subramanian**, *assistant professor of humanities*

Books transported Assistant Professor of Humanities Shreerekha Subramanian on imaginary trips throughout the world when she was a child. Fortunately, the young reader had a constant source of inspiration because of her mother's work with the National Book Trust in their native India. At 14, Subramanian and her family made a real trip when they crossed the Pacific to live in the U.S. She relied on local and school libraries to create her world with books, eventually deciding to make literature part of her career path. She made the leap into higher education by attaining a doctorate in comparative literature. Although she has assumed leadership positions most of her life, her most important roles evolved during her undergraduate years in Ann Arbor, Mich., where she became part of student activism groups. From then on, leading was natural, including in her literary research. Her specialties in Caribbean, African-American and South Asian literature have led to a book project, for which she gained additional financial support and recognition when she became the first recipient of the Marilyn Mieszkuc Professorship in Women's Studies at the university. The professorship is given to a faculty member in the Women's Studies Program who can broaden course offerings, spearhead new research, and increase community outreach. Subramanian shares her childhood books with her five-year-old son and two-year-old daughter. "My kiddies like books, especially the older one," she says. "I've tried to stress to him that the matter between his ears is where it all happens; not to use fists, but rather ideas to solve problems." She is glad to impart her passion for reading to her children, so they, too, can enjoy the pleasures of soaring through their own imaginations. — *Karen Barbier*





## THE IDEALIST

Stanley Mukundi, *fitness and human performance student*

South African statesman Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Statements like this resonate with 24-year-old Stanley Mukundi who will quickly tell anyone that Mandela will always be a leader he admires. Mukundi moved to the United States four years ago to get a college education and eventually found his way to UHCL. That was lucky for UHCL, where the transplant from Nairobi, Kenya, has actively made his mark on the university. Mukundi's many activities include work with the Black Students Association, the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and the Student Government Association, where he serves as the University Life Committee student representative. This natural-born leader is committed to giving back outside of his school life, too, by serving as a volunteer with the American Red Cross. "As a volunteer, I integrate the vibrancy of leadership through service to impact the lives of those living with kidney illnesses in the Clear Lake area," says Mukundi, who hopes to complete his Bachelor of Science in Fitness and Human Performance in May 2009. Leadership has long been a part of Mukundi's life. He vividly recalls serving as a prefect in third through eighth grade while attending school in Africa. He also remembers learning a valuable lesson. "When you have to be in charge, you have to know how to work with people," says Mukundi. "It can sometimes put you in an awkward position." He takes notes, though, from his favorite local leader: Dean of Students Anthony Jenkins. Says Mukundi, "He's a true representation of leadership in all he does."—KB





## THE ENVIRONMENTALIST

**George Guillen**, *UHCL associate professor of biology and environmental science and Environmental Institute of Houston executive director*

A self-described academic-administrative hybrid, Associate Professor of Biology and Environmental Science George Guillen, who is also executive director of the Environmental Institute of Houston, has a lifelong love for the environment that was nurtured along the Texas Gulf Coast. His passion was sparked during early childhood trips to the beach and expanded during high school science classes. The years he spent earning his doctorate in environmental science and amassing the professional background that earned him his EIH leadership role four years ago have only increased his passion. Guillen spends his days educating, researching and informing on environmental issues. His job is split between teaching at UHCL and leading EIH, which brings him into contact with students just forming their ideas about the environment as well as government leaders at the local, state and federal levels who look to him for environmental expertise. "Part of my job is to communicate highly technical environmental information in a way that makes it understandable to everyone," says Guillen. "I provide guidance on how individuals, groups and other leaders can deal with environmental problems. My team at EIH strives to provide the best unbiased scientific information we can to the community and maintain a leadership role in environmental sciences research and academics." On any given day, Guillen is challenged to make the tough decisions that fall on the desk of a leader. "It is important to have other experienced leaders, colleagues, coworkers and employees you can turn to for counsel," says Guillen. "But, in the end, you have to follow the path of what you know to be right." — HW



