



Senior Scholars take on the world

Senior Scholars forge successful careers following academic achievement guided by mentors

By Melanie Robbins '06M.A. Photos by Jeff Dow.

Senior Scholars, among the best and brightest students on campus, drew the attention of their college's Dean's Office, which bestowed the Nevada Alumni Association's top honor on them. It turns out that these high-achieving students have a habit of getting noticed and doing remarkable things after they graduate, too. We asked past Senior Scholars to tell us a little about what they are doing now, and the responses were truly gratifying: these students had taken their education and launched satisfying careers and/or further academic achievements. Whittling down the list to just one from each college was a difficult task, but here's a sampling of what some of our top students are up to:

Molly Duckett '02, '05M.S.

Speech Pathologist

Division of Health Sciences

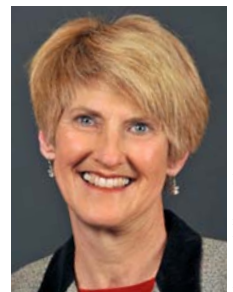
Mentor: Ann Tyler

In November 2009, Molly Duckett found that her professional training in speech pathology and audiology was invaluable in her personal life when her uncle suffered from multiple strokes that left him with severe dysphagia (difficulty swallowing safely) and dysarthria (slurred speech).

"He was devastated when he could not be understood by his own family and was told he would have to receive nutrition via a nasogastric tube," Duckett says.

Over the week of Thanksgiving, she and

her uncle "spent countless hours together, retraining his swallowing mechanism and perfecting his speech clarity," she remembers. "Today, he can eat whatever he wants, have an intelligible conversation, and loves talking about his 'own personal speech therapist!' The experience left me with extreme gratitude to possess such an invaluable set of skills, which I attribute to my excellent education and experience at Nevada."



Ann Tyler

Photo provided by Ann Tyler

What is a Senior Scholar?

Since 1989, the Nevada Alumni Association's Senior Scholar Award has honored the top undergraduate, graduating student in each college at a special ceremony held spring and fall. The award, determined by each college's Dean's Office, goes to the student with not only the top academic credentials, but to the one who demonstrates excellence of character, leadership and commitment to scholarly ideals. These students, however, don't complete an arduous course of study alone; they have had support along the way from teachers, mentors, friends and family. Each Senior Scholar names the University mentor who played the most significant role in his or her scholastic achievement and that mentor is honored at the Senior Scholar award ceremony.

Molly Duckett '02, '05M.S. teaches client Isaac Clary, 7, how to follow complex verbal instructions through magnet play. BELOW: Samantha Baldock '10 (left) and fellow American interns Aaron Gordon and Sarah Cooperson at the USA vs. Slovenia match at Ellis Park in Johannesburg, South Africa, during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. (Editor's note: See Baldock and her mentor, Yvonne Stedham, on the cover.)

palate and hearing loss. The best part of her job: "Playing with children!" she says.

"I find my job to be fulfilling and rewarding," Duckett notes. "Each day I engage with fun-loving children, caring family members and a team of excellent clinicians. Because my clients come to therapy on a weekly basis, I get to see how their communication grows week to week. The children become empowered communicators, the parents see them fulfill their potential, and I am lucky enough to be part of the change."

Included in the team of excellent clinicians is fellow Senior Scholar and owner of Sierra Speech and Language Group, Shawna Ross '02, '04M.S., who also holds two degrees from Nevada in speech pathology and audiology. Ross was also the recipient of the 2002 Herz Gold Medal, the highest academic honor the University bestows.

Because the School of Medicine offers such a dynamic speech pathology and audiology program to both undergraduates and master's candidates, chances are that if you need the

services of a speech pathologist in the Reno area, your provider will be a Nevada grad.

The Reno community has a "very special network of University of Nevada, Reno professionals and graduates who work together to better the lives of adults and children," Duckett says, adding that she is happy to now be able to mentor Nevada students herself.

Duckett chose Ann Tyler, now a professor and the chair of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at Western Michigan University, as her Senior Scholar mentor.

