



### Quick Links

[Washington University in St. Louis](#)

[Alumni Association](#)

[Parents](#)

[Alumni & Development Programs](#)

[The Record](#)

[More news...](#)

[Make a Gift to Washington University](#)

[Past Issues of @Washington University in St. Louis](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Update your information](#)



### University News

#### U.S. Energy Secretary Chu to speak at Commencement:

U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, Ph.D., has been selected to give the 2010 Commencement address at Washington University's 149th Commencement on May 21. "I am delighted that Steven Chu has agreed to serve as Washington University's 2010 Commencement speaker," said Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton. "One of the greatest challenges facing us is to develop energy resources that are affordable, abundant, and environmentally sustainable. The opportunity for our graduates to hear from our nation's leader on energy is a tremendous honor. The fact that Dr. Chu has a special connection to Washington University — his father served on the faculty in our School of Engineering & Applied Science — makes his participation even more meaningful."



#### Preston M. Green Hall to be built on northeast corner of Danforth Campus:

A groundbreaking ceremony for a new School of Engineering & Applied Science building on the Danforth Campus of Washington University was held April 30 in the parking lot adjacent to the newly completed Stephen F. & Camilla T. Brauer Hall, near the corner of Skinker Boulevard and Forest Park Parkway. The next phase in the new School of Engineering complex at the northeast corner of the Danforth Campus, the building will be named in recognition of the late alumnus Preston M. Green, EN36.

#### Sustainability plan released:

Washington University has released its Strategic Plan for Environmentally Sustainable Operations. The plan details the university's sustainability achievements, aspirations, and challenges in terms of energy and water use, food sources, recycling, and transportation, among others. It was developed by the Sustainable Operations Leadership Council (SOLC), chaired by Henry S. Webber, executive vice chancellor for administration.

### Research

#### Meaningful conversation may be key to happiness:

Outgoing, gregarious people who fill their lives with deep, meaningful conversations may have found at least one key to a happier life, suggests research from Washington University and the University of Arizona. People who spend less time alone and more time talking to others have a much greater sense of personal well-being, suggests the study, which is published in a recent issue of *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science.

#### Finding may help prevent vision loss in tumor disorder:

Nerve cells in the body and in the brain react in opposite ways to the loss of a protein linked to a childhood tumor syndrome, researchers at Washington University School of Medicine have found. The finding could be important to efforts to preserve the vision of patients with neurofibromatosis 1, a genetic condition that increases risk of benign and malignant brain tumors.



### Tweet: Scientists decode songbird's genome:

Nearly all animals make sounds instinctively, but baby songbirds learn to sing in virtually the same way human infants learn to speak: by imitating a parent. Now, an international team of scientists, led by the School of Medicine, has decoded the genome of a songbird — the Australian zebra finch — to reveal intriguing clues about the genetic basis and evolution of vocal learning.

### Features



Idle time is a key ingredient to becoming more creative in your personal and professional lives, says R. Keith Sawyer, associate professor of education and of psychology in Arts & Sciences.

### Volcano ash airport gridlock may help travelers rediscover creative genius, says psychologist:

The dark clouds of volcanic ash that have closed airports and stranded travelers for days on end may have a silver lining, suggests an expert on human creativity from Washington University. Like it or not, stranded travelers around the globe are suddenly finding themselves with a lot of unscheduled time on their hands, and idle time is a key ingredient to becoming more creative in your personal and professional lives, says R. Keith Sawyer, Ph.D., associate professor of education and of psychology in Arts & Sciences.

### Perhaps a longer lifespan, certainly a longer 'healthspan':

Organisms from yeast to rodents to humans all benefit from cutting calories. In less complex organisms, restricting calories can double or even triple lifespan. It's not yet clear just how much longer calorie restriction might help humans live, but those who practice the strict diet hope to survive past 100 years old. In a review article in the April 16 edition of *Science*, nutrition and longevity researchers at Washington University School of Medicine, University College in London, and the Andrus Gerontology Center at the University of Southern California report that calorie restriction influences the same handful of molecular pathways related to aging in all the animals that have been studied.

### A new generation of philanthropists dominates contest for nonprofit ventures:

What do ballroom dancing, fresh farm produce, and paper beads from Africa have in common? They are central to the business plans of award-winning ventures in the 2010 YouthBridge Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Competition. Five start-up businesses dedicated to helping others shared a total of \$155,000 in cash grants presented at a ceremony April 13 at Washington University.

### Kudos

Ryan Anderson, a second-year medical student and president of the class, was one of 30 medical students nationwide to receive the American Medical Association Foundation's 2010 Leadership Award. The award provides medical students, residents, fellows, and early-career physicians with special training to develop their skills as future leaders in organized medicine and community affairs.

Stuart A. Kornfeld, M.D., the David C. and Betty Farrell Professor of Medicine, received the 2010 George M. Kober Medal, one of the highest awards in academic medicine, from the Association of American Physicians at the association's annual meeting in Chicago on April 23.

Hugh Macdonald, the Avis H. Blewett Professor of Music in Arts & Sciences, received a gold medal from La Renaissance Française at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. Macdonald is one of the first six American recipients of La Renaissance Française's medals for the promotion of French language or culture.

Elaine Mardis, Ph.D., associate professor of genetics and of molecular microbiology and co-director of The Genome Center, received the Scripps Genomic Medicine Award at the Future of Genomic Medicine

### Heard on Campus

"I believe that to be great you have to first find your path, find what would make you great. The next step to greatness is to believe in your path. The third step of greatness, which we all have in us, is to live it. Live your path."

— Common, Grammy award-winning hip-hop artist and speaker for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Lecture, in his Assembly Series talk, titled "Common Sense, Common Knowledge," in Graham Chapel on March 29, 2010

conference March 5 and 6. The award is presented to researchers who have an extraordinary impact on genomic medicine. Mardis was selected for her work in cancer genome sequencing.

Linda J. Sandell, Ph.D., the Mildred B. Simon Research Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, is the 2010 recipient of the Women's Leadership Award from the Osteoarthritis Research Society. The award is given annually to recognize a woman biologist, clinician, or engineer who, throughout her professional lifetime, has made significant contributions to the understanding of the musculoskeletal system and musculoskeletal diseases and injuries.

Michael Sherraden, Ph.D., the Benjamin E. Youngdahl Professor of Social Development, was named to *Time Magazine's* 2010 TIME 100, the magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world. Sherraden, the founder and director of the George Warren Brown School's Center for Social Development, is known for his pioneering work on asset building for low-income people.

Tzyh-Jong Tarn, D.Sc., professor of electrical and systems engineering and director of the Center for Robotics and Automation, received the Einstein Professorship Award from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Einstein Professorships, established in 2005, are awarded annually to 10-12 distinguished international scientists actively working at the frontiers of science and technology to conduct lecture-tours in China.

Elliott M. Weiss, a fourth-year medical student, received the Osler Medal from the American Association for the History of Medicine. The award recognizes the best scholarly essay in history by a current medical student.

Wei Zou, M.D., Ph.D., research instructor in pathology and immunology, has received one of eight American Society for Bone and Mineral Research John Haddad Young Investigator Awards.

About @Washington University in St. Louis

This newsletter is prepared by Special Development Communications Projects staff in Alumni and Development Programs. It is intended to provide a brief summary of what is happening at the University. Alumni, parents, and friends of the University for whom we have valid e-mail addresses automatically receive @Washington University in St. Louis.

Copyright 2010, Washington University in St. Louis  
One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130  
(314) 935-5000