## THE TRAINER

Jill Hickman, '95 MA

Asking Jill Hickman to name a leader who has influenced her can result in a long list of family members. They may not be recognizable names to the general public, but they are the people who Hickman admires. Her list includes two grandmothers, both parents and her husband. One grandmother, in particular, reminded the hardworking Hickman to have balance in her life. "All work and no play make Jill a dull girl," was what she would tell me," remembers Hickman. Since then, Hickman has tried to incorporate downtime into her busy schedule, which has included attaining a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management from UHCL in 1995 to starting her own business in 1998. Jill Hickman Companies offers leadership consulting and training through online, in-class, and facilitated public and custom classes. She is proud that her training and coaching services have helped improve the business of many of her global clients, who include Stewart & Stevenson, Champion Technologies and Service Corporation International. "I have global clients," says Hickman. "And, many had no prior formalized leadership training. It is phenomenal to see what has happened with those I have trained and coached." She notes a dramatic increase in productivity as just one of the positive benefits for clients of her 10-year-old business. She's also learned quite a bit about the business world itself and leading other people. "Leadership is being able to do the right thing at the right time when it's easier not to," asserts Hickman. And, as her grandmother pointed out, don't forget to play a little. — KB



## THE VISIONARY

Charles Milby Jr., *TAACCL board member and past president*

Charles Milby Jr. thinks big. That habit may have come from his great-grandfather, Houston civic leader Charles H. Milby, but a more likely cause could be musical inspiration. His love of music is what led to his involvement with The Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake, one of UHCL's strongest community partners. He was president of TAACCL's board for two years, during which time the alliance expanded its offerings and became profitable for the first time. Lately, his musical passion has him dreaming of an outdoor music venue for the area. "Music is a universal language," says Milby. "Different music moves different people, and everybody has their own thing they like." A lifelong resident of Seabrook, Milby remembers when NASA came to town and has watched the area grow into a family-friendly neighborhood and premier recreation area. He keeps the momentum going for his hometown by taking on leadership roles in the arts as well as roles with Armand Bayou Nature Center Foundation Board, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation and Communities in Schools. "I want Clear Lake to be a good place to live and raise kids," he says, a father of two himself. "We're lucky to have so many resources in this area." One of those resources is UHCL. Having an institute of higher learning nearby contributes a special energy to the town, Milby says. He credits his wife, Suzanne, who taught in the Clear Creek Independent School District for 35 years, with pointing that out to him. "She is always sure to tell me how lucky we are to have UHCL and what a good school it is." — *Summer Russo*

## THE CONDUCTOR

Fran Davis, *Central Stores/Mail Clerk*

As one of six children, Fran Davis had the opportunity to lead from an early age. Her sister called her bossy, but she knew she was a motivated individual who was willing to work hard to get what she wanted. Davis joined the UHCL staff eight years ago as a caterer with the cafeteria service. "I was impressed when I catered events in the president's office and Dr. William Staples knew me by name," says Davis. "I was just a caterer; but he remembered me and showed me respect. That is when I realized how fortunate I was to work at UHCL." Two years later, Davis took a new position in central stores and was later given the title mailroom/stores clerk. While she makes her deliveries around campus, she meets fellow UHCL staff members and enjoys interacting with students, setting an example of community involvement in the process. Davis is president of the Support Staff Association, but is probably best known around campus as a gifted, powerful singer, the "American Idol of UHCL," as the university's President Staples has said. She has been singing for more than 30 years and is often asked to perform at staff luncheons and other events. "I define a leader as someone who can be led," says Davis. "A leader should be humble and take direction and criticism. At the same time, a leader should take charge, be persistent and confident. You need all these qualities to succeed." Working at UHCL has inspired Davis to continue her own education. She will graduate in June from a local community college with an associate's degree in business. The three children she raised by herself are proud of her — as is her sister, who still thinks she's bossy. — *Monica Byars*