"Dr. Tyler made a lasting impact by challenging me to do my best everyday and introducing me to new experiences," Duckett says. Tyler helped her find a research project and showed concern about her life, Duckett remembers:

"My fondest memory of Dr. Tyler occurred on an ordinary school day. She handed back the tests we had just taken at the end of class. I got a C (as a straight-A student, even I was perplexed). As the students shuffled out, she quietly pulled me aside, and asked what was going on (I hadn't been feeling well). At that moment, I realized I was more than a body in a desk, and that Dr. Tyler knew my potential and recognized when I was off my game."

Tyler remembers Duckett as an undergraduate who "stood out because she was very quick to grasp difficult material, and she also asked the hard questions, meaning she could see the shades of gray in theories or approaches. Students who ask those kinds of questions make us better teachers because we

While a student, Duckett distinguished herself with not only the 2002 Senior Scholar Award in the Division of Health Sciences for her outstanding undergraduate work as a speech pathology and audiology major in the School of Medicine, but also with her 2005 Division of Health Sciences honor as Outstanding Graduate Student when she graduated with a master's in speech pathology and audiology.

Duckett currently works as a speech-language pathologist at Sierra Speech and Language Group in Reno, where she evaluates and treats children with speech and language disorders, including those that are secondary to Autism Spectrum Disorders, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, genetic syndromes, cleft lip and



Photo provided by Sami Baldock

have to translate the information in new ways.”

Duckett says the personal growth was mutual: “Dr. Tyler never led me down ‘the’ path to success, but gave me the tools and real-life advice I needed to create my own.”

Samantha Baldock '10

Research Analyst

College of Business

Mentor: Yvonne Stedham

Samantha Baldock jumped on a plane headed to South Africa the summer after she graduated last May to take an internship with the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

“I took the leap of faith and figured, ‘It’s the World Cup; this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity ... I just have to go for it,’” she says. As an international business major, she made the right move. “South Africa was unforgettable,” she says, adding that “the combination of learning about a new culture and business environment, travelling the country and, of course, attending the World Cup,” made the experience truly memorable.

Along with other interns from across the United States, she worked for Matchworld, a South African company that specializes in sponsorship consulting, brand activation and public relations. Stationed in Johannesburg, she worked primarily for Gold Fields, one of the world’s largest gold producers. Her job included providing hospitality to guests of Gold Fields—ambassadors, investors, executives and mid-level workers—by chaperoning them on leisure activities and at the matches.

Upon return to Reno, Samantha landed a research analyst job with Synergy Research Group, a market research firm that specializes in quarterly market share analysis and forecasting services. Clients include telecom, mobile and networking industry leaders, including giants such as Cisco and Avaya.

“I enjoy this job because it combines my interests in international business and



Yvonne Stedham

Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas



Photo provided by Pamela Everett

Pamela Everett '92 switched careers last year, from an attorney to an assistant professor.

economics with the world of technology,” she says. “I find my work to be engaging and enjoy doing a variety of projects on a daily basis.”

Baldock’s mentor, Foundation Professor Yvonne Stedham, a managerial sciences professor who specializes in international business, says Baldock was a terrific student and their mentor-mentee relationship was more like a “partnership than a top-down relationship.”

“Sami is very independent in her thinking and motivated to take initiative and action,” Stedham notes. “My job was to keep her on track and provide guidance so that she could achieve her goals effectively and efficiently.”

Baldock chose Stedham as her Honors Program thesis adviser, and has warm memories of her achievement under Stedham’s guidance, despite typical student procrastination and indecisiveness: “Over the several semesters that I was deciding on/working on my thesis, I changed the topic countless times, yet Dr. Stedham stood by me and offered any help that she could. She diligently worked to help improve my thesis by challenging me to think outside the box, while still narrowing my focus. I honestly could not have asked for a better mentor.”

Before attending Nevada, Baldock thought that she would not be challenged unless she attended an Ivy League school. She was set on attending an out-of-state school. But due to circumstances she could not control, ended up at Nevada.

“Now, I would not change this decision for the world,” she says, noting that she was very

pleasantly surprised by the academic rigor and the quality of the instruction she received as an undergraduate: “Nevada professors were so engaging and dynamic that it made me want to exceed even my expectations of myself.”

