

# SUPEOPLE

Sean Quimby

## Rare Librarian

THE STANDARD FOR LIBRARIES WAS ONCE sheer quantity: the more stuff in the building, the better. Then the Internet came along, filling screens and clearing shelves. Reference volumes became searchable databases, journals morphed into download sites, and books began drifting into digital memory. Today, libraries are measured by the quality of their rarest holdings—and Sean Quimby, director of the SU Library's Special Collections Research Center (SCRC), believes Syracuse is exceptionally well prepared for leadership in the emerging information environment. "Our special collections are wide ranging in subject and impressive in depth," says Quimby, who arrived from Stanford in 2006 to take charge of the SU Library's 2,060 archival collections, totaling some 30,000 linear feet of boxed materials as well as more than 100,000 printed works. "Our priority in The Campaign for Syracuse University is to create a special collections endowment that will enable us to grow the collections in ways that enhance their intellectual value and preserve the University's one-of-a-kind assets."

Quimby earned a master's degree in American history and received museum certification from the prestigious Hagley Fellows program at the University of Delaware, and then a second master's degree, in library and information science, at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. An archivist with a specialist's background in the history of technology and the study of material culture, he also enjoys teaching courses that familiarize students with the educational resources available to them at the SCRC ([library.syr.edu/information/spcollections/nav2.htm](http://library.syr.edu/information/spcollections/nav2.htm)). In a profession dominated by rare-book specialists, Quimby's experience with artifacts and digital media trends has broadened his view of what constitutes intellectual capital. "The book is, first and foremost, a technology, and like most forms of technology, its centrality is likely to be time-bound," he says. "The book has endured so long because—like the



wheel—it works. I know some people dread the day when they might have to read books from a computer screen, but their children or grandchildren may embrace that way of reading or, more likely, fail to notice it as anything but normal."

As he works toward an endowment that will allow SCRC to optimize the value of its archival gems, Quimby is engaged in a continuing series of projects designed to put its holdings into the flow of intellectual life on campus. Recent exhibitions have explored Central New York's involvement in the struggle for Armenian independence during World War I and the politically charged Sacco and Vanzetti capital case of the 1920s. This spring, Quimby celebrated the official dedication of the center's new digital-ready reading and seminar room, named for SU professor emerita Antje Bultmann Lemke G'56, whose many contributions to the University include securing the papers of Nobel Laureate Albert Schweitzer. The Lemke Room's facilities allow students to use extraordinary artifacts, ranging from pages of a 442-year-old Gutenberg Bible to issues of rare Beatnik-era periodicals containing little-known work by such writers as Diane Di Prima and Jack Kerouac. "I have a great job," Quimby says. "I'm in charge of the things that make Syracuse University unique."

—David Marc



## Catherine Bertini | Advancing Global Relief

AS FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Program (WFP), Maxwell Professor of Practice Catherine Bertini conferred with some of the world's most powerful leaders. Her photo collection highlights meetings with Kofi Annan, Yasser Arafat, Ariel Sharon, George H.W. Bush, and others. Along with those pictures are images of people she served around the world, including one that captures a favorite memory: a photo of her carrying a young boy while surrounded by the smiling, curious faces of children in a Mozambique refugee camp. "You have to be with the people to assess the work your organization is doing," Bertini says. "If you don't get a sense of what the people really need, you can never do any good."

Bertini, a native Central New Yorker, first learned those lessons as acting assistant secretary for family support in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and later as assistant secretary for food and consumer services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where she helped reform food-stamp distribution and create a food package for low-income, breastfeeding mothers. "We looked at how to improve delivery of services to ease people's hardships and get them the nutrition they needed," Bertini says.

