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Government & Politics Newsletter

Summer 2010/Issue 6



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

DEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE ALUMNUS

We hope all is well and that you are surviving these difficult times. Will the economic recession and the oil spill in the Gulf impact the November elections? Will the Republicans reclaim the Congress? What impact will the recession have on the election contest in Connecticut? Needless to say, the forthcoming elections will be fascinating!

Much has transpired during this past Academic Year which we would like to share with you. In addition to describing our department's activity, this year's newsletter contains two special features. Our special features include a summary of Dr. K.'s address at the inaugural ceremony of the John F. Kikoski Scholarship, and Dr. Lesley DeNardis' "Reflections of a Convention Delegate." We trust you will find this year's newsletter informative and thought provoking.

Constitution Day

On September 17, 2009, Congressman Jim Himes, who represents Connecticut's Fourth Congressional District, served as our "Constitution Day" guest speaker. The Congressman spoke before a standing room only audience in the University Commons. He delivered a riveting and well-researched lecture on constitutional prin-

ciples and addressed the challenges that confront a freshman member of Congress. The Congressman also conversed with students long after his formal delivery. This was the fifth "Constitution Day" lecture sponsored by the Department of Government and Politics. Mr. Andrew Schneider, Executive Director of the Connecticut ACLU will serve as our guest speaker in September. The topic will be the Eighth

Amendment and the death penalty in the U.S. Admission is free and open to the public.

The John F. Kikoski Scholarship



Dr. John Kikoski

As many of you know, there is now a scholarship in Dr. K.'s honor that is housed within the Office of Alumni Relations. The scholarship was inaugurated in a special ceremony conducted in the Board Room of the William H. Pitt Health and Recreation Center on April 8, 2010. Dr. K. served as the inaugural ceremony's guest speaker. Approximately twenty-five political science alumni were present for this special event. Ms. Heather Falsetti, a double major in political science and philosophy, and Ms. Whitney Wildman, a double major in political science and history, were

this year's scholarship winners. For those of you who would like to donate to this prestigious scholarship, we have enclosed a pledge card and return envelope. If you have questions you may contact Ms. Kristy (Pacelli '02) Cioffi, the current Director of Alumni Relations. Kristy is also one of our political science graduates. A summary of Dr. K.'s address, which appeared for several weeks on the University website is presented below. Many thanks to Ms. Alexis Harrison ('10), for her excellent reporting.

Former SHU Professor Dr. John Kikoski Presents Talk for Alumni

Affectionately known as "Dr. K.," former professor of Government and Politics at Sacred Heart University, John Kikoski, Ph.D., delivered an address at the William H. Pitt Health and Recreation Center to several generations of graduates. Dr. Kikoski retired from Sacred Heart in 2008, however, his rich legacy as a professor and mentor to scores of students lives on. Several members of the faculty from the Department of Government and Politics were in attendance including Chairman Gary Rose, Ph.D., Lesley DeNardis, Ph.D., and Alka Jauhari, Ph.D. Dr. Rose noted that the Department of Government and Politics has grown by leaps and bounds over the past several years, and now has approximately 100 declared full-time majors, nearly doubling in recent years. "I hope this event begins an alumni tradition," said Dr. Rose.

"Tonight may be the first time I've ever been on time to a class," Dr. Kikoski quipped with a smile, acknowledging his tendency to run a few minutes behind the start of class. "I always tried to be on time, but there was always too much to do in a day, especially students to see in my office." True to form, Dr. Kikoski began his lecture by once again writing the two quotations on the board with which he began the first and last class of every semester: "The circle is the most perfect form in nature, for its end also is its beginning" by Epictetus; and "Whether you believe you can or believe you can't, you're right" by Henry Ford. He then reminded his alumni audience to "TFY" – to "Think for yourself," something he'd always urged them to do as students.

Then he asked a question: "If we Americans are so rich, then why are we so unhappy?"