Pamela Everett '92

Assistant Professor/Attorney/Writer

College of Liberal Arts

Mentor: Ken Peak

Pamela Everett practiced law for 15 years and enjoyed the work, but when her former Nevada professors asked her to try teaching as an adjunct, she discovered that she loved teaching even more, so she switched careers.

As an assistant professor of criminal justice at Wayne State College in Nebraska, Everett has multiple responsibilities, including teaching four classes each semester, doing scholarly research for publication, serving on committees, advising criminal justice undergraduates, co-advising the pre-law program and serving as faculty adviser for the criminal justice honor society.

“I love the work primarily because teaching is, in the right hands, a very creative endeavor,” Everett says. “I enjoy interacting with students and debating issues with them whether we’re talking about criminal law, constitutional issues or how the legal system deals with mentally ill defendants. Every day I have the opportunity to make a student’s life better through education, advising and sometimes just being a good friend and mentor, just as my Nevada professors were to me.”

Inspired by her Senior Scholar mentor Ken Peak, professor of criminal justice, she left her law practice in California last year to move to Nebraska to teach. She still keeps a hand in law doing legal research and writing, and also follows her passion for writing by freelancing columns for the *Omaha World-Herald* and the Wayne State College newspaper, the *Wayne Stater*, as well as other publications.

“My experience at Nevada changed my life,” she says. “I remember one day



Ken Peak

Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas



Jenny MacKay '00 and her Senior Scholar mentor, Michael Branch, professor of English, flip through some of MacKay's many published books in the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center.

in particular, in a philosophy class in the old Frandsen Humanities building. The ivy had turned its incredible colors and the snow was just starting to fall, while we were tucked away in a historic classroom debating Nietzsche. I was so grateful to be there and I knew that my life had forever changed because the Nevada experience was opening doors—in my mind and in the world—I never even knew existed.

“I never would have made it to law school or to my place now in higher education without the University of Nevada, Reno.”

Peak's mentoring “had a major effect on my academic success at Nevada and beyond in law school,” she notes. “He was everything a professor should be—an incredible teacher, an adviser and a friend. He was the consummate supporter, always praising achievements but urging me to keep reaching, to keep aiming higher.”

For his part, Peak considers Everett the top student he's ever had: “Pam Everett was unquestionably the most talented student

with whom I have been associated in my 28 years at Nevada. Pam is truly a unique and gifted woman, one who brought a very special package of skills to our campus. She has now been ‘infected’ with the love of teaching, to her students' great benefit.”

Everett earned her *juris doctorate* from the University of San Diego in California in 1995. She lives, teaches and writes in Wayne, Neb.

Jenny MacKay '00
Nonfiction Youth Author /e-Structor
College of Education
Mentor: Michael Branch

Jenny MacKay did something unusual with her degree from the College of Education: She combined a love and talent for writing with an equal passion for teaching. While she's never been a classroom teacher per se, her words reach many students: She currently has 10 youth educational series nonfiction books in print—including her most recent book, *Gangs*,

published last November—and two more in press. About half of MacKay's books are about crime scene investigation, a topic she tackled at the request of her publisher, Lucent Books.

She is also a part-time e-structor for Smarthinking.com, an international tutoring service for high school and college students. Both jobs are not only gratifying, but keep her constantly learning:

“I do tons of research for every book I write, and I've learned incredible things,” she says. “I once had to write a book about robots in just five weeks. I've never so much as taken a basic physics class, so that was a challenge. But I can now explain the workings of pneumatic devices to a middle-grade audience. It's fascinating stuff!”

As an e-structor, she reads an array of papers and stories and gives personalized tips to help students improve their writing:

“I've worked with students from as far away as Australia, as well as some right here in Washoe County. It is very rewarding to be able



Photo provided by Matthew Churchfield

Matthew Churchfield '02 stands by a large wind turbine. He studies the machines' aerodynamics.

subject familiar, clear and interesting. We may live in the information age, but we desperately need the talents of writers like Jenny, who understand that information without story is often ineffective in educating kids or promoting positive social change.”

MacKay is equally admiring of Branch’s ability to communicate and convey helpful information to students.

