Beth Weitzman, Ph.D., Named Steinhardt
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Beth Weitzman, Ph.D., has been named the Steinhardt School’s Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. A respected member of the NYU community, Dr. Weitzman joined the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service faculty in 1987 and was promoted to Professor of Health and Public Policy in 2003. She will continue to hold that title in the Steinhardt School within the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health.

A widely published scholar, Dr. Weitzman’s research focuses on urban policies affecting poor families, and she has evaluated a range of programs aimed at meeting the health, social service, housing, and educational needs of these families and their children. She is currently the principal investigator of a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Her research has also been supported by the National Institute of Mental Health.

FALL 2009

Remembering Frank McCourt (’57)

Frank McCourt, Irish-American teacher and Pulitzer Prize-winning memoirist whose autobiography of growing up poor in Limerick, Ireland captured the imagination of millions of readers, died on July 19.

He wrote his memoir, Angela’s Ashes, with wisdom, elegance, and a comic’s all-knowing sense of humor and pitch-perfect timing. McCourt gave generously to the Steinhardt School through his teaching and public readings, regaling his audience with stories about his Irish dreams and sorrows. A retired teacher who spent 30 years in the New York City public schools, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from New York University in 2000.

McCourt honed his storytelling skills in his Stuyvesant High School classroom and began writing in earnest upon his retirement. “F. Scott Fitzgerald said there are no second acts in American lives,” McCourt once told a reporter. “I think I’ve proven him wrong.”

Visit Steinhardt’s At a Glance blog to watch the film Frank McCourt: The Journey of An Ordinary Teacher. The film was created by NYU colleagues Elisa Guarino and Debra Weinstein and has a soundtrack by Ron Sadoff, director of Steinhardt’s film scoring program.

Steinhardt Annual Fund Achieves Goal: $1 Million+

The Steinhardt Annual Fund raised more than $1 million in 2008-09, placing Steinhardt in an elite group of NYU schools whose annual funds exceeded this mark. The group includes Arts & Science, Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Stern, and Tisch.

Generous gifts from the Dean’s Council, alumni, parents, and friends contributed $1,059,466 to support Steinhardt’s greatest needs: maintaining facilities, providing scholarships, and supporting faculty research and public service activities in schools, hospitals, and community centers in NYC and beyond.

This year, the fund was particularly strengthened by the creation of a Dean’s Emergency Fund, which provides dedicated support for students who would otherwise not be able to continue their studies at Steinhardt.

At the 2006 NYU Alumni Renioun, Frank McCourt had a conversation with Dean Mary Brabeck about his career as a public school teacher and writer. Afterwards he signed copies of his books.
What prompted you to write this book?
Beth: I had finished *We Band of Angels*, a book about the nurses who served with the men on Bataan. Michael edited the manuscript and told me that there was still another half of the story — about the men — to tell. We talked about writing a book and decided that we did not want to write the story of Bataan from just the American viewpoint. We wanted to include the Filipino experience and those of the former Imperial Japanese soldiers if we could find them. We felt that by speaking to and writing about all sides in the battle, we could begin to understand what happens and why in war.

How do you do your research?
Michael: In terms of reading and searching for documents, vetting sources, collecting statistics, authenticating and verifying all of the information we gathered in 400 interviews, we worked together. Beth and I studied and analyzed every interview together, and that really helped in pulling together into a coherent story all the individual narratives we were hearing from the people we’d interviewed.

What are some of the hazards for couples writing together?
Beth: A book of this size and scope benefited from having two people involved. There was never a moment when one of us was waiting for the other to finish something. There was too much to do. Another advantage was that we knew each other’s strengths and weaknesses, so there was no trial and error or testing period. We just got to work. It was wonderful to have someone to listen and someone to bounce off ideas.

