



# PLANT BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT *NEWSLETTER*

## SPRING SEMESTER 2006

FRANKLIN COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, ATHENS, GA 30602-7271

### Dedication of the *Alan Jaworski* Plant Sciences Amphitheater



The dedication ceremony for the Alan Jaworski Plant Sciences Amphitheater was moved indoors on a rainy April 26, 2005. By 4:30 p.m. a large crowd from the University community and members of the Jaworski family had gathered in room 1501 of the Plant Sciences Building for the official unveiling of a bronze plaque and planting of a *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip poplar) tree in memory of our former department head, friend and mentor, Alan Jaworski.

Garnett Stokes, Dean of the

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, Rod Canfield, Professor, Computer Science, Bill Barstow, Professor, Biological Sciences, Sue Wessler, Distinguished Research Professor, Plant Biology and Michael F. Adams, President of The University of Georgia all spoke about Alan, the Jaworski family and the commitment made by so many people to raise the funds to make the dedication a reality. Barry Palevitz, Professor of Plant Biology, recognized the hard work of Scott Simpson, supervisor of the Amphitheater project. A food and beverage reception at the Savannah

Room of the Georgia Center for Continuing Education followed the dedication ceremony.

When the days are warm and sunny, faculty, students and staff find the amphitheater to be a perfect place to teach a class, read a book, have lunch or just relax. Alan would have approved. 🌸

*I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Jaworski Fund. Your generosity made it possible for us to name the Plant Sciences Amphitheater in honor of Alan. It is a perfect setting to reflect his love for both teaching and gardening. Thank you!*  
Russell L. Malmberg, Department Head

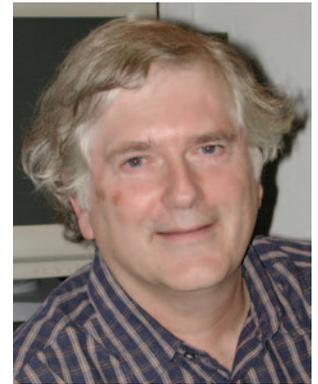
# Faculty Awards



On February 6, 2006, *Kelly Dawe* was appointed as the GRA-Lars Ljungdahl Distinguished Investigator. This is a brand new award. Kelly is the first recipient.



*Lisa Donovan* received the 2006 Creative Research Medal



*Steve Hubbell* received the 2006 Lamar Dodd Creative Research Award

*Peggy Brickman* was awarded the Richard B. Russell undergraduate teaching award for 2006



## **We'd also like to recognize:**

*David Porter* - 2004 Sandy Beaver Teaching Professorship

*Lisa Donovan* - 2004 Stebbins Award for Best Paper of Year in Plant Systematics and Evolutionary Biology

*Steve Hubbell* - 2005 British Ecological Society Marsh Award

*Sue Wessler* - 2005 UGA System Regents Professorship

*Jim Hamrick* - 2005 Reappointed as Distinguished Research Professor

*Michelle Momany* - 2005 Sandy Beaver Special Teaching Award

## **W**here are they

**now?** Meet former Plant Biology student Robby Roberson and his major professor Mel Fuller

Robby finished his Ph.D in 1989 and went directly to Arizona State University as an Assistant Professor. He's on the faculty in Cellular and Molecular Biology and the Director of the Life Sciences Electron Microscopy (EM) Facility. He lives in Tempe with his wife Elaine and their son Lucien, but visits Athens on a regular basis to



see his daughters Patricia, Erin and Morgan.

Reflecting on his time at UGA, Robby said, "my experience at UGA was great. Mel (Fuller) was a supportive advisor and with (E.S.) Luttrell, Charles (Mims), Dave (Porter) and the other mycologists (including all of my 'student' friends) the Botany Dept and UGA was an academically vibrant and nurturing environment. I could not have asked for better training and experience."

In his spare time Robby is making music and art. "I play acoustic music regularly around the Tempe/Phoenix area both as a solo performer, playing original music, and as part of a trio ('The Waves' <http://www.thewavesmusic.com/>). An owner/manager of a Phoenix art gallery (Tilt Gallery, 919 West Fillmore Street, Phoenix Arizona 85007 ([info@tiltgallery.com](mailto:info@tiltgallery.com)) was in the audience at one of my recent solo performances. She found out that I was a bioimager, went to my websites <http://lsweb.la.asu.edu/rroberson/> and



*Robby Roberson (left) and his major professor Dr. Mel Fuller in 1988*

<http://lsweb.la.asu.edu/Synechocystis/>, called me to see if I would be interested in doing an art exhibit based on bioimaging. The show will be in November 2006 and will be titled 'The Universe Within'. I also use my images as background art for the flyers I make for my gigs" Robby says.

Robby's major professor, former Plant Biology Department head and Professor Mel Fuller retired in 1994 and moved back to the great state of Maine with his wife Barbara. He maintained a laboratory at the University of Maine's Darling Marine Center for many years. Mel's interest in graphics and his love of the fiber arts have kept him busy. He (*see Roberson and Fuller on page 3*)



## Remembering Wilbur Howard Duncan 1910-2005

by Wendy Zomlefer & David Giannasi

We are saddened to report the passing of Wilbur H. Duncan, University of Georgia Professor Emeritus of Botany

and retired Curator of the Herbarium. He died at his home attended by his family on 25 March 2005 in Athens.