“Michael Branch was a true inspiration to me,” she says. “I remember sitting quietly at the back of his classroom, probably making an impression as small as his was huge on all the students who were lucky enough to take a class from him. He was a gifted scholar and teacher, and he spent what must have been countless hours writing detailed critiques of every paper that every student handed in.

“He always gave enough praise to boost confidence, but he gave meaningful suggestions for improvement, too. He made you want to write the next essay instead of dreading it, and to reach for that something extra. I owe a great deal to Mike Branch, and I’m sure many others could say the same.”

Jenny lives in Sparks with her husband, Andy '99 (marketing).

Matthew Churchfield '02
Postdoctoral Researcher—Wind Energy
College of Engineering
Mentor: Brad Snyder

Matthew Churchfield is using his education to change the future: specifically, the future of energy. As a postdoctoral researcher at the National Wind Technology Center of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, he is developing a wind farm aerodynamics simulation tool.

“I work with a group of competent people on a socially relevant problem, that of our energy future,” he says. Harnessing the energy of the wind for human use as efficiently as possible for ultimate commercialization is one of the U.S. Department of Energy’s goals within the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

The problem with modern utility-class wind turbines is that they “are large and getting larger,” Churchfield says. “A football field could fit within the rotor disk of many of these turbines.”

The huge machines interact

aerodynamically with the incoming wind and create turbulent wakes that in turn interact with other turbines downwind in ways that are complex and not fully understood.

“These aerodynamic effects directly influence the amount of power produced by a wind farm and create flow-induced mechanical loading that fatigues and causes failure of wind turbine parts,” Churchfield explains. By studying the aerodynamics of wind turbines, he hopes to learn how to make them operate more reliably, maximize power output and lower maintenance costs.

After graduating from Nevada with a mechanical engineering degree, Churchfield earned his master’s and doctoral degrees in aeronautics and astronautics at Purdue. He credits his Nevada experience with his later successes: “When I was a student at Nevada, teaching undergraduates was clearly a top priority, something which I highly value. That commitment by the professors to teaching well and being available played a large role in providing me with the solid engineering foundation that allowed me to thrive in graduate school and in my job.”

Churchfield chose Brad Snyder, now an emeritus associate professor of mechanical engineering, as his Senior Scholar mentor: “Dr. Snyder is definitely a well-rounded person with many interests extending beyond engineering. Devoting time to family, friends, and interests outside of engineering is important in fostering creativity and overall happiness, and that creativity and happiness in turn benefits the engineering research I do in my job.”

Churchfield also remembers Snyder as a dedicated and engaging professor: “I can clearly picture him, on the first day of a fluid mechanics course, grinding chalk into a container of water, which he then stirred and used to illustrate an important point about the way fluid moves. Dr. Snyder always took the time to come up with ways to clearly



Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas

Brad Snyder

to help such a wide variety of students as they improve their writing skills.”

Choosing Nevada for her undergraduate studies was easy.

“I’m a third-generation Nevadan,” MacKay says, “Staying in my home state for college took very little persuasion.” But Nevada offers “so many terrific programs” that the choice was wise, in any case. “I was able to major in English and education with a teaching minor in biology. I depend on all three areas of concentration for every book I write.”

In the College of Education, she learned how to determine “what students are interested in and can understand at different grade levels and also what they need to be learning based on national standards,” she notes.

Michael Branch, MacKay’s Senior Scholar mentor and professor of English, says MacKay is a “wonderfully clear and engaging writer,” whose books showcase “a whole constellation of impressive skills and talents.

“What I find most fascinating and important about Jenny’s books is the way they interpret scientific and cultural issues for the benefit of a general audience of young readers,” Branch adds. “Her books on forensic biology and forensic art make difficult scientific concepts accessible and engaging, for example, while her book on phobias makes a potentially traumatic



Photo provided by Daphne Monson

Joseph '05 and Daphne Monson '07, '08 met at Nevada and shared academic achievement: both were Senior Scholars.

communicate what he was teaching and capture the attention of his audience, no matter how hard the subject.”