Studies indicate that people in Haiti and Egypt are happier than we are, and they have nothing materially, while we have everything. Gratitude and humility are the key to everything, while hubris is the key to nothing," the wise Dr. Kikoski said. "So the question -- what does the conceited man of hubris need to learn? He needs to learn nothing because he already knows everything. And what does the humble man of humility need to learn? Everything, because he knows nothing."

Dr. Kikoski said that to think by one line of political thinking or to subscribe to one kind of thought is akin to cheating yourself out of knowledge. "We become prisoners in our minds that way," he said. "As a country, we tend to think in groups. In the North, we think too much as liberals, and in the South, we think too much as conservatives. People in business tend to think as conservatives, and those in academia as liberals. I also am convinced that 'group think' or group 'conventional' thinking played a role getting us into the financial mess we're in. The 'group thinkers' were the ones who caused the problem and lost everything, while those who 'TFY'd' made fortunes."

Dr. Kikoski then underscored the importance of embracing different points of view and thinking by telling the story of Mohamed El-Erian, CEO and Co-CIO of PIMCO, the world's largest bond investor. Reading aloud from an article in which El-Erian had been interviewed, Dr. Kikoski related how as a youngster El-Erian's family lived in Paris where his father was Egypt's ambassador to France. Every day, his father read four newspapers covering the spectrum of political ideologies -- from *Le Figaro* on the right to *L'Humanité*, the newspaper of the Communist Party on the left -- which puzzled young El-Erian.

"I remember asking my father, 'Why do you need to read four newspapers a day?' He responded: 'Unless you read different points of view, your mind will eventually close, and you'll become a prisoner to a certain point of view that you'll never question,'" read Dr. Kikoski. Otherwise, El-Erian conveyed, you'll never spot the new variables or ask the new questions that help one invest successfully in this tumultuous era of new economic and political realities. Dr. Kikoski concluded by asking his students (whatever area they were in) to: "Read widely, read wisely, particularly in this era of high-velocity, novel change."

Dr. Kikoski dispensed more wisdom, telling his former students that over the course of his life he's learned you can't plan everything. "But you can follow your heart, set your goals, and do something that you love. There wasn't a day that went by when I didn't wake up and not love what I was doing. I was excited every September as another academic year began and to be here with you."

Dr. Kikoski also advised the audience to trust their instincts. "Instinct or intuition can be wrong, but it is more often right. There is a nerve that begins in the most primitive, pre-verbal part of our brains that we share with reptiles, and it goes to our intestines, or 'gut.'" Dr. Kikoski said that when he was younger, he dreamed of becoming a physician and planned to attend medical school. "One day, I pulled up in the university parking lot, opened the car door, put one foot on the tarmac, and -- instead of going to the organic chemistry lab -- went to the political science department and asked for an application. To this day, I don't know why I did it but I had an epiphany. Trust your 'gut.' Do what you love. I once read a line that said, 'All truth is feeling.' Trust it," he said.

"Love what you do, love each other, no act of kindness goes unrewarded," he continued. "You can't be loved if you don't love." The reflective Dr. Kikoski said that a series of "awful things" had happened to him many years ago because of certain people, and he finally realized that if he didn't forgive them, they would continue to control him. "The only way to get rid of them was to forgive them and that leads to a much better life."

Dr. Kikoski also called on the audience to have faith in order to accomplish anything different, new, or substantial. "Show me the evidence that Bill Gates or Steve Jobs who started Microsoft and Apple knew beforehand that they would become the giants that they are. The evidence isn't there. Those men had faith. If you want to accomplish anything in life, you have to have faith."

In his final thoughts, a tearful Dr. Kikoski told his students, "I pray for all of you every day -- by name if I've heard one of you is in difficulty or in thanks for your success -- but I pray for all of you and you will always be with me." He concluded by advising his student audience, "And don't wait until you are age 65 (like I did) to enjoy good beer, good scotch,

good wine and occasionally a good cigar," he said with a chuckle.

Candidates Day at SHU



A photo from Candidates Day, 2010. Left to right: campaign volunteer Renee Maturo, SHU students Sarah Burke and, Shana Beladino, gubernatorial candidate Larry DeNardis, and his daughter Professor Lesley DeNardis.

