By Catherine Hensley

Jim Hinojosa, Department Chair and Professor, will be presenting the distinguished Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture at the 87th Annual Conference of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). This year, the conference is being held in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 20 – 23. Dr. Hinojosa will deliver his lecture titled, “Becoming Innovators in an Era of Hyperchange.”

“We live in an era of rapid, unpredictable change, and many therapists are finding themselves feeling overwhelmed,” Dr. Hinojosa said. “I will be examining how this time of hyperchange is influencing the roles and responsibilities of practitioners. How is occupational therapy as a profession reacting, and what can we do as therapists, educators, and scholars?”

The lectureship is presented annually by the AOTA in honor of Mrs. Slagle, a pioneer in occupational therapy service and education. Mrs. Slagle directed some of the first training courses in occupational therapy in Chicago in 1917 and was one of the founders of AOTA. Each year, a lecturer is chosen by the AOTA’s Recognitions Committee from nominations received from the general membership to deliver the address the following year. The award recognizes the lecturer for significant contributions to the knowledge of the profession.

By Karen Stone (’57)

More than 100 people came together on Friday morning, October 27, 2006, to remember and celebrate the life of Deborah R. Labovitz, former Department Chair. The large crowd gathered seeking to pay homage to this remarkable woman who had led the Department for 20 years, beginning in 1980. Among those present were many former students, colleagues, friends, and family.

Dr. Labovitz was recognized as an outstanding educator and noted author who was active both nationally and internationally. This memorial gathering focused not only on her professional accomplishments but also on her character and personality, making for a very personal gathering. Speakers included Deans Mary Brabeck and Patricia Carey, Department Chair Jim Hinojosa, close friends of Debbie and her husband, Judah, and fellow alumni Karen Stone. Sally Poole read a deeply moving letter from the 20 Israeli occupational therapists who, with Debbie’s help, had earned their M.A.’s in conjunction with NYU’s OT program.

Amid the tears, laughter often broke through to temper the sadness of a loss that all wished had not come so soon. The Department and the Alumni Association expect to soon announce the details of a memorial tribute fund in Dr. Labovitz’s name, which will be used to support scholarly activities.
Welcome from the Alumni Board Chair

As you read through our newsletter this year, I’m sure you’ll see the hard work, care, and dedication that went into creating it. This enterprise is also a reflection of the integral part that each board member plays in helping to make us one of the most active alumni boards at NYU. This year, we are looking forward to focusing on 3 important endeavors:

The Frieda J. Behlen Scholarship Fund
Our scholarship fund continues to blossom, thanks to your support. Currently, we are able to provide two students with a summer scholarship of $2,500 each. With your continued support, we hope to increase that amount in the future.

The Anne Cronin Mosey Lectureship
Lynn Bassini will host our 4th Annual Anne Cronin Mosey Lectureship this year entitled Volunteering Overseas: The Pearls and Pitfalls. It has been a wonderful experience helping to plan, and we are looking forward to another successful event.

Deborah R. Labovitz Memorial Fund
We are in the beginning stages of setting up a fund in honor of Deborah R. Labovitz, Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA. She served as Chair of the Department from 1980-2000 and had a tremendous impact on the NYU and occupational therapy communities.

As always, we welcome and encourage your comments and participation. Your help is integral in making us the success we are.

Loreto Dumitrescu ('97)
Chair, Occupational Therapy Alumni Board

Alumni Happy Hour a Big Success

Many alumni gathered for our annual Alumni Happy Hour on Thursday, November 2, 2006, at the Caliente Cab Company. There were an estimated 50-60 people in attendance, including alumni, faculty, and current students. Those in attendance enjoyed appetizers and beverages and the opportunity to reminisce with old friends and classmates, network with fellow alumni, and catch up with past professors.

Claudia Beyer, who organized the annual event, reported, “Everyone seemed to be having a great time, and I think it was the best turn-out since we started doing the happy hour!”

