Remembering Friends

Theodore “Ted” Conover, professor emeritus, died Sept. 14, 2009. Ted was a journalism professor at the University of Nevada, Reno from 1960 until he retired in 1982. He was named chairman of the Department of Journalism in 1965 and was credited with creating sequences in the school and adding broadcast journalism to the curriculum. Under his direction the department was first accredited in 1970. He continued as department chair until 1974. He also authored Graphic Communications Today, a book for beginning design and journalism students, which was first published in 1985.

Ted’s education at Ohio University was interrupted by World War II. During the war he was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds received while serving in Europe. On May 13, 1944, Ted married Edna Harsha of Frazeyburg, Ohio. It was during this time that he and Edna bought their first newspaper. Over the next 13 years they bought and sold five newspapers. Ted also completed work on his journalism degree from Ohio University and his masters from Ohio State University.

Ted was preceded in death by his wife, Edna. Ted’s family includes son David (Pulou); daughters, Nancy (David) and Linda (Bill); grandchildren, Mellissa, Litiana, Laura (Fotu Tua); and Sarah; and great-granddaughter, Cierra.

Catherine (Parsons) Smith, professor emerita, died Sept. 1, 2009 after a struggle with cancer. Catherine was born in Rochester, N.Y. in 1933. She graduated from Smith College in 1954 and later studied performance (flute) at Northwestern University and then received a doctor of musical arts from Stanford in 1969. She was a professor at the University of Nevada, Reno in the music department from 1968 to 2000. She played flute in the Reno Philharmonic and the Reno Opera for many years.

Her scholarly work was influential resulting in four books: Mary Carr Moore, American Composer (1987), William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions (2000), Making Music in Los Angeles: Transforming the Popular (2007), and William Grant Still (2008).

She married Ross Smith, also a long-term professor at the University, in 1955. They have three children, Walter, Anne and Courtney. Catherine will be deeply missed by her three children and their spouses; her five grandchildren, Connor, Hugh, Lily, Kara, and Maxwell; and by her partner of 10 years, Paul. She was an inspiration to her friends and colleagues in her dedication to scholarship and teaching; her enthusiasm for new ideas; her respect and support for the work of others; and her overriding decency and kindness.

James Donald Bagby, former employee, died Aug. 8, 2009. James was born in Santa Cruz, Calif. on Oct. 9, 1935 and later attended San Jose State, obtaining his degree in music. Music played a major role in his life, as a jazz musician and also as second place winner with his group in the Army Entertainment Contest in the 50s, while he was serving in Germany. He was a guest drummer for the Greater Carmichael Traveling Street Band.

James lived throughout California prior to coming to the University, where he worked as a purchasing agent in the 1970s and 1980s. James primarily dealt with scientific and medical purchasing for the then-neglected medical school. He then worked as purchasing and distribution manager for Refcon, Inc. for 25 years.

James is survived by his wife, Patricia; children, Elizabeth (Alberto), William (Pennie) and Edward (Eryn); and grandchildren, Max, Sophia, Gail Rose, Christopher, Aidan, and Austin. James was an outstanding family man and wonderful raconteur.

Billie McReynolds, friend of the University, died Oct. 1, 2009 following a prolonged illness with cancer. Billie was born in Greeley, Colo. on Dec. 31, 1921. At the age of 6, she began studying the violin. After high school she enrolled in Stephens College in Columbia, Mo., where she eventually became concertmaster of the college orchestra. In 1945, Billie earned a performer’s certificate in violin and a master’s degree in music education from Eastman School of Music.

In 1950, Billie received a teaching fellowship from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. She was also appointed concertmaster of the Stanford Symphony. In 1952, she took a position in the Palo Alto School System. It was during this time at Stanford that Billie met Paul McReynolds. They were married in 1955. Soon after marriage, Billie began playing with the San Jose Symphony, serving as principal violinist from 1962 to 1965. In 1969, the McReynolds family, which now included son, David, moved to Reno where Paul accepted a position at the University of Nevada.

Billie liked to travel, entertain, sew, play computer solitaire and was an avid reader. She was always there to help those in need, especially those who had lost a loved one. She will be greatly missed and long remembered by her many friends.

She is survived by her husband, Paul, their son, David (Candi), and two grandsons, Jason and Kevin. Those who wish to send condolences may do so at: hoopers2@msn.com or by writing to Paul McReynolds, 6009 Snowy Ridge Lane, Berthoud, CO 80513.

Ethel “Janice” (Bawden) Scobey passed away Aug. 11, 2009 in South Pasadena, Calif. Janice was born to Ethel and Joseph Bawden Feb. 26, 1922, in Reno. She attended the University of Nevada, where she was a member of the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. She then moved to San Francisco, Calif., where she met Fred Bradley Scobey whom she married on April 30, 1945.

Janice and Fred’s first home was in Bangkok, Thailand, where Janice gave birth to their first child, Janice Louise. Later a son, Fred Bradley “Brad” Jr., and a daughter, Barbara Lynn, was born.

