

# Prof's gown earns international textile association award

**F**abric and an admiration for artwork helped Rosetta LaFleur, Department of Consumer Studies, win a top design award from the International Textile and Apparel Association at a recent conference in Cincinnati (see related article).

LaFleur bought the fabric for the winning dress design, "Metallic Fan," over 10 years ago. "At that time, it was something that just attracted my attention," she said, holding up the lightweight dress. "I liked the sheerness of it. I liked the metallic yarns running through it. I had no idea what I would do with it."

The next spark came in Paris, while LaFleur was visiting the Louvre and admiring the work of Edgar Degas. "I was just inspired by the ballet dancers and the lightness," she says.

"For me, it's the fabric," she said. "I like textiles. I like the idea of looking at a design on a piece of fabric and asking, 'OK, if I put a design line here, how will it change the look of that fabric?'"

But, her fascination with fabric and design extends back a lot further than 10 years.

In Baton Rouge, La., where LaFleur grew up with her father, mother, two sisters and two brothers, she picked up textile and design skills by watching her mother sew. LaFleur majored in textiles and clothing at Southern University, attending Louisiana State University, where she earned her master's degree. She completed her doctorate in 1982



KATHY FLICKINGER

Rosetta LaFleur with her award-winning creation at the University of Tennessee.

She said her early years shaped her style. "I think I'm two different people," she said. "Inside the classroom, I'm very serious, no nonsense, get to the point. I have a plan when I go in there. Outside the classroom, I have a softer side. I think it shows in my advisement. There are some students who might not like me in the classroom but want me to be their adviser."

Shannon Blake, 22, CHEP '98, now working at QVC in West Chester, Pa., said she clearly remembers her first day of class. "She handed out comments that students had written about her on her review from last year," Blake said. "It was really quite an attention-getter. It was almost intimidating. She wasn't shy about it at all. She just sat up there looking at us as we were reading them. She was pretty much doing it to tell us what we had to prepare for."

LaFleur joined UD's consumer studies faculty in 1983. Today she teaches several classes, primarily "Advanced Textiles" and "Advanced Fashion Merchandising." She also helps students get a taste of the fashion world. She assists in arranging visits to New York City for students to meet with merchandising and fashion industry experts. She helps identify internship options for students and

encourages them to acquire industry experience prior to graduation. This gives students a taste of future work and informs prospective employers of their training at the University, according to LaFleur. "We want to keep pace with what's going on so that once the students graduate, they are prepared," she said.

In addition, LaFleur is faculty liaison for a program with the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York, a leading four-year state school with degrees in art and design and business and technology. Under the program, UD consumer studies students can spend three years at the Newark campus and one year at FIT.

LaFleur advises students and oversees their educational progress with FIT. Karen Stein, consumer studies department chair, said, "Perhaps her greatest impact is being director of our liaison program with the Fashion

Institute of Technology. She counsels students and keeps in touch with them while they're there so a piece of Delaware travels with them. Her impact really has to do with the personal relationships that she forms with our students," she stressed.

"I really want students to be successful," LaFleur said. "I want them to feel that once they leave the University that they are well-prepared and can compete with anybody out there."

During the 1999 winter session, Josette Moore, 22, CHEP '99, now working at *McCall's* magazine in New York, said she remembers shopping with LaFleur in Paris at a street market. "Prof. LaFleur took three of us. She knew exactly where to go and what to buy and how to bargain. It was remarkable to see how comfortable she was in the city. From that perspective, we didn't look at her as our teacher."

On the last day of LaFleur's advanced fashion merchandising class, she takes a picture of each student. She asks everyone to send notes about where they are employed and how they are doing after they graduate.

LaFleur smiled and showed a department bulletin board filled with the faces and notes from the students of her classes. She reads the employer names: Tommy Hilfiger, Guess, Richard Tyler, *McCall's*, Bloomingdale's, Saks Fifth Avenue, to name a few. It's a long list.

LaFleur said she believes that her roles of instructor, adviser and designer require creative ideas that need tending. "But, it doesn't always have to be nurtured by working on the ideas," she said. She often will leave a project alone and switch to another activity, such as gardening or golf. "You can plant it in your mind as a seed," she said. "Go away. Then, come back to it. If you want to maintain creativity in your life, try to focus on things outside of what you might consider your world." ☞

-Chris Lepine

## The winning design

**T**he International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) recently presented Rosetta LaFleur, consumer studies, with its Outstanding Faculty Designer award for 2000 at its annual conference in Cincinnati. LaFleur received the award for her dress design, "Metallic Fan." Her work was selected by an independent panel of fashion industry experts. ITAA members are faculty at institutions worldwide.

The winning design is an elegant formal dress created for a young woman, age 16-25. It includes double layers of crisp metallic plaid polyester organza, tricolor nylon, cotton batiste, gold buttons and gold beading. The bodice front features a fan design made from folded material at the bust line.

The industry review panel recognized LaFleur for her significant research,

interpretation of current and historical styles and technical patterning and construction techniques for the design. "Metallic Fan" was inspired by works from the 19th century. While in Paris a couple of years ago, LaFleur visited the Louvre and admired several paintings by Edgar Degas. "I was just inspired by the ballet dancers and the lightness," she said. "When I came back, I was trying to think about what I could do to capture the feeling in fabric."

Although LaFleur's area of emphasis is in fashion merchandising, she often designs clothing. She said she decided to enter the competition after teaching a course involving computer-aided design. "I became more interested in not only how apparel designs were forecasted but actually doing them myself," she said. ☞

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 PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

A campus community newspaper published biweekly during the academic year by the Office of Public Relations.