On April 13, 2010, the Department of Government and Politics in conjunction with the College Democrats and College Republicans hosted "Candidates Day" in the University Commons. The event was a great success. More than twenty candidates for public office were present for what essentially was a "meet and greet" for the University community. Hundreds of students, faculty staff and members of the outside community were provided the rich opportunity of personally meeting candidates for the U.S. Senate, Congress, the Connecticut governorship and the Connecticut state legislature. Candidates were provided a personal booth which allowed them to prominently display their campaign literature and other promotional material. The extraordinary success of "Candidates Day" has encouraged the Department to host the event on a regular basis.

A Revised Political Science Major

The valuable feedback we received from last year's survey of political science alumni has resulted in a revised political science curriculum. PO301: Ancient and Medieval Political Thought and PO 302: Modern

Political Thought have now been collapsed into one mandatory theory requirement, PO300: Foundations of Political Thought. Additionally, PO200: Approaches to Political Science is now a required course

for all political science majors. A number of alumni thoughtfully suggested that a methods course be required of all majors. We have responded to your suggestions by mandating PO200. The new political science curriculum is as follows:

Required Courses:

- PO 121: Introduction to American Government
- PO 122: Introduction to International Relations
- PO 200: Approaches to Political Science
- PO 300: Foundations of Political Thought
- One Course in Comparative Politics
- PO 395: Senior Seminar in Political Science
- 18 Credits of Political Science Electives (can include up to 9 credits of internship)

Total required credits = 36

Faculty Scholarship

The political science faculty were active scholars this past Academic Year.

Dr. Lesley DeNardis focused her research agenda this year on the topic of education policy and school finance reform in Con-

necticut. Two articles will be appearing in peer-reviewed journals: "From Equity to Adequacy: Evolving Legal Theories in School Finance Litigation: The Case of Connecticut," Lesley A. DeNardis, *International Journal of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1 and "Horton's Odyssey: The Politics of School Finance Reform in Connecticut," Lesley A. DeNardis, (forthcoming) *New England Journal of Political Science*, Volume IV, issue 3. Both articles address the problem of funding inequities across school districts in Connecticut and the attempts to correct for these inequities from the vantage point of the legislature and the courts.

Dr. Alka Jauhari presented a paper at the African Studies Association Conference, "Sudan: A Divided Society." She also completed a manuscript "Colonial and Post-Colonial Human Rights Violations in Nigeria." Additional activity included reviews of chapters in a book entitled *International Relations in an Uncertain World* published by Oxford University Press, and continued work on an article, "South Sudan: A Fledgling Nation."

Dr. Steve Michels prepared and offered two new political science electives: *Politics and Humor*, and *Politics and Literature*. He has also prepared a new course entitled *Democracy for the fall, 2010 semester*. The three new courses will likely be catalogued in the near future. He also co-authored a chapter with Religious Studies professor Dr. Brian Stiltner, "Religion, Rhetoric, and Running for Office: Public Reason on the Campaign Trail," in *Religious Voices in Public Places* (Oxford University Press, 2009). He is looking forward to his sabbatical next spring, when he will complete work on a book-length project, *The Case Against Democracy*.

Dr. Gary L. Rose completed and published another book, *Shaping A Nation: Twenty-Five Supreme Court Cases That Changed The United States* (Academica Press, 2010). Dr. Rose's book explores what he perceives as the most profound U.S. Supreme Court rulings in the history of the United States. Unlike other works on constitutional law, this book provides the reader with extended political, economic and social context for the purpose

of understanding the high court's rulings. The cases selected for review range from *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) to *Bush v. Gore* (2000). In addition to this project, Dr. Rose is working on a case study of Connecticut's Fourth Congressional District from World War II to the present. He continues to provide political analysis for national, state and local media.