Wilbur was born on 15 October 1910, in Buffalo, New York, attended Bloomington High School in Indiana, and received an A. B. (1932) and M.A. (Botany, 1933) from Indiana University. After earning a Ph.D. from Duke University in 1938, he began his distinguished forty-year teaching and research career at the University of Georgia, Department of Botany (now Department of Plant Biology). He was also curator of the GA Herbarium (1938-1978).

Wilbur Duncan had an illustrious career spanning seven decades during which he generously shared his enthusiasm and expertise in botany with students, professionals, and amateurs alike. He inspired several generations of students via over 20 popular hands-on field courses. Wilbur also supervised six Master's students and ten Ph.D. students, whose studies focused primarily on floristics of the southeast.

Wilbur was a mega-collector (over 30,000 plant specimens in multiple sets) that he deposited at GA and distributed to other herbaria throughout the southeastern United States. Through his efforts, the GA Herbarium grew from 16,000 to 135,000 specimens during his tenure. Among these specimens is his first: a collection of *Trillium sessile*.

His books brought botany to more people at an understandable level than any academic text. These guides are coauthored by his wife of 64 years, Marion Duncan, also a professional botanist. The Duncans logged over 80,000 miles together compiling these field books.

Wilbur Duncan is survived by his wife Marion Duncan; three children (Douglas, Lucia, and Mack Duncan); and four grandchildren (Amber, Laramie, Laura, and Ross Duncan).

*From SIDA 21(3): 1941-1950. 2005 and used with permission of the authors and SIDA.*



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**Roberson and Fuller from page 2** explains "I do all of the graphics work for the DaPonte String Quartet including their website [www.daponte.org](http://www.daponte.org). I'm also on their board. I have designed note cards for a company that printed 15,000 of them for sale all over the country. I do ads for businesses and have just done all of the graphics for a recently published book *Dyeing to Knit*. I maintain four different web sites and still do lots of weaving.

Barbara and Mel travel a lot. They went to Prague, Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest and places in between for two weeks last fall. They're in Eleuthera, an island in the Bahamas, where according to Mel he and Barbara are wrestling with sun and salt water for six weeks. "Retirement is tough and I am enjoying every minute of it," says Mel. "Anyone that doesn't think the

UGA retirement system is great should try it. I talk to retirees from many other schools, e.g., the president of Radcliffe, and I am getting much more from TRSOGeorgia."

Robby Roberson was a technician and graduate student in Mel's lab. Mel commented, "Robby is just one of the many wonderful graduate students I had the pleasure of working with. He already had training (EM) when he came to work for me as a technician. Charles (Mims) and Lut (E.S. Luttrell) had done a very good job. It was also clear that Robby wanted to go beyond the more descriptive EM that Lut, Charles and I had done. In the same way that (Ralph) Emerson encouraged me to reach out, I tried with students, including Robby, to make them realize that they wouldn't know whether they could do something new unless

they tried. Robby blossomed in this environment and we did some outstanding things while he was my student and coworker. He has gone on at Arizona State to do some of the most elegant cell biological work ever done with fungi. While I moved toward fungal cell biology in later years, Robby is first class in this field. I am extremely proud of his abilities and accomplishments."

Mel will be 75 years young in May and he's still going strong.

Thank you to Robby and Mel for taking the time to do an e-interview.

**TELL US WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW**  
Email or call Beth Richardson and share your story <[beth@plantbio.uga.edu](mailto:beth@plantbio.uga.edu)> or 706.542.1790. We want to hear from you! 

# Student Awards

*Congratulations to all of our students!*



*Cara Gormally*  
&  
*Wenli Li*  
received the 2006  
UGA Outstanding  
Teaching Assistant  
Awards



*Rachel Spigler* - 2004 Joshua Laerm Award  
*Denise Hardesty* - 2004 Elected to Who's Who Among  
Students in American Universities & Colleges  
*Eleanor Pardini* - 2005 Excellence in Teaching Award  
*Ava Howard* - 2005 Outstanding TA Award  
*Fangfang Pan* - 2005 Outstanding TA Award  
*Eva Gonzales* - 2005 Plant Biology Outstanding Graduate  
Student Duncan Award Winner  
*Lee Echols* - 2005 Marie Mellinger Field Botany Research  
Grant Award (Ga. Bot. Soc.), the Georgia Native Plant  
Society 2005 Research Grant Award and the 2005 Joshua  
Laerm Academic Support Award for Graduate Students

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### Photo Credits

*Dandelion Seeds* - graduate student Linda Lee  
*Alan Jaworski & Amphitheater* - Beth Richardson  
*Robby Roberson & Mel Fuller* - Beth Richardson  
*Robby with guitar* - from Robby Roberson  
*Wilbur Duncan* - from Lucia Duncan

### Drawings

by Wendy Zomlefer from *Guide to  
Flowering Plant Families*. The Univ. of  
N. Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC.  
***Unless otherwise noted:***  
**Articles & Design** - Beth Richardson  
**Reviewed by** - Michelle Momany

 [Please visit www.plantbio.uga.edu](http://www.plantbio.uga.edu) to learn more about Plant Biology at UGA 



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