Material for publication in UPDATE should be submitted by 4 p.m., the Thursday before the publication date, to: UPDATE, Office of Public Relations, 150 South College Ave., Newark, DE 19716, telephone 831-2791 or [UpDate@udel.edu].

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*Memorial Hall in the snow*

# UPDATE

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# WINTER

VOL. 20, No. 8

DEC. 14, 2000



**Faculty member receives top design award.**



**Students show off their mousetrap cars.**



**Sophomore one of five Nordstrom scholars**



**National Send-Off Jan. 7 in Rust Ice Arena**

# SDATE

VOL. 20, No. 8



COMPUTER  
PROGRAM  
SALES EXCEED  
\$1.7 MILLION.

Please see page 8.

DEC. 14, 2000

## Senior named UD's newest Rhodes Scholarship recipient

No one who knows Thomas Pellathy is the least bit surprised to learn that the earnest young scholar is the latest University of Delaware senior to earn a Rhodes Scholarship. The third UD student to win the prestigious award in the last 10 years, Pellathy learned of his scholarship over the weekend after a round of interviews with scholarship committee members in Washington, D.C.

While Stephanie Vega, his wife of five months, waited anxiously in a D.C. coffee shop, Pellathy said he enjoyed chatting with the interview committee and had a good feeling going into the final session where the awards were announced.

"When they announced the four regional winners, they called my name first. Then, they talked to the four of us and gave us lots of papers to fill out, but it's all a blur to me. All I wanted to do was run to the coffee shop and tell Stephanie," he said.

"He was later than I thought he would be," Vega, herself a UD alumna and current graduate student, said. "At first, I kept hoping he'd get there and be a winner, but the later it got, the



KATHY FLICKINGER

*Reflecting their international interests, Rhodes Scholar Thomas Pellathy and his wife, Stephanie Vega, are pictured with a wooden cup from her native Paraguay used for drinking herbal tea. Draped behind them is a Guatemalan blanket.*

more I just wanted him to get there and be safe!

"I was pretty sure as soon as I saw him round the corner outside the shop that he had won, but when he came in, he didn't say anything. I had to ask him and then he just couldn't talk. He just held up the papers and pointed to them. Then, we started screaming. We were so excited," Vega said.

After phone calls to both sets of

Please see *Academic* on page 6

## Blue Hen athletes to compete in Colonial Conference in '03

The University of Delaware announced Wednesday, Dec. 13, that the Blue Hen athletics program will leave the America East conference and join the Colonial Athletic Association, effective July 1, 2003.

Colonial Athletic Association commissioner Thomas E. Yeager announced in a televised press conference at the MCI Center that four current America East conference members—UD, Drexel University, Hofstra University and Towson University—will join the conference. The four schools will remain members of America East until joining the CAA.

"Today marks the beginning of the new CAA, spreading from New York City to eastern North Carolina," Yeager said. "Our four incoming members boast programs that are highly regarded on a national level in terms of both academic and athletic excellence. These schools will mesh well with the existing membership of the Colonial Athletic Association and enhance our reputation as we move forward."

Delaware and the other three will join George Mason, James

Madison, Old Dominion and Virginia Commonwealth universities, the

University of North Carolina-Wilmington and the College of William & Mary to form a 10-team conference that will conduct championships in 20 sports. With their arrival, women's softball and men's lacrosse championships will be established with the possibility of other championships being added in the future.

"The reputation of the CAA is greatly enhanced today," said Dr. Alan Merten, president of George Mason University and chair of the CAA President's Council, said. "The ties we share with these four schools have been strengthened. They are four highly regarded institutions and they are a perfect fit. This adds to the already proud history of the CAA."

The move affects 21 of the 23 Blue Hen athletic programs. Football will remain a member of the Atlantic 10 Football Conference and women's rowing will remain an NCAA Division I independent. CAA currently does not sponsor a men's or women's

Please see *Colonial* on page 8

## Freshman students get a kick out of new LIFE experience

More than 160 students, faculty and visitors attended a celebration of LIFE (Learning Integrated Freshman Experience) on Dec. 4, in the Rodney Room of the Perkins Student Center. At the event, 115 first-year students who were part of 11 groups—called clusters—displayed their end-of-the-semester cooperative projects and answered questions about their LIFE experiences.

The event was the culmination of a new program where students with similar academic interests become part of a small learning community,

or cluster, and enroll in thematically related introductory courses, plus UNIV 101, a one-credit First Year Experience seminar. Members of LIFE cluster groups with a residential component also live in the same residence hall.

Students in the LIFE experience program have spent the fall semester working in clusters to complete final projects that range from making advertisements and posters, to creating videos and building a computer. LIFE clusters are assisted by a faculty contact and upperclassmen who serve as peer

mentors and facilitate the UNIV 101 course.

"The students have been working on these projects throughout the semester," Meghan Biery, program peer mentor coordinator and graduate assistant in the Center for Teaching Effectiveness (CTE), said, "This event is a culmination of that project in a way that is very visible to the University community."

Biery said that feedback on the LIFE program has been positive and that additional clusters are planned for the spring semester.

"Students take courses together, and the peer mentors can help direct them towards University resources as they are needed," Biery said. "The clusters give the new students an instant study group and an instant group of friends."

William Frawley, faculty advisor on general education for Academic Programs and Planning, said being involved with LIFE has led him to appreciate the importance of providing a coherent and thematically-focused experience for first-year students.

Please see *Cluster* on page 8