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April 2005

University News

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ELIZABETH GRAY DANFORTH DIES AT 75: Elizabeth Gray Danforth, wife of Chancellor Emeritus William H. Danforth and first lady of Washington University for nearly a quarter century, passed away on Wednesday, March 30, 2005, of cancer. She was 75.

GEPHARDT TO GIVE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS: Richard A. Gephardt, former U.S. House minority leader, will give the 2005 Commencement address at Washington University. The University's 144th Commencement will begin at 8:30 a.m. May 20 in Brookings Quadrangle. During the ceremony, Gephardt will also receive an honorary doctor of humane letters degree.

SCIENCE OUTREACH: The Monsanto Fund has awarded Washington University \$3.7 million to develop, build, and operate two custom, mobile, science classrooms. Programming on the vehicles is designed to reach elementary students in underrepresented public schools to help develop enthusiasm for science through interactive experiences and exhibits, and to assist teachers in doing classroom science investigations.



Elizabeth "Ibby" Gray Danforth became a tireless ambassador for the University when her husband was named vice chancellor for medical affairs in 1965 and then chancellor in 1971.

Research

BREAST CANCER VACCINE MAY BE ON THE HORIZON: Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine and the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center are reporting progress toward development of a breast cancer vaccine. Researchers are studying a protein called mammaglobin-A, which is found in 80 percent of breast tumors. Utilizing a DNA vaccine they constructed, they plan to now conduct clinical trials in patients who are at very high risk for breast cancer and in patients who have had a relapse after initial treatment.

"HOBBIT" FOSSILS: A fossil of a diminutive human, discovered in Indonesia and nicknamed the "Hobbit," likely represents a previously unrecognized species of early humans, according to the results of a detailed comparison of the fossil's brain case with those of humans, apes, and other human ancestors. The findings are the results of a study conducted by scientists at Washington University, Florida State University, the University of New England in Australia, and the Indonesian Centre for Archaeology in Jakarta.



Arabidopsis thaliana, the "white rat of the plant world," has been the object of a new discovery that is surprising to many plant scientists.

ALONG CAME POL IV: A team of Washington University biologists, headed by Craig S. Pikaard, Ph. D., professor of biology in Arts & Sciences, has discovered an entirely new cellular

"machine" in plants that plays a significant role in plant flowering and DNA methylation, a key chemical process essential for an organism's development. This fourth kind of RNA polymerase, found only in plants, is thought to have been around for more than 200 million years.

Features

HUSBANDS' CAREERS STILL TRUMP WIVES' IN JOB RELOCATION: Whether a married woman makes a potentially career-enhancing relocation to a big city to pursue job opportunities depends largely on whether or not her husband holds a college degree, suggests a study by economists at Washington University.



Migration patterns of couples where both hold degrees are indistinguishable from couples where only the husband has a degree, while migration patterns of couples where only the wife has a degree are indistinguishable from those where neither partner has a degree.

TAPPING BABY BOOMERS: With the first wave of baby boomers preparing for retirement, the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA), to be held this fall in Washington, D.C., will be an important opportunity to assess aging in America and improve the lives of older Americans. The conference is intended to produce recommendations to guide national aging policy over the next decade through 2015, and the George Warren Brown School of Social Work and the University's Center for Aging have played a significant role in shaping the discussion.

AVOIDING THE "WARS OF RELIGION": The U.S. Supreme Court is again considering whether it is constitutional to display the Ten Commandments on public property. An expert on the American religious experience, Frank K. Flinn, Ph.D., adjunct professor of religious studies in Arts & Sciences, argues that the Ten Commandments have no place on public property. "If there is anything the Founding Fathers wanted to avoid, it was a repeat of the wars of religion that wracked Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries," he says.

Heard on Campus

"Leadership is about facing tough problems and not passing the buck to a future administration or to future generations,

tackling the problems that are going to have the biggest impact as opposed to just dealing with the day-to-day snags that can consume so much of our time. In the business world, we called it confronting reality."

—Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce, during his address "Confronting Reality: The President's Economic Agenda" March 24, 2005, at the John M. Olin School of Business

Kudos

R. Gilbert Jost, M.D., the Elizabeth Mallinckrodt Professor and head of radiology, has been named chairman of the board of directors of the Radiological Society of North America.

Washington University head football coach Larry Kindbom has been named to the American Football Coaches Association Ethics Committee.

Katherine Jahnige Mathews, M.D., assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, was awarded the Association of American Medical Colleges' Herbert W. Nickens Faculty Fellowship for 2004. The annual award honors an outstanding junior faculty member involved in addressing inequities in medical education and health care.

Jeffrey H. Miner, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine in the renal division and assistant professor of cell biology and physiology, received the American Society of Nephrology's 2004 Young Investigator Award.

Jennifer Neuwald, a doctoral student in biology in Arts & Sciences, is one of just seven students in the United States and Canada named a 2004 Canon National Parks Science Scholar.

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One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130
(314) 935-5200