

University janitor leaves scholarship legacy behind

Attorney gives \$25,000 to establish the George Weyrens Scholarship Fund for University students

BY KARA HANSEN
NEWS REPORTER

A former University custodian had few experiences with students and workers around him in his 19 years on the night shift, but it was for that reason that a friend decided to set up a scholarship in the man's name.

George Weyrens worked as a custodian at the University from 1968 to 1987. His attorney and friend, Marc Perrin, recently donated \$22,000 from Weyrens' estate, as well as \$3,000 of his own money, to establish the George Weyrens Scholarship Fund at the University.

Perrin said he was probably "about the only family George had" after Weyrens' brother died in the 1990s. He described Weyrens as developmentally disabled and "painfully shy," but said he always did the right thing.

"In spite of the barriers George faced in his life, he worked hard, he saved his money, he paid his taxes and he never hurt a soul," said Perrin, who met Weyrens in 1982 when he began helping him with his tax returns. "He's sort of an American success story on the small scale, so it's important for us to remember people like George."

Weyrens lived a quiet life, Perrin said, with few to no friends. He had one plate, one spoon, a coffee cup, a couple of pots and no television, according to a University press release. Newspapers and the radio provided

his only sources of entertainment, the release stated.

When Weyrens died of a stroke in 2001, he left money to Meals on Wheels, St. Mary's Catholic Church and \$22,000 to his attorney to handle as he saw fit.

University custodian Rodney Jensen worked with Weyrens for a few years, but said Weyrens mostly kept to himself.

"Nobody really knew him that well, to be perfectly honest with you. But it's wonderful someone can do this, especially a custodian," Jensen said.

The \$25,000 will accumulate value for an unknown number of years, Perrin said, and he plans to add money annually. He hopes the principle will grow to \$100,000 so it can provide funds to students, especially those who are children of University Facilities Services employees or those with special needs.

The scholarship endowment is an important example of how one person can impact the lives of others, University President Dave Frohnmayer said in a press release.

"How wonderful that a man who never went to college and who, in fact, was developmentally disabled, was able to establish a legacy that will help students obtain a university education," Frohnmayer said.

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IN BRIEF

Court maintains verdict against Portland schools

PORTLAND — The U.S. Supreme Court denied a request from Portland Public Schools to review a \$1 million jury verdict awarded to a former special education teacher.

Pamella Settlegoode's contract was not renewed in 2000 after she repeat-

edly complained about services available to students. She filed suit, contending that the district violated the Disabilities Act of 1978, her First Amendment rights to free speech and the Oregon Whistleblower Act.

A jury deliberated nine hours before awarding her \$1 million in 2001.

A federal magistrate set aside the verdict, but the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals restored the judgment earlier this year.

Settlegoode started teaching in the district in the 1998-1999 school year

after earning a doctorate in education from the University of Oregon.

She was hired to work with disabled high school students in physical education. Settlegoode developed her own curriculum and had students taking part in track, tennis, hiking and self-defense classes.

She complained that some of the equipment was missing or unsafe, and it was tough to find locations to teach her students.

— The Associated Press

Evolution: Team challenges other models

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likelihood model, a statistical and mathematical based model, assumes that evolution is homogeneous for every gene, meaning every gene evolved at the same rate, a behavior that is not manifested in the natural world.

"There's a tendency for people to say maximum likelihood is right," Thornton said. "We hope people will evaluate maximum likelihood. (Our research is) more of an effort to be critical with maximum likelihood and try out different models."

Kolaczowski said he designed the program, which runs on three Apple dual-processor G3 computers, to handle the intensive load that the evolution simulator requires. He added that the simulation uses Apple's Mac OS X operating system for its Unix code.

"This is a very pathetically simple simulation right now that's not close to real life as of now," Kolaczowski said.

Right now, the team said the simulation is working in a wide range of parameters, trying to determine the pattern of problem occurrences from small-

large-scale genetic evolution.

"We used a variable rate — a range of rate observed for real biological circumstances," Kolaczowski said. "We wanted to try out many of our hypotheses to see how well they worked."

HOW DOES THE SIMULATION SHOW EVOLUTION?

Associate Professor Joe Thornton and graduate student Bryan Kolaczowski used a model called maximum parsimony, which maps out a phylogenetic tree by using the fewest steps of evolution possible to explain a given set of data. The simulation then maps an evolution tree that can display genetic relationships between different species.

The project was funded by a National Science Foundation grant to train graduate students in interdisciplinary research in evolution, development and genomics, according to a University press release. Thornton said in the future this project will create more complex evolution simulations. The two men are still working with maximum likelihood and other models so they can improve their models and simulation, Thornton said.

"When you're using a computational or scientific method, you automatically have assumptions and questions you do," looking for that are built into the research you do," Kolaczowski said. "You need to try different approaches to see what assumptions come with every model."

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Bush: President may reshape federal judiciary

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are against abortion were unlikely to be confirmed.

Assistant Law Professor Robert Tsai said Bush may use his "capital" is to shape the federal judiciary by appointing judges, including filling potential openings on the Supreme Court. Tsai said Bush, who has appointed about 170 judges to federal positions, may even have an opportunity to match President Ronald Reagan's efforts to remake the judiciary — Reagan appointed about 350 judges, including three Supreme Court Justices.

Bush might be able to replace between one and four justices during his second term, as Chief Justice William Rehnquist suffers from thyroid cancer and several other justices of age, Tsai said.

Tsai said the "strong assertion of executive power by this particular administration" related to Guantanamo Bay detainees and security issues leads him to believe Bush will seek people with executive experience or who are open to broad executive power.

Novkov agreed that judicial appointments will be extremely important.

"There's a possibility for a fundamental debate on the constitutional level of executive authority depending on what judicial appointments are made," she said.

Tsai said Bush decided to confront difficult issues by focusing on both Social Security and Internal Revenue Service tax code reform.

"He gets points for being ambitious," Tsai said.

Tsai said there is a possibility for consensus on both issues, but he said Democrats will probably be more open to changes in the tax code if Bush's changes are designed only to simplify the code and not make it a "less progressive tax."

However, Tsai said attempts to re-vamp or privatize Social Security will meet with opposition from across the aisle.

"My guess is Democrats will fight tooth and nail on that one," he said.

He added that even minor progress on tax reform will give Bush credit.

"I think these issues are being pushed for a particular reason," he said, adding that a positive Bush legacy would help whoever is running on the Republican ticket in 2008.

"When you personally no longer have an election hanging over you, you start thinking about your legacy," Tsai said.

Bush said there will be changes to his cabinet, but he has not specified what these changes will be.

Past presidents have also faced political difficulties during their second terms. Bill Clinton underwent impeachment by the House after admitting to an affair with intern Monica Lewinsky, and the Iran-contra scandal marred Ronald Reagan's second term.

"We expect too much. Second-term presidents get careless and cocky," said Stephen Wayne, a political science professor at Georgetown University, according to an Nov. 6 Associated Press article. "They either overreach, or do something illegal, or don't manage the way they should."

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