Outstanding Student Achievements: AY 2009-2010

Shana Beladino was this year's recipient of the Silver Medal of Excellence in Political Science. Shana has been accepted into the Teach for America Program sponsored by the federal government. She will teach students in one of Connecticut's inner-city schools upon completion of the program this summer.

Elizabeth Cronin was accepted into the education graduate program at Sacred Heart University.

Cory Emilia was accepted into the graduate program in international relations at Rutgers University.

Heather Falsetti was this year's recipient of the Gold Medal of Excellence in Political Science. Heather was accepted into the graduate program in political science at Fordham University. A double major in political science and philosophy, Heather won first place in the Writing Across the Curriculum contest this year for her research paper entitled "Is Religion Necessary or Superfluous?" Heather placed first in last year's contest as well. She was one of two recipients of the Dr. John F. Kikoski Scholarship Award.

Michael Fazzino placed second in this year's writing contest for his paper "Millard Fillmore: Inspired Life, Uninspired Presidency." Mike has been selected to participate in a policy research trip this summer to Rwanda sponsored by the One Campaign. A service award was bestowed on Mike by the Connecticut Department of Education for his work related to the establishment of a Thrift Store on the University's main campus. He was also this year's recipient of the John Croffy Award which is awarded

to the student who has demonstrated outstanding leadership during the course of his studies at Sacred Heart University. Mike graduated with a double major in political science and business administration.

Seamus McNamee-Perez was accepted into the graduate program in bioethics at the Union Graduate School.

Kerry Nolan was accepted into the graduate program in occupational therapy at Sacred Heart University.

Tess Raytar was accepted into the graduate program in criminal justice at George Washington University.

Kaitlin Scherer was accepted into the accelerated nursing program at Stony Brook University.

Whitney Wildman was one of two recipients of the Dr. John F. Kikoski Scholarship Award.

Jennifer Wysocki was accepted into the Quinnipiac University School of Law.

Internships

Many political science students during the 2009-2010 Academic Year worked as interns in a wide variety of settings. Although not a formal requirement, practically all of our political science majors are placed in at least one internship prior to graduation. A lengthy research paper, or several book reviews, are routinely assigned to complement the internship experience. Political science majors served as interns at the following sites:

- Connecticut State Capitol
- Office of Congressman Jim Himes
- Office of Senator Joe Lieberman
- Office of Congressman Peter King
- Campaign staffs of gubernatorial candidates
- Campaign staff of candidate for Trumbull First Selectman

- Local law offices
- Connecticut Superior Court
- College Republicans National Headquarters in D.C.
- Port Authority of New York
- International Institute of Connecticut
- City Attorney's Office, Bridgeport, CT
- Village of Sag Harbor, Long Island, NY
- Department of Homeland Security

Pi Sigma Alpha Induction

Seventeen students were inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha on April 15th, 2010. Mr. Anthony Ciliento ('02) an organizer for United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (AFL-CIO) served as this year's guest speaker. Anthony spoke on the goals and values of organized labor in the twenty-first century. Several parents were in attendance and a reception followed the ceremony.

Alumni Update

Javier Lopez ('09) was accepted into Syracuse University School of Law

Lauren Black ('07) was accepted into the social work graduate program at Boston College.

Jeff Guillot ('04) is the Legislative Director for New York State Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky (D). Jeff recently received his MA in American Government from C.W. Post in Long Island, and serves as the Finance Director for the Queens County Young Democrats.

Aaron Chrostowsky ('00) is the Town Manager in Clinton, Maine

Cindy (Lisa '99) Egloff recently completed her Masters in Adolescent Education and is working as the Graduate Advisor for the School of Management at Long Island University, CW Post campus.

Reflections of a Convention Delegate

Dr. Lesley DeNardis served as a delegate to the State Republican Nominating Convention held in Hartford on May 21-22. Her reflections regarding this unique political experience are presented below.