During her decade-long tenure at WFP, which ended in 2002, Bertini pursued the same mission from her Rome offices, monitoring the agency's work in such places as North Korea, Afghanistan, and Bosnia. She charged ahead with modernizing WFP, the world's largest international humanitarian agency, which provided food aid to 77 million people in 82 countries in 2001. The United States and the 36-government WFP board recognized the changes as models for UN reform. "WFP, which is voluntarily funded, was well regarded, but we had to make

sure it was transparent, extremely efficient, and accountable," says Bertini, who was named 2003 World Food Prize Laureate by the World Food Prize Foundation of Des Moines, Iowa, in recognition of her accomplishments with the WFP. She donated the \$250,000 award to the Friends of the WFP for a girls' education trust fund. "Words cannot describe what the honor meant—it was very special," she says.

In 2000, as an envoy for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Bertini worked with a team to bring relief to millions of people suffering the effects of drought in the Horn of Africa. Two years later, she led a UN mission to address humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank. In 2003, she was appointed UN under-secretary-general for management, responsible for managing the organization's human, physical, and financial resources. Bertini's skills were further recognized last year, when she was named a senior fellow with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Program and was appointed by Annan to the new Global Humanitarian Forum, which seeks to strengthen the global response to humanitarian crises. She also received the 2007 Gene White Lifetime Achievement Award for Child Nutrition from the School Nutrition Association.

An invitation from Maxwell Dean Mitchel Wallerstein G'72 to become a Professor of Practice in public administration drew her to SU in 2005. She teaches Humanitarian Action, Managing International Organizations, and Girls Education. "I am invigorated by the idea that I can funnel my experiences in measurable ways to students who want to make a difference in the world," Bertini says. "It's a wonderful opportunity to be at this first-class institution."  
—Kathleen Haley

## SUPEOPLE

Tomás Gonzalez

### Life Lessons for Law Students

ALTHOUGH HE KNOWS FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE that studying law is a serious endeavor, Tomás Gonzalez G'05 believes it's good for students to take time out to enjoy themselves. In fact, he considers it an important part of his job as the College of Law's senior assistant dean of student life to create opportunities for future lawyers to learn about living a balanced life. So when a team of first-year students invited him to shave his head to help raise \$10,000 for childhood cancer research, Gonzalez proudly participated—not only because it was a worthy cause, but also because it gave him a chance to engage with students in ways that demonstrate you can be a professional, while giving back to your community, and have fun doing it. "Law students are under so much pressure," says Gonzalez, a College of Law graduate with 17 years of experience in student affairs. "So my mantra to them is that the more you are able to relax and let life kind of flow through you, the more successful you will be. Yes, it's important to work hard. But it's also important to live life and enjoy yourself."

Gonzalez leads an 11-member staff in his newly created position, bringing together, under one umbrella, the college's Office of Student Life and Office of Professional Development and Career Opportunities. "This holistic approach to student life and student affairs is unique among law schools," he says. "We're trying to address the various needs our students have beyond the classroom, including professionalism, academic and personal counseling, wellness, and diversity issues. Our goal is to be a one-stop shop for them, and our vision is to be recognized within five years as a top student life program among law schools across the country."

While earning a law degree, Gonzalez worked full time as the University's assistant director of the Office of Greek Life and Experiential Learning in the Division of Student Affairs. An expert in leadership and community development, academic support programs, diversity education, and student recognition programs, he is also a nationally recognized speaker in the area of legal issues concerning online communities.

Gonzalez originally dreamed of being an opera singer. A tenor with degrees in music education and voice performance, he won the 1982 National Association of Teachers of Singing East Coast competition. He still loves singing and often performs around his home in Geneva, New York—in area productions, at churches and weddings, and in a barbershop chorus with his 11-year-old

son Joseph. But in terms of a career path, higher education is where his heart lies. "All the training I did as a musician made me realize my best work was with people, not locked away in the practice room by myself for hours and hours," he says. "I need a collaborative atmosphere to be successful." Gonzalez admires the dedication professional musicians bring to their work, and hopes to instill the same sense of passion in the law students he encounters. "I know what it takes to persevere," he says. "So it's great to help students achieve goals they've set for themselves."