It is often said that the writer doesn’t pick his/her subject, but the subject picks the writer. Why is war such a compelling subject for you?
Michael: I’d been writing about war on and off for 40 years, and in all of those pages I felt that I never really got at the truth of war. The truth of war that I learned on the battlefield in Vietnam as a combat Marine in 1968, the bloodiest year of the Vietnam War, was that war is not about victory and war is not about defeat, war is about loss and the worst things that men can do to one another. All war stories well told are about the most basic of human emotions and reveal the most basic elements of the human condition.
Research @ NYU Steinhardt ... a digest of research news

STEINHARDT SCHOOL OF CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 3

Steinhardt Center Wins $2.9 Million NIH Grant

Although strides have been made in the fight against HIV and AIDS in recent years, infection rates continue to climb for certain populations. Last year, the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reported that among young males between 13 and 29, rates of HIV infection increased by 9 percent. Seventy-five percent of these cases involved men who have sex with men (MSM).

Hoping to better understand the developmental pathways of this population of young MSM and the specific risk factors for HIV infection, researchers at the Center for Health, Identity, Behavior, and Prevention Studies (CHIBPS), are embarking on a three-year longitudinal study of the behavioral choices of young gay men.

According to Perry Halkitis, director of CHIBPS and professor of applied psychology and public health at NYU Steinhardt, emergent adulthood “is a period of time when young gay men are highly vulnerable not only to HIV infection but also to hepatitis B and C, syphilis, gonorrhea, and drug use.” He adds, “Young gay men may be more at risk in part due to the stigma and discrimination that they face.”

Aronson Awarded $1.4 Million Grant to Improve Academic Performance Through Engaging Fiction and Interactive Media

Research into the psychology of intelligence has demonstrated the extent to which students’ academic performance improves when they are taught that intelligence is malleable and that people can get smarter in response to intellectual effort. Building on this research, a team of psychologists led by NYU Steinhardt’s Joshua Aronson has been awarded a $1.4 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to develop teacher-friendly materials to use with 8th and 9th grade students from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The study’s aim is to encourage these students, who are notoriously prone to motivation problems, to think, feel, and behave in ways that promote good learning.

Problems in Preschool Classrooms: A Cluster-Randomized Trial,


Doctoral Candidate Awarded National Academy of Education Fellowship

Myrrh M. Domingo, a doctoral candidate in the English education program in Steinhardt’s Department of Teaching and Learning, received the 2009 Adolescent Literacy Predoctoral Fellowship from the National Academy of Education. The award is a $25,000 stipend for doctoral research aimed at improving literacy outcomes for middle and secondary students.

Domingo’s project, “Bridging In-School and Out-of-School Literacy Practices: Examining Digital Technologies and Multimodality to Promote Socially and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy,” is a two-part ethnographic study. The first part of the study is theoretical, examining how groups of Filipino British youth, the “Pinoys,” employ technology to accomplish meaningful tasks and interpersonal transactions in their daily lives. The second part of the study is an investigation into the practices of a group of in-service teachers who engage technology to carry out literacy instruction with their students.

C. Cybele Raver Receives Griffiths Research Award for Educational Policy Research on Head Start

C. Cybele Raver, a professor in the Department of Applied Psychology, is the recipient of Steinhardt’s 2009 Griffiths Research Award for “Targeting Children’s Behavior

Making a gift

If you are interested in making a contribution to help us continue funding scholarships, faculty research, and public service activities, please contact Steve Sagner, Assistant Dean, at 212-998-6755 or stephen.sagner@nyu.edu. Gifts also may be made online at giving.nyu.edu.
New Leadership in Departments

This fall, the Steinhardt School will have new leadership in three of its departments.

Jonathan Zimmerman, a professor of educational history, has been appointed chair of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. Zimmerman, who served as director of the department’s History of Education Program, also holds an appointment in the Department of History at NYU’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Zimmerman, who served as director of the department’s History of Education Program, also holds an appointment in the Department of History at NYU’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Marita Sturken, a professor of culture and communication, has been named chair of the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication. Sturken, who has served as a co-director of Steinhardt’s Visual Culture Program, has taught courses in visual culture, cultural studies, cultural memory, and consumerism. She succeeds Ted Madger in this position.

