Postscript 1961

Congratulations to Willamette Class of 1961 alumnus Dale Mortensen, Professor of Economics at Northwestern University, for winning the 2010 Nobel Prize in Economics

Introducing Our 2010-11 Class of 1961 Scholar: Kenneth “Kenny” Miller
By Stewart Butler
Hayden Lake, Idaho

Kenneth “Kenny” Miller, a well-rounded Willamette junior from Woodland, Wash., has recently been chosen as the fourth Class of 1961 Scholar. Kenny, who is a serious student, an athlete, and an outdoorsman, is a math major with a physics minor. In the realm of sports, he is the center on this year’s Willamette football team. Looking ahead, he is planning to obtain his Masters in Teaching degree and then do “double duty” by becoming both a high school math or physics teacher and a football coach.

His interests and talents are rooted in his younger years. An avid steelhead fisherman, he grew up on the banks of the Lewis River near Woodland, where his father, a former fishing guide, began teaching him the art of fishing at age four. Through his earlier football participation, Kenny developed the skills that resulted in his being chosen “All-State Center” while playing football for Woodland High. It was his high school football coach (having attended Bearcat football coach Speckman’s motivational camp) who determined that Willamette was the ideal choice for Kenny.

His interest in math was encouraged by his high school math teacher. Further, recognizing his scholastic talent and academic potential, this teacher stressed to Kenny the importance of a college education.

Kenny was offered scholarships to Linfield and UPS, but Willamette was always his first choice. He remains an enthusiastic supporter of his alma mater, stating that Willamette opened a whole new world to him. On campus, he is an active Sigma Chi member responsible for recruiting this year’s pledge class; one sees that, beyond his academic and athletic participation, he is very engaged socially.

Attending Willamette in these trying economic times is a challenge for most students’ families. Kenny’s is no exception. Unfortunately, an important portion of his tuition funding disappeared when his mother lost her job of twenty years. In the wake of this loss, Kenny has had to rely on other support, including his Class of 1961 Scholarship, which helps to fill the gap in his funding needs. This summer, to help build his college nest egg, he made money in Longview, Wash., painting houses with other students whose company he enjoyed. He is candid that his recollection of working as a farmhand the previous summer is a constant reminder to him of the importance of staying in school.

Kenny, with a very full program, manages to successfully balance his football, academic, and social activities.
While he has many afternoon labs as a science student, his fall football schedule takes up thirty hours per week. Any conflicts in these schedules are ironed out between the Willamette coaching staff and professors, who cooperate to allow Kenny’s completion of his academic requirements. As a math major, most of his classes are in the new Ford Hall, which he describes as an amazing “state of the art” classroom building. Kenny, too, surely benefits from having his core classes near the Sigma Chi house, where he can take needed breaks or seminar with friends.

Kenny Miller, our fourth Class of 1961 Scholar, is the last of our partial scholarship recipients. In the fall of 2011, at the time of our 50th Reunion (Sept. 16-18, 2011), our regular full-tuition scholarship program will get underway. We plan to set aside a little time during the weekend to recognize the four scholars who have demonstrated the efficacy of our Class of 1961 Scholarship Fund. We can thank the Willamette financial aid staff for choosing Kenny Miller, who, along with our three previous scholars, is a fine and deserving recipient of this award.

Professor Monk’s Legacy
By Dorr Dearborn MD/PhD
Cleveland, Ohio

In late-August 1961, newly-minted WU graduates Dale Mortensen and I set out to cross the country in my Austin ‘Bugeye’ Sprite — Dale to go to graduate school at Carnegie Mellon (and ultimately to become a Nobel laureate) and I to go to medical school at the University of Minnesota. Our paths didn’t cross again until our 40th class reunion back at Willamette. By then our frames had recovered from the ride, but our psyches were still raw.

It took me nine years to complete med school because I also took a Ph.D. in biochemistry. In embryology class at Willamette, when we would ask Professor Monk how something developed that way, his firm answer was that we were not to ask “how?” or “why?” because biology was a descriptive science. However, several of us (Mike Waterman, Pete Stenzel and I) found that answer wanting and went into biomedical research to try to find out “how” and “why.” After a pediatric internship at the University of Minnesota, I joined the U.S. Public Health Service (“yellow berets”) for three years as a post-doctoral fellow at the National Institutes of Health. My personal life fell apart in divorce losing five children (two hers, three ours) the day I started on faculty at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. For ten years I was a biochemist directing Cystic Fibrosis research in the pediatrics pulmonary division. I was not seeing patients because I hadn’t completed my pediatrics training; however, at 44 years old I became a peds resident for a year and a pulmonary fellow for 6 weeks, whereupon I was a pediatrics pulmonologist seeing patients and continuing my research.