—Amy Speech





Wendy Ng |

## Building Success in the Classroom and Beyond

ONE REASON WENDY NG '08 CHOSE TO MAJOR IN CIVIL ENGINEERING IS SHE'S GOOD with numbers. But it doesn't take a mathematical genius to figure out there are a lot more men succeeding and thriving in the profession than women. It isn't because they are smarter or work harder, maintains Ng, whose impressive GPA earned her a Thomas and Colleen Wilmot Scholarship in each of her four years at the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science (LCS). It is simply that engineering is a traditionally male-dominated field, one in which bright and ambitious young women like Ng find too few role models. "I don't think it is harder to study engineering as a female, but in my experience it is difficult to compete with male engineers in the job market because there are so many of them and so few of us," says Ng, who is also pursuing a management studies minor at the Whitman School. "Many people say that companies are trying to shift the balance and give more opportunities to females now, but I think big changes will require a lot more time."

As public relations chair and web master for SU's section of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Ng encourages women engineers to attain high levels of academic and professional achievement and enjoys the support of others for her own educational and career pursuits. "The professional workshops held by SWE are definitely helpful," she says. "It is always nice to hear successful women talk about their experiences and give students hints on how to achieve success."

Ng also assists first-year students as a peer advisor, has served as president of SU's chapter of the Alpha Omega Epsilon professional engineering sorority, and mentors students at Blodgett Middle School in Syracuse. "A group of LCS students gets together on Fridays and goes to the school to teach lessons that emphasize science and engineering," she says. "We've built bridges and played with parachutes and even tried to make a refrigerator. It's fun, and the kids get excited!"

As she approaches graduation and launches a job search, Ng is grateful for the tight-knit atmosphere at LCS, and values the hands-on experience she gained through two summer internships with General Electric. "I really like our school," she says. "Everyone around me has been really helpful, and that kind of support and personal connection has definitely made a difference for me."

—Amy Speech

## Thomas and Colleen Wilmot Scholarship

**Recipients:** Civil engineering majors in the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science

**Background:** The scholarship was established in 1989 by Syracuse University Trustee Thomas C. Wilmot '70 and his wife, Colleen. This fall, the Wilmots expanded their generous support to SU with a \$6 million gift to strengthen the University's initiatives in built environments and entrepreneurship. Half of the funds will be used to establish the Thomas and Colleen Wilmot Endowed Chair, and \$2 million will go to a bequest, to be used to advance a vitally important program at the time it is made. The balance will go to the Wilmot scholarship endowment. "I am pleased to have the opportunity to give back to the University that has meant so much to me and my family over the years," says Wilmot, chair of Wilmorite Inc., a Rochester-based real estate development business. "Colleen and I feel it is a privilege to support two of the most important components of the University—the faculty and the students—with this gift."

## SUPEOPLE



## Vincent Cobb | Inspired to Lead

AS A STUDENT LEADER AND COMMUNITY ACTIVIST, Vincent E. Cobb II '08 speaks with deep conviction about his faith, the challenges faced by inner-city youth, and his commitment to empowering them through education. "My strongest passion is for the community," he says. "I feel that's where my calling is."

A lifelong Syracuse resident and Nottingham High School graduate, Cobb is the oldest of four children and will be the first in his family to earn a bachelor's degree. He credits his parents (his father, Vincent E. Cobb, is an instructional technology analyst at the Newhouse School) with instilling in him the importance of education and family. He also cites his home church, the Evangelical Church of God in Christ, and his pastor and godfather, the Rev. Kenneth Reed, with inspiring him to have the faith and determination to take on challenges. "I have to be challenged in some way to feel I have progressed," Cobb says.

At Syracuse University, Cobb has marked his progress on several fronts. A double major in political philosophy and policy studies, with a double minor in political science and economics, he participated in Orange Seeds, a leadership program for first-year students, served as president of the campus chapter of the NAACP, and has been active in the Student Association (SA) and Chancellor's Initiatives. Through it all, he has remained involved with his church and community projects, including helping to establish a youth center and organizing an annual gospel benefit concert that provides scholarship support for local students. A strong advocate of diversity and the perspectives it brings from different walks of life, Cobb wants to give voice to the city's young people, and he shares his inspirational

message at national conferences and local high schools.