Thanks to all who attended, and we look forward to seeing even more of you at the next events!
2006 FRIEDA J. BEHLEN OT SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

By Ilene Burack ('50)

Andrea Johnston and Ruth Siebers were awarded the $2000 Frieda J. Behlen Occupational Therapy Summer Tuition Grants for 2006. The awards were presented at the Third Annual Anne Cronin Mosey Lectureship event in March. The Behlen scholarships recognize students for academic achievements and initiative and service within the Department and the occupational therapy community.

Andrea Johnston has incorporated her training as a professional dancer to use as a therapeutic modality in the community. Andrea uses dance techniques for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease, mental illnesses, and physical disabilities. She is exploring the connection between occupational therapy and Laban movement analysis, a systematic language of the qualitative aspects of human movement.

Ruth Siebers, a special education middle school teacher, is enrolled in the occupational therapy program to expand her education expertise with a focus on improving function. Ruth has currently turned her attention to community dwelling of the well-elderly to help this population remain active and independent at home and at work. Her goal as an occupational therapist is to promote wellness and physical and emotional well-being in seniors.

We salute both of our 2006 scholarship recipients as we look towards the 2007 awards.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

By Henrietta Charach ('89)

We are still seeking new members for the Corporate Sponsorship Committee. We need members with innovative ideas and the willingness to obtain funds from various corporate sponsors. I am in the process of seeking individuals who enjoy eliciting funds and following up with the various sponsors while promoting a sense of philanthropy within the sponsorship communities of occupational therapy in New York.

This is an ongoing process each year, and new members and new corporate sponsors are always needed. The funds we raise will be used to sponsor our students’ attendance at the annual Anne Cronin Mosey Lectureship, to be held this year on March 25, 2007. Sponsors will be invited to attend the event without cost to thank them for their significant contributions.

Phase One of this endeavor will include finding additional support from sponsorship communities within New York. These can include agencies, small corporations, and equipment vendors who deal with the occupational therapy populations. Phase Two will include sending out letters to marketing directors of the various agencies and corporations and following up with phone calls to secure the pledges.

We want to thank you in advance for taking the time to join with us in this valuable endeavor. For more information, please contact me at hennieot@aol.com. Your support and comments are greatly appreciated!
**TECHNOLOGY CORNER**

*By Loreto Dumitrescu (‘97)*

We invite you to explore two areas of ongoing communication within the alumni community: the Department’s alumni web site and the listserv forums.

**Web Site**

The NYU OT Alumni Board is proud to announce our redesigned web site. You can find us at:

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/otnew/alumni.php

Here you can find alumni news, upcoming events, view past newsletters, submit updated contact information, and much more!

**Listservs**

As an NYU alum, you are invited to join the Department’s listservs. A listserv is a system of postings and responses to e-mail messages for a common group. There are two listservs that you may be interested in joining. You may join either one or both.

1. **The NYUOT Forum ("nyuot"):** members include current students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

2. **The Alumni Forum ("ed-ot-alumni"):** members are limited to NYU OT alumni only.

The benefits of joining these forums include improved communication and discussions of current events within the profession, as well as a venue to list events you are coordinating or available job positions.

If you are interested in joining one of the listservs, please follow the steps below. (Also, note that current subscribers can easily change the settings for their accounts or unsubscribe by following the steps below.)

1. Using a web browser, go to: http://forums.nyu.edu/ and enter either “nyuot” or “ed-ot-alumni” (depending on which forum you wish to join).

2. You can then register your e-mail address and join the mailing list. You will begin receiving e-mails posted on the forum directly in your inbox.

3. Once registered, to post a comment or message, send an e-mail to either nyuot@forums.nyu.edu or ed-ot-alumni@forums.nyu.edu.

Take caution, as replying to a message from the forum will distribute your reply to all members of the forum.

4. For current members to change settings:
   - Enter your e-mail address and password (if you have one)
   - Select: “change your user settings” or unsubscribe options

We hope you take advantage of these services and keep in contact with the alumni community!

**CHANGES IN THE AIR**

In March, the Steinhardt School of Education will formally announce the renaming of the school. It will become the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. The change is an effort to more accurately reflect the variety of departments and studies within the school. With this change we invite you, our readers, to reflect upon it and the evolving look of our newsletter, as well....And, as always, we look forward to hearing from you.