The family lived in several places while the children were growing up, including Illinois, California, and Tokyo, Japan. Janice loved East Asia, bringing back many objects of art from her travels. She was also a master in the art of Japanese flower arranging (Ikebana). Janice enjoyed her family, her church and California, where she lived until her passing.

Janice was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Ethel; and her sister, Martha. She is survived by her children, John (Ted), Barbara (Richard) and Brad; her grandchildren, Eric, Ryan and Laura; her niece, Darla; and her grandnephew, Joe.

Elmo Derico ’48 (physical education), ‘64M.Ed. (school administration) died July 10, 2009. Elmo was born in Sparks in 1927, but graduated from Pershing County High School in Lovelock, Nev. As an undergraduate, Elmo lettered in both basketball and tennis.

Elmo entered the U.S. Marine Corps after graduating from the University of Nevada and served for three years before being honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant. The native Nevadan began his educational career in Churchill County in 1955 as a teacher. In addition to his teaching, Elmo also served either as a head or assistant coach for the football, basketball and baseball programs in the 1950s. Fallon teams won back-to-back state championships during the 1957 and 1958 school years.

Elmo became superintendent in 1968, a position he held until his retirement in August 1990. During his career, Elmo received many accolades and honors. The high school gymnasium, which was built in 1988, was dedicated in his honor. He also received awards from the Optimist Club and the University of Nevada for his 35 years of service to youth and education. The city of Fallon proclaimed June 9, 1990 as Elmo Derico Day and the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association’s first Hall of Fame class included Elmo.

Elmo was also active in the Knights of Columbus and the Fallon chapter of the University of Nevada Alumni Association. Elmo is survived by his wife, Donna, and three grown children.

Jack Wulff ’50 (civil engineering) died on July 24, 2009 after a long battle with heart disease. Jack was born in Sacramento on Feb. 20, 1929, to Otto and Clementine Wulff. He graduated from Sacramento High School, class of 1946,
and went on to earn his bachelor’s degree from the University. In 1950, he married his high school sweetheart, Jane and then spent 18 months as an officer in the U.S. Air Force.

Jack was the state of California’s Department of Water Resources first chief of earth dams design and was directly in charge of the designs of the foremost dams in the State Water Project. Jack entered private practice in 1968 as principal engineer for design and construction with Leedes, Hill, and Jewett in San Francisco and later went on to become chief engineer, vice-president and then president of Wahler Associates in Palo Alto, Calif. and Walnut Creek, Calif.

Jack is survived by his wife and love of his life, Jane; son Dave (Joyce); son Doug and Jim Arata. Jack will forever be remembered for his love of life, his devotion to Jane and his family, his hundreds of dear friends and neighbors, his sense of humor, funny travel stories and beautiful singing voice.

Jerry “Jerry” Wyness ’52 (physical education) died Oct. 13, 2009. Jerry was born in 1928 and was enrolled at Nevada in the fall of 1946. In his freshmen year he played football, basketball and baseball. Jerry played varsity basketball when the team went 19-3 for a best winning percentage in Pack history. Jerry also served on Sagers, Blue Key, Coffin and Keys, Scabbard and Blade, Block N, Sagebrush Staff, and the drama club. Jerry was also very involved in his fraternity, SAE. One of Jerry’s most memorable times was when he appeared as an extra in three Hollywood movies that were filmed on campus. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force Reserve in May 1950; and served from April 1952 through September 1953 in the Korean War. He attended San Jose State, obtaining his teaching credential and his master’s degree in 1955. He earned his doctor of education in 1963 from University of Oregon. During his 40 years in higher education, Jerry wrote two college level textbooks, authored more than 30 articles and gave more than 60 professional presentations.

Jerry has been awarded numerous accolades including: 1980–1991 Outstanding Teacher Award, San Francisco State University, 1992 Honor Award, CAHPERD and the 2008 University of Nevada, Reno Professional Achievement Award. He was also involved in SAVE, the Senior Auxiliary Volunteer Effort for the Reno Police Department.

Gerald “Reg” S. Parsons ’75 (managerial science) died June 30, 2009 after a short battle with cancer. Born Oct. 22, 1932 in Queens, N.Y., Reg moved to Reno in 1946. In 1951 he graduated from Reno High School, where he met his devoted wife of 57 years, Marilyn (Allen) Parsons.

Reg served as corporal in the U.S. Army Signal Corp. After discharge, he graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno, with honors. Reg worked for Nevada Bell for 30 years as a protection engineer, then consulted for Citizens Utility and wrote operation practices for Bell of Canada. He was the chief operating officer and chief financial officer for Hillcrest Corporation in Medford, Ore. Reg’s final project was his energy independent dream home, which was featured in the Reno Gazette-Journal. Reg’s imprint will be lasting not only because of his intellectual contribution to technology, but because of the many colleagues and friends who flourished due to his generous support.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn; his daughter, Carole (Jim); and granddaughters, Kristina (Ben) and Danielle. He is also survived by two sisters, Diana (Warren) and Cynthia, and many extended family members.