Robert Rowe, a professor of the Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions, has been named its vice chair. Rowe, who has served as director of Steinhardt’s music composition program, is artistic director of the biannual Interactive Arts Performance Series that unites computers, video, music, and other arts in live performance.

Cutting-Edge B.S. Program Prepares Students for Public Health Challenges

Next year NYU Steinhardt will launch an undergraduate program (B.S.) in public health, one of the first of its kind in the country. The program will prepare students for careers in local and state health departments, health care organizations, and human service agencies.

Students will study statistics, epidemiology, public health nutrition, and global issues. The program provides a broad overview of the field and enables students to explore particular health conditions, such as HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and obesity. It culminates in a semester-long internship in one of the many national and international organizations involved in public health in New York City.

“Our new public health program builds on the enormous strengths that NYU and New York City have to offer,” said Diana Silver, assistant professor of public health and director of the program. “Given the set of public health challenges facing us all, and the need for a sophisticated, talented, and well-prepared work force, I can think of no better place to explore the field.”

IN MEMORIAM: SHEILA LUKINS (BS ’70), COOKBOOK AUTHOR

Sheila Lukins, renowned cookbook author and an alumna of the Steinhardt School (Art Education, BS ’70), died on August 30, 2009. The cause was brain cancer.

Lukins, who was honored at Steinhardt’s 2008 Baccalaureate Ceremony with a Distinguished Alumnae Award, was a chef, food writer, and cooking teacher whose book, The Silver Palate Cookbook, was one of the top ten bestselling cookbooks of all time. Among her seven books are The Silver Palate Good Times Cookbook, Celebrate!, All Around the World Cookbook, and USA Cookbook. There are more than 6.5 million copies of her books in print.

Jewish Foundation Scholarship Alumnae Reunite at Steinhardt

Past and current recipients of grants from the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women (JFEW) came together for the first annual JFEW reunion at the Steinhardt School in June. The New York City-based foundation is dedicated to enabling women with financial need, regardless of their religious affiliation, to meet their education and career goals through scholarships, as well as creating a community of women who are able to fulfill their educational aspirations and contribute to society.

“One of the key ingredients to JFEW’s success is its commitment to effective collaboration with colleges, universities and community-based organizations to create programs jointly, undertake evaluation, and ensure the best possible outcomes for its recipients,” said Sharon L. Weinberg, Steinhardt professor, and current president of JFEW. “I am particularly proud of JFEW’s partnership with NYU’s Steinhardt School, Silver School of Social Work, and Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Through these affiliations, JFEW is able to continue its work supporting talented women who choose to study for professions that are of great social value, but often not highly remunerative. I am keenly aware of the impact such a scholarship can have on the pursuit of a women’s life goals.”

Weinberg, Steinhardt Associate Dean Beth Weitzman, and Debra Weinstein, At a Glance writer and editor, are also former recipients of JFEW scholarships.

Live from the Blue Note Milano

Two jazz ensembles from the Steinhardt School recently played a gig at the Blue Note Milano in Italy. The ensembles had the chance to perform during spring semester spent at NYU Florence. After four months of work on a repertoire of jazz standards and original pieces with renowned jazz musicians Francesco Bearzatti and Andy Gravish, the students performed in several Italian venues. Pictured (on saxophone) is music business student Nick Myers, ’09, with an Italian rhythm section.
Jonathan Nosan, an actor and contortionist, broke through the boundary between audience and speaker at a seminar on postmodernism, lecturing on French acrobatic performer Jules Léotard (1842–1870), while standing on his hands.

The seminar was part of a summer curriculum for 18 Fulbright scholars, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Its purpose is to promote research and teaching about the United States at foreign universities. The American Embassy in the U.K sponsored a similar program for a group of 10 British academics.