As a high school student, he spoke at SU's annual Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration and helped organize the 2004 Hip-Hop Summit, which brought entrepreneur Russell Simmons and his message of youth empowerment to the Carrier Dome. The experiences helped Cobb lay the groundwork for Empowering Minds (EM), an SU student organization he co-founded with former SA president and friend Travis Mason '06. Dedicated to inspiring inner-city youth to pursue higher education, EM hosts an annual all-day conference on campus for area high school students that explores education, leadership, civic engagement, and other issues. Past guest speakers have included such television personalities as BET's "Cousin Jeff" Johnson and ESPN's Steven A. Smith. "We want to give these kids a sense of who they can be," Cobb says. "They really want the opportunity to go to college, but don't think it's possible because of their backgrounds and where they come from, so it's a huge responsibility for us to convey the message that college is an option for them."

Cobb, who is writing a book about his SU experience, is open-minded about his future. He is considering pairing his interest in community activism with work in development and regional planning, or with graduate studies in higher education, business, or divinity. "When people are excited about life and pursue whatever endeavors their hearts desire, that's what I love to see," he says. "I want to see people cultivating their dreams and passions because I believe that's what makes for a better community." Count on Vincent Cobb doing the same.

—Jay Cox

Eileen Stempel |

## Exploring the Musical Landscape

EILEEN STEMPEL WAS JUST A YOUNGSTER WHEN she fell in love with the opera. At the time, of course, it had more to do with the singers' dazzling costumes than a precocious passion for Puccini. Not a bad gig, she figured, if you can't be a fairy princess. Stempel laughs at the childhood memory, but that early attraction to music proved prophetic. With a soaring soprano register that critics have described as "radiant," "exquisite," and "brilliant," Stempel has sung for a U.S. president and in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls and opera houses. She has won national and international vocal competitions and presents lecture-recitals to national conferences of her peers. Her latest CD, which sets Margaret Atwood's poetry to the music of women composers, is due out this year.

At SU, Stempel juggles several roles: artistic director for Pulse, the University's performing arts series; director of strategic planning for a master's degree program in arts administration/arts leadership; recipient of an entrepreneurship grant to enrich the arts in Central New York; and professor in the College of Arts and Sciences. Her signature class—Performance Live!—explores music within a cultural context, focusing coursework around the lineup of performers appearing at SU under the auspices of Pulse or the Syracuse Symposium. In preparation for a concert by Grammy Award-winning saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera, for instance, her class studied the roots of Latin jazz. Performers also visit her classroom. Her goal, Stempel says, is to create "entry points" through which students can discover their own love for music in any of its myriad forms. "It's a little bit like speed dating," she says. "These programs happen in rapid rotation. So if you didn't like the Harlem String Quartet, maybe you'll like the Calcutta Quartet. And if you don't like D'Rivera, maybe you'll like the Brazilian ensemble."

Stempel began studying music at age 7 and at 15 was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, making her Kennedy Center debut before President Reagan. She attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and Jerome Hines Opera Music Theater International, and earned a doctorate from Indiana



University. Today, after an extensive career in opera and as a soloist for oratorios and other symphonic repertoire, she concentrates on recitals and has a particular interest in highlighting the historically neglected work of women composers. "There's this treasure trove of knowledge we don't have access to simply because the teaching materials we're taught from don't include women," she says. "Without that visibility, we don't understand there are works out there by women that are worthy of study, worthy of performing."

Stempel says her passion for exploring unfamiliar or culturally diverse musical terrain feeds her work at SU as she seeks to inspire the next generation of music lovers. "Teaching, performing, researching: They really do flow together in an inexplicably beautiful way," she says. "I don't think at this point the world needs another *Magic Flute* from me. But I do feel this is a chance to make a more lasting, perhaps ultimately more profound, impact on the musical landscape of the future."

—Carol Boll