## THE SCOUTMASTER

David Rachita, *UHCL Assistant Dean of Student Life*

David Rachita really enjoyed his college experience. In fact, he liked it so much he made a career out of it. As assistant dean of student life, Rachita creates opportunities outside the classroom to enhance the lessons students learn inside the classroom. "I have worked at UHCL for 13 years, and my love for student activities is what brought me to this position," says Rachita. "It is more than a job. We are educators and have a passion for it. People here believe in the mission of the university." Rachita defines leadership as serving those you are assigned to lead. He believes leaders should empower, encourage and provide resources so everyone can reach the goals of the organization. He and his wife of 16 years have two children. He is a past president of UHCL's Professional and Administrative Staff Association, serves as the American College Personnel Association's chair-elect of the Commission for Student Involvement and is an active participant in the Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel. He is also very involved in his church and teaches a sunrise Bible study every Wednesday morning. If he sounds like a Boy Scout, that's because he is one. Rachita is an Eagle Scout who is leader of his son's Cub Scout den. He also volunteers with Boy Scouts of America in various other capacities. "My leadership background and philosophy comes from my experience with the Boy Scouts," says Rachita. "To this day, I remember the Scout Oath I took and refer to the Scout Law as my moral and personal compass." — MB





## THE ADVOCATE

Michelle Espinoza-Flores, *education student*

"Leaders give other people the opportunity to discover what abilities and creativity they have. That's what others have done for me," says Michelle Espinoza-Flores, a single mom, who returned to school at age 39 and will complete a bachelor's degree in special education from UHCL in May 2009. Giving of herself and being a good listener are key elements to Espinoza-Flores' success as a leader. Being in charge is a role that comes naturally for this second oldest of seven siblings. Among those is a brother with Down syndrome who inspired her to seek a special education degree. "When I work with kids like my brother, they just light up my heart," says Espinoza-Flores. As the first in her family to receive a college education, she is strongly motivated to help other minority or disadvantaged students do the same. "You need support; you need mentors. They are lifelines when you don't know what to do." Espinoza-Flores received help at both the community college level and UHCL that she says was instrumental to her success. Aided by multiple scholarships, both internal and external, Espinoza-Flores envisions a day when she can establish a scholarship fund of her own. "With the support of the community, dreams can become reality as they have for me. I believe that I, too, will be able to contribute to society by helping others explore their potential, become leaders and achieve success." – *Jean Rudnicki*

**APPLY HERE**

**Career Services helps take degrees from theory to application**

Beth Kungel Borck and Chuck Crocker (center) assist UHCL student Trong Vo in UHCL's Office of Career Services.

**CONNECT ONLINE!**

Alumni can stay in touch with the people and activities that make UHCL special with "Your UHCL." This monthly e-newsletter features slice-of-life stories drawn from campus people and activities written by Associate Vice President for University Advancement Dion McInnis. Read past issues of "Your UHCL" and eConnections, and manage subscriptions for both by visiting <https://ecomunications.houston.edu/uicl/home.html>.

**T**ake a look at any top 10 list of the most stressful life experiences and finding a job will be on it. Whether a person is looking for a first job, contemplating switching companies or even careers, a job search can be an emotional roller coaster peppered with exhilarating highs or daunting lows.

Navigating a career change with the right tools, clear direction and dependable counsel can clear a path for a smooth job search. Fortunately for UHCL alumni and students, reliable career help is as close as UHCL's Office of Career Services.

Imee Mantilla, a December 2004 UHCL graduate and human resources manager for GE Sensing and Inspection Technologies in Houston, knows how much students can benefit from career services. As her graduation approached, Mantilla realized that not only did she want a professional to review her résumé but also to help develop her interviewing skills. Mantilla had earned her bachelor's degree in the Philippines, and she wanted to present herself as well as she could for her new interviews.

"Because I was an international student, I wanted to make sure that both my résumé and interviewing abilities were up to par with the U.S. standards for my industry," she explains. "Having the mock interviews with career services helped me prepare for my interviews, and I went into those meetings with a better understanding of potential employers' expectations as well as with more self confidence."

Career services staff provide a wide spectrum of online and in-person services to assist with a current active job search, to improve skills and tools that might land the next job or to help identify the career field or industry for which a person is best suited. Alumni interested in hiring students or other alumni also may contact career services.

"The purpose of UHCL's career services is to help all alumni and students throughout their career," says Beth Kungel Borck, career and alumni events coordinator for the Office of Career Services. "We're not an employment agency, in that we do not place potential candidates in jobs, but through our various services we do help members of the UHCL community find the right job or career."

