Computer Science Department Recruits Prominent Researcher

By Suzanne Trimel

The Computer Science Department has recruited Peter Belhumeur, one of the country’s leading researchers in computer vision, from Yale, and appointed five young faculty members in key research areas such as computer networking, security and computer learning. The expansion builds the department’s reputation in an important research field and meets the demands of unprecedented growth in course enrollment.

Belhumeur, who has received White House and National Science Foundation career awards, joins the department as a full professor with tenure. Four others were named assistant professors: Tony Jereb, whose research area is machine learning and multimedia human computer interaction; Vishal Misra in networking and Angiolo Kermani in security; and Stephen Edwards in embedded systems and computer engineering. Elizabeth Sklar was appointed a lecturer in human and computer learning. In addition to breakthroughs in computer networking, security and computer learning. The expansion builds the department’s reputation in an important research field and meets the demands of unprecedented growth in course enrollment.

Flo Grant was working in the main offices of J.C. Penney & Co. in 1961 when she decided she needed a change and took a job uptown at Columbia. Four decades later, as departmental administrator for University security, she is still an integral part of the school and has accumulated an eclectic array of friends on campus that can be matched by few.

After 41 Years on Campus, “Flo in Low” Remains An Integral Part of Columbia

By Jason Hollander

“Flo in Low,” a name she coined herself since working in Low Library, has maintained relationships with all sorts of Columbians during the years—from deans to deliverymen, presidents to payroll staff, administrators to students.

She became friends with the legendary Jacques Barzun in the early 1970s and still keeps in touch with the 92-year-old scholar. Every year she sends Barzun, University Professor Emeritus and recent author of the best-selling historical epic, “From Dawn to Decadence,” a copy of the Columbia telephone directory. “He’s so thrilled with that, and I get such lovely notes from him,” she says. Grant also notes that Henry Graff, Professor Emeritus of History, has always been one of her favorites, adding, “He’s such a sweet guy. Henry and I just love each other.

Getting to know the personal

Undergraduate Applications Are Strong for Class of 2006

Despite predictions that Sept. 11 might discourage students from applying to colleges in big cities, Columbia College and the Fu Foundation School of Engineering have received almost 16,000 applications so far, just 2.8 percent fewer than last year’s total.

With 14,078 applications and perhaps two dozen more expected, the College should equal or slightly surpass last year’s total of 14,094.

Engineering, with 2,019 applications in thus far, will finish behind last year’s 2,466.

Eric Furda, executive director of undergraduate admissions and financial aid, says the weak economy has affected applications trends throughout the country, especially for majors like computer science and engineering.

Furda added that the caliber of students seeking admission to both schools was “as competitive as it ever been,” noting that SAT’s for both programs are higher than last year.

Early applications to both schools were impressive, rising a combined 5.8 percent over last year. The College admitted 49 percent of early applicants, while Engineering offered admission to 40 percent.

NATURAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

newly formed Center for International Conflict Resolution as Senior Fellow

By James Devitt

Former United States Senator George Mitchell (D-ME.) will be joining Columbia as a senior fellow at its School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) on July 1, 2002. Mitchell, who helped broker the 1998 Good Friday Agreement for Northern Ireland, will conduct lectures and issue briefings for faculty as part of SIPA’s newly formed Center for International Conflict Resolution.

“It’s a great honor for me to be associated with Columbia University, one of the pre-eminent institutions of higher learning not just in the country, but in the world,” Mitchell said. “I look forward to making life-long associations at this institution, which provides a great service to our nation and its people.”

During a welcoming event at SIPA that drew more than 250, Mitchell encouraged the U.S. to maintain the international coalition established after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

“I’m of the view that it’s essential to maintain the international coalition for no other reason than the very first line of defense against the terrorist organizations themselves is an active and aggressive effort by the police and security forces in the 60 countries in which we’ve been told terrorists operate,” Mitchell said.

Flo Grant, sitting under an old aerial view of Morningside Heights, where she has worked for the past four decades. A member of the security office staff, since 1978, Grant says, “I love the excitement.”

RECORD PHOTO BY JASON HOLLANDER

CRITICAL THINKING: Developing an Ethical Core

Philosophy Professor and Chairwoman, Kathleen Higgins, discusses the importance of ethical thinking in academic and daily life.

RECORD PHOTO BY JASON HOLLANDER

Scrapbooks Help Preserve African Americans’ Past

By Jo Kadlecik

On Dec. 8, 1934, The New York Amsterdam News reported “One illusion buried in the rubble of the World Trade Center is the notion that the United States can go it alone—withdrawing from multilateral efforts, refusing to pay our dues at the United Nations and repudiating treaties,” he said. “It’s now obvious that we can’t do this alone, that we are part of and interdependent in the world. And given our role in the world, it’s very much in our interest to encourage the involvement of others in the current conflict and other problems.”

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