Ivory Flynn (‘04)
Editor
By Ivory Flynn ('04)

Marion Strauss is a 1954 alumna and a resident of New Orleans. Here is her account of her experiences during Hurricane Katrina.

At the time of the hurricane on August 29, 2005, I was working at Charity Hospital in New Orleans as the Head of Occupational Therapy Mental Health Services. I had been working there for over 25 years, starting originally as the only occupational therapist in the Department of Psychiatry. I had an integral role in creating the Occupational Therapy Outpatient Clinic within Charity Hospital.

We were very involved with our patients, raising money through sales to pay for bus fares for patients to come to our clinic and attend medical/pyschiatric appointments, as well as to pay for deductibles for medications to enhance medication compliance. The Outpatient Clinic was nominated for and awarded an Honorable Mention for the 1999 Safety Net Health System Innovation Award from the National Association of Public Hospitals & Health Systems. We were proud of the caliber of care we had established, and we loved what we were doing. All of this was lost, though, at the time of the storm and with the levees breaking.

Living in New Orleans, we had always been concerned about hurricanes. The hospital had established a system of activation and recovery teams. Usually, one day prior to landfall of an anticipated hurricane, activation team members were called to go home, collect enough belongings and non-perishable food for about three days, and be prepared to stay out the storm with the approximately 100 patients. I was a member of the hospital’s activation team during Hurricane Katrina.

My husband (who is a psychiatrist) and I took shelter in the unit with more than 90 psychiatric patients and 60 staff members. In addition, people who walked into the emergency room to escape the flooding were brought up to the third floor where we were staying. We all remained in the hospital for six days and five nights. Apparently, the authorities thought that we had been evacuated prior to this time. For most of the time, we were forced to go without electricity, running water, or bathroom facilities. Canned food was available in very small amounts. The patients were wonderful. Somehow, in the midst of the emergency, most of them remained cooperative with staff. On the night of the sixth day, the National Guard rescued us and brought us to buses that transported all of us to Central Louisiana State Hospital in Pineville, Louisiana.

Upon arrival in Pineville, we were assigned sleeping accommodations. The patients were assigned to a ward that was no longer being used by the patients at Central. It was a log-cabin type of residence, with a washing machine and dryer. We were dependent on staff there in order to leave the hospital grounds. The staff members at the hospital were extremely kind and generous. Security guards drove staff to eat and run errands. They were wonderful to us, but it wasn’t home.

Continued on page 6
Our displaced staff gradually decreased in size as we remained in Pineville. Some decided they couldn't stay in Pineville. Others opted to retire early. Those who continued to work with our patients attended our ward rounds daily and gradually discharged the patients.

Some patients were sent to relatives who had evacuated to Texas or Georgia. Others, however, had no homes to return to, and no relatives we could find. Many had relatives living in crowded trailers back in New Orleans, and many of those were ill-equipped to accept a possibly delusional psychiatric patient who might not be able to get appropriate treatment back in New Orleans. So the staff at Central converted an unused ward on the premises into a shelter, where a staff member worked around the clock to help locate appropriate housing for the patients. A few new patients were admitted, mostly those who had been found wandering around New Orleans and some already known to us from past admissions to Charity. Eventually, all of our patients were discharged, and there was no longer a reason for us to stay in Pineville. We had been there for five months.

We were next sent to Southeast Louisiana State Hospital, in Mandeville, Louisiana, another hospital for long-term psychiatric patients. I was there for six months. Now I am finally back in New Orleans, working at New Orleans Adolescent Hospital, another state facility. Some of the other staff members from Charity, who traveled together around Louisiana for the previous year, also returned to New Orleans and we continue to work together, although in a different facility. I have been assigned the position of Manager of Clinical Support Services. Through this position, I interact with the entire hospital, including both children and adults.

Life is interesting. I love being back home. My house has been repaired.