Alumni who have discovered career services are not only visiting the office in person but also taking advantage of the many online tools. Alumni and students can get help determining their skills and interests, as well as obtain information on academic majors and careers, with an online tool called DISCOVER: Computer-Assisted Career Exploration. Another online tool, the Vault Online Career Library, lets the user research employer profiles and more than 80 career guides.

“For example, if a person was considering a career as an actuary, he could learn about the day-to-day activities of this type of job, what type of schooling is necessary, what the pros and cons of the career are and even what personality is best suited for this field,” says Borck.

Job seekers and career changers who feel more comfortable working with a person instead of a computer may attend one of the 10 to 12 workshops offered by career services each semester on topics such as career exploration, salary negotiations, résumé preparation, interviewing techniques and business etiquette. One-on-one counseling also is available to assist in résumé preparation and review, mock interviews and career selection.

Kimberlie Atkins, a May 2008 graduate employed as an associate scientist with PROS Revenue Management, was a regular client of career services.

“I took several workshops on topics such as résumé writing, interviewing skills and how to work a job fair,” says Atkins. “I was able to have one-on-one time with Chuck Crocker of career services who not only worked with me on fine tuning my cover letter, but he really helped me figure out what type of industry I was most interested in. When I had lined up some interviews, Chuck coached me on how to present myself over the phone as well as how to research potential employers.”

Today, interviewing potential employees is a major element of Mantilla's jobs, and she knows that the counseling she received from the Office of Career Services not only helped her receive a job offer from GE but also could be of benefit to fellow alumni.

“I definitely would recommend that UHCL alumni take advantage of the counseling and programs offered by career services when they are looking for a job or considering a career change.”

## { alumni honored }

The UHCL Alumni Association recognizes its distinguished alumni during the annual UHCL Alumni Celebration. Recipients of this award are long-term leaders in their professional or personal lives with strong commitments to their communities. For 2008, five UHCL graduates were honored at the Oct. 25 gathering.

**Russell P. Austin**, '80 MA, was a gifted and dedicated member of the legal profession. He practiced probate and real estate law for 24 years before he was elected to the bench of Harris County Probate Court No. 1 in 1994, where he served until his death. Austin was a U.S. Marine and an adjunct professor at UHCL in the urban and regional planning program.

**Dilhar De Silva**, '91 BS, '94 MS, is the founder and chief technology officer of Houston-based AtLink Communications. He is recognized as a member of the team that invented Unified Modeling Language, which helps architects and analysts describe software solutions. De Silva is a former member of the UHCL Alumni Association board of directors and currently mentors UHCL computer science and computer information students through the UHCL graduate capstone projects.

**Preston Johnson Jr.**, '83 MBA is a recognized expert in the human resources field who has more than 30 years of experience in the profession. Currently, he is senior vice president of human resources for McDermott International Inc. Previously, he held senior management positions with Anadarko Petroleum Corp., CenterPoint Energy and Dow Chemical Co. Johnson is active in his community and serves on several advisory boards.

**Michael L. Landolt**, '85 BS, a senior financial adviser with Merrill Lynch, is an active philanthropist and volunteer in the Clear Lake area. He led the effort to create the university's first private scholarship. Since its creation in 1993, Landolt has spearheaded the establishment of three other endowed scholarships. He received the UHCL President's Cabinet Leadership Award in 2000.

**Katherine K. Reeves**, '98 BBA, has been employed by Wyle Inc. since 1990. She currently serves as the strategic alliances coordinator supporting Johnson Space Center's Space Life Sciences Directorate and planning lead for JSC's Human Research Program. Outside of her professional obligations, Reeves holds leadership roles in local volunteer organizations and is a founding member of the UHCL Arts Task Force. She received the UHCL President's Cabinet Leadership Award in 2000 and 2005.