Stacy Pies, professor at the Gallatin School moderated the panel that included Joy Boyum, Steinhardt professor of humanities and arts education and Bob Vorlicky, Tisch associate professor of drama.

Philip M. Hosay, professor and director of Steinhardt’s Multinational Institute of American Studies, has run programs of this nature since 1983, receiving more than $6,500,000 in funding from the United States Information Agency, the U.S. Department of State, the National Endowment of the Humanities, and various Fulbright commissions.

A seminar on postmodernism was part of the curriculum for visiting Fulbright scholars. Pictured from left to right: Stacy Pies, Jonathan Nosan, Joy Boyum, Philip M. Hosay, and Bob Vorlicky.

**A Postmodern Moment for Steinhardt’s Fulbright Scholars**

**Steinhardt’s Ryan Studies Effects of Omega-3s on Cancer Patients**

Aoife Ryan, assistant professor of nutrition, recently published a study in the *Annals of Surgery* demonstrating the benefits of omega-3 enriched nutrition for surgical cancer patients. Omega-3 fats are essential fats found naturally in oily fish, but recently food manufacturers have begun to add them to foods such as yogurt, milk, juice, eggs, and infant formula.

Ryan’s controlled trial showed that oral nutritional supplements with omega-3 fatty acids resulted in the preservation of muscle mass in patients undergoing surgery for esophageal cancer, a procedure normally associated with significant weight loss.

“The results are intriguing, as no previous study of nutritional support in the peri-operative period has revealed such a benefit,” said Ryan. “Initial treatments like this may be cost-effective for our cash-strapped health care system,” said Ryan.

**Pless Lounge Enjoys New Found Celebrity**

The Steinhardt School’s Pless Hall Lounge, at the corner of Washington Place and Washington Square East, was transformed into a student lounge for the film *Remember Me*, a drama with Robert Pattinson, slated for release next winter. The lounge is also the site of the ‘Communication Café’ in Disney’s summer 2010 live-action adventure film *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice* starring Nicholas Cage.

**Beth Weitzman, Steinhardt Associate Dean**

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the National Institute on Drug Abuse, as well as by private philanthropy. At the Wagner School, Dr. Weitzman served as director of doctoral studies and as director of the Program in Health Policy and Management, one of the most highly ranked programs of its kind.

“Dr. Weitzman’s research has underscored the importance of eliminating the gulfs that separate sectors and services to better address significant social problems,” said Steinhardt dean Mary Brabeck. “This approach will serve her well in Steinhardt’s unique, interdisciplinary community.”

Dr. Weitzman succeeds Ron Robin, who has served as Steinhardt associate dean since July 2006, and is moving into a new role as NYU’s Senior Vice Provost for Planning.
Ross Bleckner, renowned artist and clinical professor of studio art in the Department of Art and Arts Professions, has been named Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Bleckner is well known for his large-scale paintings that deal with remembrance and loss — operating as memento mori to those lost in crisis. Bleckner’s involvement with UNODC, a global leader in the fights against illegal drugs and international crime, began with an invitation by Antonio Maria Costa, UNODC executive director, and Simone Monasebian, chief of UNODC in New York, to help draw attention to the plague of human trafficking, specifically child soldiers and the kidnapping of girls in northern Uganda. Bleckner agreed, proposing to travel to Gulu, Uganda to conduct an art workshop for victims of trafficking.

Bleckner conducted the workshop for the Gulu children, encouraging them to confront their past through artistic expression. The mission resulted in the creation of more than 200 paintings that were exhibited at an UN benefit this May. Proceeds from the benefit and from the sale of the artworks benefit UNODC and the TVF work with child victims of human trafficking.

“The look of accomplishment and joy in the eyes of the children I worked with in Africa was one of the greatest gifts I’ve received in my years being an artist,” Bleckner said.