This past May I had the honor of attending the State Republican Convention as a delegate. Every four years, delegates from each major party gather for the purpose of selecting nominees for the offices of U.S. Senate, Congress, the Governor as well as all state constitutional officers. Attending the convention as a delegate was especially meaningful given that my father, Lawrence DeNardis, was a gubernatorial candidate. A former Third District Congressman and University of New Haven President, my father decided to seek the nomination after Governor Rell announced her decision not to seek reelection last November. I had the honor of making the seconding speech on his behalf before fifteen hundred delegates and members of the media. It was an experience like no other and one which I shall never forget.

Connecticut is one of only a few states that still utilize the convention as a method of selecting nominees for state and national offices. Most states have moved to a primary system whereby rank and file registered party members select candidates directly. In Connecticut, we have both a convention and a primary system. The convention is the first step in an arduous process that ends with the general election in November. This year was unusual in Connecticut gubernatorial politics with a hotly contested race with a total of six candidates all vying for the nomination. The objective was to gain at least fifteen percent of the total delegates in order to reach the necessary threshold to qualify for a primary. Advocates for the state convention view it as a means of testing a candidate's viability before entering a larger scale race. Detractors view it as less democratic by placing too much power in the hands of a small group that is not necessarily representative of rank and file party members. Nonetheless, it remains part of the political landscape in Connecticut and poses the first major hurdle that any candidate must clear before entering either the primary or general election phase of the process.

Delegates are selected on the basis of their membership on their respective Republican town committees. The size of each delegation varies based on a formula that takes into account the number of registered Republicans and election turnout in a particular town. For Hamden, our delegation consisted of sixteen delegates, plus one superdelegate. Superdelegates are individuals who are members of the Republican State Central Committee or state elected officials. As a member of the Board of Education in Hamden, I am an ex officio member of the Republican Town committee and therefore automatically eligible for membership in my delegation. In the weeks and months leading up to the state convention, delegates are courted with an intensity not seen in recent years. Like other candidates, my father spent an enormous amount of time crisscrossing the state to meet with Republican Town Committees as well as to participate in numerous gubernatorial forums and debates.

Our particular delegation, given the long history of involvement in politics by my father, was unanimously in support of their "favorite son". Other towns split their support among the three gubernatorial candidates, some for Foley, others for Fedele and Griebel. Each candidate displayed pockets of support in the different regions of Connecticut. As the result of his forty years of public service in the Greater New Haven area, my father drew most of his support from this region. A few surprise "pop out" towns like the Windsor Locks delegation supporting my father made the process interesting and somewhat unpredictable.

On Saturday morning, the focus was on selecting a gubernatorial candidate. The voting went in the order of congressional districts, with the third Congressional district going first according to a set rotation. After each delegation cast its votes, the tellers would announce the results over the microphone. To the surprise of many delegates, votes were manually tabulated instead of by computer. This long, arduous process is the most difficult part of being a delegate and can take several hours. After the votes for each town have been recorded, the process known as switching begins. Delegates are allowed to switch their votes before the second ballot. In the case of my father, he did not reach the fifteen percent threshold necessary to qualify to stay on the ballot and therefore he "released" his delegates. This allows for those who were previously com-

mitted to him to switch their votes to another candidate. At this moment it helped me to remember that the ultimate purpose is for fellow Republicans to reach an agreement about the nominee and ideally to emerge from the convention unified. The switching resulted in Foley garnering enough votes to qualify as the convention endorsed candidate. Lt. Governor Michael Fedele and Oz Griebel each qualified to force a primary.

Despite the fact that the outcome was not what we would have wished, I am extremely proud of the spirited and issues oriented campaign that my father conducted. Many delegates had approached me to say that they appreciated the high level of preparation and qualifications he exhibited for this office. However, other considerations entered into the equation most notably fundraising ability which has grown in importance as the cost of campaigns has risen exponentially over the years.

All in all, the experience of being a delegate, especially while my father was a candidate, was a rich and rewarding one for which I am grateful.

We trust that you have enjoyed this year's newsletter. We are proud of our department and proud of the fact that you are an alumnus of the political science program at Sacred Heart University. Please keep in touch, and let us know what you are doing with your life.

Stay well.

Sincerely,

*Gary L. Rose, Ph.D.
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