The UHCL Alumni Association also recognized **Richard Puzdrowski** with the 2008 Outstanding Professor Award. Puzdrowski is an associate professor of biology, environmental sciences and biotechnology and the founding faculty adviser of the UHCL Biology Club as well as chair of the Division of Natural Sciences. A three-time Piper Award nominee at UHCL, Puzdrowski designed the university's prehealth/physiology specialization for the Bachelor of Science in Biology, the prehealth specialization for the Master of Science in Biology and the Biology Scholars plan for the undergraduate and graduate programs.



View portraits of the  
Alumni Award recipients at  
<http://www.uhcl.edu/egret>.

**1970s**

**Norma Callender**, '77 MA, is owner and director of Bay Area Tutoring and Reading Clinic, Bay Area Family Counseling, Bay Area Speech and Language and co-owner and public relations director of Gateway Foods USA and Gateway Supply Inc. in Houston.



**1980s**

**Mary Sue Anton**, '89 BA, has written a book, "Tales Beyond the Levee: A Mississippi River Town in History and Legend" that will be published by the Center for Regional History at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau.

**Clanton Beeth**, '87 BS, is a pilot for Southwest Airlines. He lives in Phoenix, Ariz. with his family.

**Robert C. Brundrett**, '86 MS and professional teaching certificates, is the superintendent of schools for Texas City ISD in Texas.

**Connie B. Edwards**, '85 BS, is living and working in Saudi Arabia for Saudi Aramco. She teaches first grade.

**Gail Gregory**, '88 MS, recently retired from Galena Park ISD in Texas.

**Gregory Johnson**, '84 BBA, was featured in Genentech's Avastin Patient Awareness Program and raced in the 2008 Toyota U.S. Open Triathlon after successfully completing treatments for Stage IV metastatic colorectal cancer.

**Vernon D. King**, '81 MA, had his biography accepted for publication in Marquis Who's Who in America, 2009, Who's Who in American Education, 2009, Who's Who in the World, 2009 and Cambridge Who's Who, 2007-2008.

**Michael McEachern**, '86 MS, is president and CEO of St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center.

**Jeffrey Murrah**, '84 MA, '81 BS, received the 2007 Presidio La Bahia award from the Sons of the Republic of Texas for the best published book on Early Texas History for his second book, "Texans Always Move Them: A True History of Texas."

**Susan Larson Thoburn**, '83 BA, is a signature member of the Colorado Watercolor Society, which entitles her to use the CWS logo on paintings and résumés.

**Charles Wiley**, '83 BS, has been named chief of police for the city of Galveston.

**Donna Adams Zemanek**, '86 BS, received an MBA from Texas A&M University in May 2008. She is an internal auditor for Waco ISD and lives in Hewitt, Texas.

**1990s**

**Lucia James Bates**, '97 BBA, is the regional classified advertising director with Houston Community Newspapers.

**Greg Brokmeyer**, '94 MBA, is vice president of operations and delivery for Techstone Technology Partners LLC located in Houston.

**Maureen Koctar Cogbill**, '93 BS, is case coordinator for Project Victory at TIRR/Memorial Hermann. She works with U.S. soldiers who recently have returned from fighting in Iraq.

**Carol Bunch Davis**, '98 MA, received her doctoral degree in English from University of Southern California in June 2007 and has been promoted to assistant professor of English at Texas A&M University at Galveston.

**William Deese**, '99 BA, received his Ph.D. from University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla. He has taught at Houston Community College, UHCL and Miami Dade College's InterAmerican Campus. He recently accepted a position at Lone Star College in Cypress, Texas.

**Melissa Dyer**, '93 MBA, has relocated to St. Louis, Mo. to accept a position with MasterCard as a senior consultant.

**Paul Goldenberg**, '95 BS, has made partner at the law firm of Lorange & Thompson PC, Houston.



**David Goodman**, '94 BS, is an engineering business analyst with Jacobs Engineering in Houston.

**Traci Goodwin**, '96 MS, '87 BA and secondary teaching certificate, is the new principal at McAdams Junior High School in Dickinson, Texas.

**Gary Horlacher**, '95 MS, is undergoing training to serve as an international space station flight director for NASA.

**Michel Jackson**, '98 BA, was named Magnolia ISD 2008 Secondary Teacher of the Year. She teaches pre-advanced placement world history at Magnolia West High School in Texas.