In 1994, I noticed that we were seeing too many infants with pulmonary hemorrhage and called the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. We then collaborated with the CDC’s team, in carrying out an investigative study that found that the infants were coming from water damaged houses with mold, specifically with Stachybotrys, subsequently dubbed “black toxic mold.” Its toxins are of the same class of compounds as the chemical warfare agents we accused the Soviets of using in Laos and Afghanistan, but even more potent. One of the initial study group of ten infants died, as did three more subsequent infants in the ensuing year. The documentaries by The Learning Channel and Discovery Health didn’t sit well with the insurance industry (nor did the billions of dollars of mold claims), so pressure was brought on the CDC to re-review our published data linking the infant pulmonary hemorrhages to exposure to Stachybotrys. The CDC withdrew their support of our initial investigation and for the next ten years the original research team had an open disagreement with them. A few months ago, the Director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the CDC invited me to give his monthly science seminar on the health impact of indoor mold. As I left the podium, one of the deputy directors approached me and apologized for their having done the re-review. Our 53 cases (with 90% of them having been exposed to Stachybotrys) seemed to have won the argument.
(3) If you know of someone who has lost contact with the university, get in touch with her/him, and have them email their updated information to alumni@willamette.edu or call the main Alumni office at (503) 375-5304.

(4) Go through old photos, old newspaper articles, and other memorabilia, and send copies by scanning to the aforementioned email address or by snail mailing these materials to Willamette for our slideshow Friday night. In the case of photos, please be sure to identify who is in the pictures, what the occasion was, and include your name and return information on the back.

In summation, we are at ten months out and counting down to our grand 50th Reunion event—September 16-18, 2011. With this in mind, mark the date on your calendar and make plans for your reunion transportation and lodgings. Beyond that, join us in recruiting other classmates to attend, and gather your memorabilia to send in for the Friday evening slide show.

We’ll see you in September!
And Happy Holidays!

Class of 1961 Reunion and Gift Committee

Stewart Butler  Peter Manning  Judy Teufel
Chuck Cheeld  Sammie (Barker) McCormack  Mike Waterman
Harriet Dockstader  Loretta (Ray) Milnes
Karen (Drier) Esayian  Karen (Madsen) Myers
Neil Hutchinson  Alice (Stewart) Pailthorp
Carol (Woodbury) Lane  Bill Richter
Charles Lane  Alice (Eastman) Simpson
Paul deLespinasse

If you’re interested in joining the Reunion and Gift Committee, please contact Alice (Stewart) Pailthorp at kpail@yahoo.com

Alumni Weekend: New Name, Same Fun
Our eagle-eyed classmates will appreciate knowing that what Willamette has formerly called Reunion Weekend will soon be called Alumni Weekend—the name is changing, but the event isn’t!
Look who’s coming to our 50th reunion! (As of Dec. 1, 2010)

Barbara (Giberson) Billings
Barbara (Simon) and Will Bunney
Bev (Fulton) and Marvin Bolland
Stewart Butler
Chuck Cheeld
Karen (Henninger) Cheeld
Roy and Carolyn Chapin
Mary (Blanchard) Coletti
Judd DeBoer
Dorr Dearborn
Paul deLespinasse
Harriet “Skip” Dockstader
Karen (Drier) Esayian
Dick Forcum
John and Teresa Gallagher
Wayne and Carol Gladwin
Barbara (Royer) Graham
William (Bill) Graham
Neil Hutchinson
Carol (Woodbury) Lane
Charles Lane
Judy (Taylor) Lasswell
Betty (Toy) and James Logan
Peter Manning
Sammie (Barker) McCormack
Paul McGilvra
Loretta (Ray) Milnes
Claudia (Peterson) Moore
Dale and Bev Mortensen
Karen (Madsen) Myers
Marcia (Madsen) Myers
Alice (Humphrey) Olson
David Rehfuss
Bill Richter
Jo (Gannon) Roughton
Joan (Barber) Rutlowski
Barbara (Sherk) Schacht
Alice (Eastman) Simpson
Jerry and Norma Spoonemore
Judy Teufel
Mike Waterman

Calling For Submissions

As always, we extend a call for full (300-500 word) feature articles or shorter (one or two paragraph) class notes on the topic of your choice. Contact Erik Schmidt, associate director of alumni communications, at eschmidt@willamette.edu or by mail at 900 State St., Salem, OR 97301.

A 50th reunion ‘Creative Activity Display,’ encompassing classmates’ books, works of art and other creations, is being considered if there is enough interest to warrant this exhibit. Please send your ideas for this ’61 reunion exhibit, along with an explanation of any creative work(s) you would like to contribute, to Judy Teufel at teufelj@easystreet.net.