The patient population is similar to those who would have been admitted to Charity Hospital, with the exception of an increase of patients with post-traumatic stress syndrome and severe depressions related to the hurricane. Many suffered the effects of returning to New Orleans from Texas or other evacuation sites with the hopes of returning to family and were then unable to find any family members.
ALUMNI DEPARTMENT NEWS

By Phyllis Ginsberg and Ivory Flynn ('04)

Maria Aguilera ('86) (formerly Cruz) now works in Rochester, NY, in a pediatric setting at Occupational Therapy of Rochester. "Dr. [Jim] Hinojosa was one of my professors," she says. "And I was glad to hear he is in charge at the Department." She adds that he was indirectly instrumental in guiding her to her current position.

Offiong Aqua, M.D., has been appointed Clinical Assistant Professor in the NYU Department of Occupational Therapy. He teaches human anatomy. Previously an adjunct faculty member, Dr. Aqua recently received the Steinhardt School of Education’s Teaching Excellence Award on May 1, 2006. The award is given annually to "...outstanding teachers who influence our lives."

Jane Bear-Lehman, Ph.D. ('98), began working at NYU Department of Occupational Therapy in 2004 as an associate professor teaching in both Professional and Post-professional programs. Jane is also the Director of Doctoral Programs for both the Ph.D. and D.P.S. programs and was granted tenure in the Fall of 2006.

Claudia Beyer ('03) has published research in the American Journal of Occupational Therapy. Her research was a qualitative exploratory study with parents and occupational therapists that used the Wilbarger brushing protocol. Parents identified their children's responses during brushing, its perceived efficacy, and interaction of the protocol with family daily schedules.

Lindsey Biel ('99) co-authored the recently published book, Raising a Sensory Smart Child (2005). The book explores sensory integration (SI) dysfunction in children and offers practical advice in areas such as detection and community assistance. Along with her private practice, Lindsey works with special needs children through the state at New York’s Early Intervention Program. More information about her book can be found at www.sensorysmarts.com

Ann Burkhardt (‘79), Associate Professor at Long Island University, was named Director of the Division of Occupational Therapy. Ann has served on the board of the AOTA and has long played an active role in the New York State Occupational Therapy Association (NYSOTA), including as former NYSOTA President and current editor of NYSOTA News.

Christine Chen and Yael Goverover ('02), assistant professors in the NYU Department of Occupational Therapy, have been awarded Challenge Grants from New York University's (NYU) Steinhardt School of Education. Presented by the School’s Office of Research, these grants provide support for faculty projects and research and aim to enhance the interdisciplinary nature of that work.

Paula Connely-Close ('83) is the proud mother of Katherine “Kerry” Close, who won the 79th Annual Scripps National Spelling Bee on June 1, 2006 in Washington, D.C.

June Ackerman Delvalle ('47) is proud to announce that this year will mark her 60th year as a member of the AOTA. She is part of a unique “three generations of OTs” family. Her aunt, Sophia Ackerman, graduated alongside Frieda Behlen. Her cousin’s daughter, Jean Ackerman Matson, is also an OT.

Janet Jedlicka ('88) was appointed Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Dr. Jedlicka joined the UND OT faculty as an associate professor in 2003 and was named Chair in January 2006. At NYU, she had earned a post-professional M.A. with a concentration in mental health.

Lori Licker (formerly Kamer) ('80) wrote and self-published a book entitled Writing Right with Professor Pendleton Pencil. She describes it as a “colorful and reusable handwriting and activity book that teaches children how to write letters and numbers.” For more information, write Lori at lori@writing-right.org.

Joyce Sabari ('92) is Chair of the Occupational Therapy Program at State University of New York Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. Prior to this appointment, she initiated and conducted research in motor assessment in stroke victims while working as an associate professor here at NYU. Published in the August 2005 Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Joyce’s study was supported in part by NYU’s University Challenge Fund.

Nuntanee Satiansukpong ('97) was promoted to the position of Dean Assistant of the Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, and has recently been promoted to Assistant Professor.
Honor Roll of Contributors 2006/2007

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Contributions are invited

Add your name to the list through a gift. Contributions at all levels are necessary to maintain the Frieda J. Behlen Occupational Therapy Scholarship at an economically meaningful level. OT graduates take on critical roles in health care settings, schools, and private practices throughout the city and around the globe. They are committed to improving lives through research, service, and training, and we are committed to allowing them to study full-time with minimal student debt.