**Stephen K. Jones Jr.**, '96 MHA/MBA, is the chief executive officer at Clear Lake Regional Medical Center.

**Craig Keyser**, '93 BBA, is the international marketing director for Flame Seal Products Inc. in Houston.

**Joyce Kievit**, '92 MA, has joined the Department of History at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Ariz.

**Robert J. King**, '95 MBA, '86 BS, married Kathryn Cunningham on May 17. King is the mergers and acquisitions project manager for Universal Weather and Aviation in Houston.

**Matthew Legg**, '99 MBA, has been named Chevron Corporation's Manager of Employee Relations, Compliance and Policy in Houston.

**Robin Lowe**, '97 MS, '83 BS, is the principal at Houston ISD's Pershing Middle School.

**Jason Martin**, '98 BA, is an associate in the litigation section of Jackson Walker L.L.P. He was selected for H Texas magazine's "Houston Professionals on the Fast Track."



**Jason Nelson**, '93 BS, has been accepted into the Executive LL.M. in Tax program at University of New York School of Law. He is currently an attorney with Hogan & Hartson LLP in Denver, Colo.

**Nancy Ojeda**, '96 BS, teaches for LaPorte ISD in Texas.

**Denise Birkholz Pineault**, '93 MS, was appointed ESL instruction specialist for secondary math for Pasadena ISD in Texas.

**Angela Lawson Poole**, '90 BS, is a tax manager for Green & McElreath CPAs. She lives in Alvin, Texas.

**Gayla D. Rhoads**, '94 BS, is the academic dean at LaMarque High School in Texas.

**Darrell Robertson**, '91 MS, completed the Dept. of Commerce Executive Leadership Development Program in 2007 and was selected as the NOAA satellite director of program planning and analysis.

**Teresa Sones**, '93 MA, '81 BA and teaching certificate, is co-owner and vice president of Gateway Supply Inc. in Houston.



**Donna Starkey**, '95 BS, is the presiding judge for the city of Alvin and was re-elected Region VIII director.

**Sasha Tarrant**, '96 MA, '94 BA, has passed her Ph.D. examinations in history at Texas A&M University. She is a professor of history at Brazosport College.

**Troy A. Villarreal**, '94 MHA/BBA, is the president of Medical Center of Plano in Plano, Texas.

## 2000s

**Salene Adcock**, '06 BS, is a telecommunications operator for the city of Pearland, Texas.

**Nida Ajaz**, '08 BBA, is an enrollment counselor for University of Phoenix.

**Kimberly Barfield**, '01 BS, married Dion McInnis on Nov. 3, 2007. The couple resides in League City, Texas.

**Gilberto Blattner**, '04 MBA, is the business operations director for Hewlett Packard.

**Dana Burke**, '04 BS, is managing editor of the Bay Area Citizen in Webster, Texas.

**Kelly Callender**, '00 BS, is co-owner and president of Gateway Supply Inc. in Houston.



**Foy Curley**, '04 BA, is a communications specialist for Employee Benefit Solutions in Houston.

**Keely Flom Gaertner**, '07 BA, and her husband Aaron, welcomed their daughter, Zoie Lynn, on June 4.

**Helen Fuller**, '05 MA, is the executive director for American Kinesiotherapy Association and instructor at University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Miss.

**Mindi Funderburg**, '03 BA, is coordinator of outreach and communications at UHCL.

**Dora Garcia**, '05 BS, was nominated for VOW Post 880 Teacher of the Year.

**Kent B. Green Jr.**, '07 BS, is an environmental, health and safety technologist for Dow Chemical.

**Kim Herhold**, '00 MBA, '97 BS, has been promoted to assistant director of development in UHCL's Office of University Advancement.

**Dora Hernandez Trevino**, '05 MS, and her husband, William, welcomed a baby girl, Maya Elizabeth, on April 23.

**Pamela Kennard**, '07 MA, '04 BA, teaches high school history and heads the Social Studies Dept. at Houston Can! Academy. She recently accepted a position as adjunct at San Jacinto College-South teaching anthropology.

**Andrea Kersten**, '08 MA, '04 BS, is a training coordinator for CEVA Logistics.

**Ginger Hilton**, '04 MA, '00 BA, teaches English at Pearland Junior High East in Texas.

**Guillermo Jacobson**, '00 MS, is the senior project manager at Robert Half International.

**Leslie Plaza Johnson**, '00 MA, '92 BA, is teaching photography as an adjunct professor at UHCL. Earlier this year, she and her colleague, Van Edwards, participated in FotoFest 2008 at The Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake.

**Lori Lopez**, '00 BBA, and her husband, Michael, welcomed a baby girl, Alyssa Renee, on Oct. 29, 2007.

**Sherry Mann**, '05 BA, teaches eighth-grade language arts at Lomax Junior High School in LaPorte, Texas.

**Michael McCormick**, '04 BA, and his wife, Amanda, welcomed their first child, Ethan Michael on May 7. Michael is the assistant basketball coach for varsity and junior varsity at Brazoswood High School. The family resides in Dickinson, Texas.

**Bridget McGinty**, '05 BA, works at Pasadena Memorial High School in Texas.

**Julie Michele Mills**, '06 MA, '05 BS, married James Brent Crowell on May 10. She is a physical education instructor at San Jacinto College.

**Cherry Morris**, '03 BS, teaches third-grade math at Anahuac Elementary in Texas.

**Bonnie Lynn Napoli**, '05 BA, married Devin Bradbery on April 26. She teaches in Dickinson ISD in Texas.

**Lori Nolen**, '05 BA, married Rodney D. Blackman III on May 3. The couple resides in Pearland, Texas.

**Lana Pigao**, '04 MA, welcomed her second child, Alec Kainoa Kiss, on May 7, 2008. She is the director of marketing and communications at College of the Mainland in Texas City, Texas.

**Luis Ramos**, '05 MS, was named one of Galveston ISD's teachers of the year. He works with the district's bilingual students. He has been with the district since 1999.

**Linda Julieta Reyes**, '07 BS, was awarded a 2008-09 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship for studies abroad.

**Mohammad Rob**, '02 MS, is an associate professor at UHCL.

**Anthony Salvato**, '05 MA, is teaching at Lamar State College in Port Arthur, Texas.

**Susan Serice**, '08 MA, works at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center as a research assistant in Houston.



**Haley Stringer-Hedderick**, '04 BA, and her husband, David, welcomed their daughter, Keira Michelle, on Nov. 28, 2007.

**Carlos Vega**, '01 BA, is a DNA analyst for Harris County.

**Crystal Walker**, '07 BA, is teaching history at Albright Middle School in Alief, Texas.

**Andrew Wimbs**, '06 MS, is assistant principal at Ambassador's Preparatory Academy in Galveston.

**Melanie Atnip Wright**, '01 BBA, is an independent consultant for Discovery Toys.

## In Memory

**Gary Reece Cummings**, '76 BS, passed away in July 2008.

**Susan Hillary Groves**, '04 MA, '01 BS, passed away in June 2008.

**Kristi Higginbotham**, '84 MS, passed away in October 2008.

**John Francis Mitchell**, '78 MBA, passed away in August 2008.

**Karen Michele Morrison**, '80 MBA, passed away in June 2008.

*Submit your items to Class Notes by sending an e-mail with "Class Notes" in the subject line to [alumni@uhcl.edu](mailto:alumni@uhcl.edu) or by completing the online form at <http://www.uhcl.edu/alumni>. Be sure to note your full name, class year and contact information with your news item. You also may mail your submission to Class Notes, UH-Clear Lake, Office of Alumni and Community Relations, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., UHCL Box 318, Houston, TX 77058.*

## SUPPORT YOUR UHCL

**Commemorate your UHCL experience by making a gift to your program. You may have received a letter from the dean of your school detailing ways to give in May. All gifts from first-time annual fund donors will be matched dollar-for-dollar. Two of the schools are matching, too! For more information about the annual fund, contact Kim Herhold at 281-283-2036 or [herhold@uhcl.edu](mailto:herhold@uhcl.edu). Gifts can also be made online at <http://www.uhcl.edu/gifts>.**



**When UHCL alumnus Kevin Kwan** showed up on “Good Morning America” to discuss a new book he had co-authored, “Luck: The Essential Guide,” he seemed to be proof that courting luck with mysterious incantations and special furniture arrangements could cause the stars to align and good fortune to smile. But, as the saying goes, there’s no such luck. The grim reality behind writing a bestseller and being on television to talk about it is as many have feared: Luck occurs when preparation meets opportunity.

Kwan may make being a creative genius look easy, but he’s worked hard to build a career as a writer, fine art photographer and creative consultant. His professional accomplishments include projects with Tibor Kalman, Martha Stewart Living and The New York Times as well as work in the permanent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. Here he shares a few lessons learned about leading, inspiring and being, well, lucky.

**Leadership by any other name:** As a creative consultant, my clients look to me for guidance. Rather than being a leader in the conventional sense and directing people to a pre-determined outcome, my aim is to be a creative inspirer who leads team members to exceed their own expectations. I am a writer, a photographer and a creative consultant. Most days I feel like a juggler trying to balance my life in these different worlds. I spend a lot of time in design meetings and strategy sessions helping teams to make their projects better, which can include calming people down when they have brought me in to get a challenging project back on track. One client joked that I should get a business card printed up with the job title: “A Calming Presence.”

**On the shoulders of giants:** True leadership is about breaking new ground and inspiring change. Tibor Kalman was that kind of leader. He was a graphic designer and provocateur who revolutionized the design establishment and influenced a new generation of creative thinkers. I worked for him at M&Co, and he was a great mentor to me. To this day, before I take on any new project, I think of what Tibor would say. Is this worth doing? Or is it just going to end up as landfill?

## *as luck* would have it

**Road to riches starts in Singapore:** My childhood in Singapore provided me with a good foundation. It was a very multicultural society, and I was exposed at a very early age to different peoples and experiences. Moving to America at age 11 was a profoundly life-altering experience, but it taught me how to adapt to a new environment quickly.

**College as life-changing experience:** UHCL was an awakening. For the first time, I met other students who were actually motivated to learn and to succeed. I met professors like John Gorman, Gloria Morris and Jib Fowles, who really encouraged and challenged me. UHCL also gave me the first opportunity to discover my leadership potential. During my first semester, I also met this dynamo of a student leader named Simone Gers who really pushed me to get involved in student life. Before I knew it, I was the Student Organizations Forum representative for the Literature Club, vice president of the Media Association, and served on the Cultural Arts Advisory Board and the Dean of Students Advisory Board. I realized for the first time that being involved actually made a difference.

**Real luck:** Running your own business is a constant challenge, but on the whole I feel tremendously lucky. I have been able to work with some of the most amazing and talented people in the world. I feel that we are all capable of being leaders, especially in our own lives. Whenever I’ve had to make any sort of decision, I’ve always chosen the path that’s more challenging, and doing this has always rewarded me. I took a chance by coming to UHCL, by moving to New York on a moment’s notice, by doing the things I have done that have really tested my comfort zones. But I think that is the secret to leadership: You really have to step away from the crowd, take risks and work toward creating the world you want to live in. And you have to believe that you will be lucky!



Writer, photographer and creative consultant Kevin Kwan is author of “I Was Cuba” and co-author of “Luck: The Essential Guide.” He graduated from UHCL in 1994 with a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies and can be contacted at [www.kevinkwanprojects.com](http://www.kevinkwanprojects.com).


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{ in the gallery }



"Frederic Chopin," lithograph by Vladimír Suchánek, 1987

The UHCL Art Exhibition will begin 2009 with a display of prints by Vladimír Suchánek. The 75-year-old artist influenced the development of Czech art in the latter half of the 20th century, maintaining contact with mainstream European culture even while living under the repression of the Communist Party. He specializes in graphic arts, painting, book illustration, stamp design and ex-libris prints. Widely recognized for his color lithography technique, he was appointed a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts in Vienna, Austria. The exhibition runs Jan. 1 – March 31 on the second level of the Bayou Building in Atrium I.

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