Snyder considers Churchfield one of the top undergraduates he encountered at Nevada:

“Matt is surely one of the best undergraduate students I’ve met at the University, and two things make him especially memorable: First, his unique ability to organize: This thoroughness is characteristic of everything he does—he set up a lab demo for me to illustrate the onset of starting and stopping vortices on an airfoil. Every aspect of this project was his own devising, which he undertook, on his own volition, simply because he wanted to see it happen. He ordered the materials, designed the test chamber, and built a tracking mechanism—all in less than a month in the midst of his busy 20-credit semester.

“And second, is his life’s dream of understanding the physics and engineering of flight. His pilot’s license, his engineering degrees, and now his tenure among a cadre of those passionately dedicated research engineers

who strengthen our national or industrial labs—because in flight that’s where the action is.”

He lives in Louisville, Colo., with wife, Jill, and children, Emmett, 2, and Glory, 8 months.



Rena Hanks '79M.S.

Joseph Monson '05

Agricultural Economist

College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources

Mentor: Rena Hanks '79M.S.

Daphne (Bateman) Monson '07, '08

Registered Nurse

College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources

Mentor: Gary Blomquist

Division of Health Sciences

Mentor: Elissa Dewolfe

Academic achievement runs in Senior Scholars Joe and Daphne Monson’s families: Joe’s cousin Katie Tramonte '04 (elementary education) was the Senior Scholar for the College of Education, and one of Daphne’s triplet siblings, Devon Bateman '07 (biochemistry), was a co-Senior Scholar in the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources, along with Daphne.

Daphne, however, outdid herself by becoming a Senior Scholar twice: once for her 2007 bachelor’s in biochemistry and once for her second bachelor’s in nursing the following year.

Daphne and Joe met while attending Nevada and wed in August 2009.

Growing up in Spanish Springs Valley, Joe spent summers working for his father’s custom farming business.

“It was here that I first developed a passion for agriculture,” he says. After a “top notch” education at Nevada, he earned a master’s in agricultural and applied economics at Virginia Tech. Joe now works for the California Department of Food and Agriculture as an agricultural economist in the marketing division, which oversees 56



Photo by Theresa Dama-Douglas

Gary Blomquist



File photo

Elissa Dewolfe



Ronald Reitz



Indra Chatterjee

Photos by Theresa Dama-Douglas

Mentors feel honored

Being named a Senior Scholar mentor is one of the greatest honors faculty can receive. The Senior Scholars choose their mentors after the fact, so to speak. Each is named the top scholar in his or her college as they are about to graduate; then they choose the person who had the most influence on them during their college years.

“It’s an incredible feeling to be chosen by someone at that level, after they’ve been in school for four years,” says Ronald Reitz, professor of biochemistry emeritus, and a mentor to four Senior Scholars (David Hair '98, Michael Papez '01, Kristin (Hicks) Papez '01 and Rajeev Wadia '02, '06M.D.). Reitz adds that he was not the senior thesis adviser to any of his Senior Scholar mentees.

“I must have said something to them somewhere along the way that made sense,” he jokes. In actuality, he remembers having a lot of interaction with all of his mentees over the years. “They would come back to my office and sit and visit.”

Indra Chatterjee, a three-time Senior Scholar mentor (Charles Randall '01, Matthew Koepnick '01 and Adam Blitstein '05) as well as professor and associate dean of the College of Engineering, had a similar experience:

“All three of them would often come talk to me, and we got to know each other. I talked to them about electrical engineering and their career plans. We had a good rapport.”

She helped her mentees find research and internship opportunities. “They were all good students and personable—all the qualities that would make a good employee.”

Chatterjee thinks it’s wise for students to seek out a mentor: “Students who find a mentor tend to do better. Absolutely. When you find out that students are interested in the subject, you tend to bring opportunities to their attention. I may even call an industry representative.”

—Melanie Robbins '06M.A.



Photo provided by Sara Vienna

Sara Vienna '03 is the proud owner of her own design studio, Sara Studio, in the Washington, D.C. area, where she works with clients from across the country.

marketing programs in the state. Campaigns include the well-known-even-in-Nevada, “California Happy Cows” and “Dancing Raisin.”

Joe enjoys his work, he says, noting that California’s agricultural sector is large, producing almost half of U.S.-grown fruits, nuts and vegetables and generating more than \$36 billion in cash receipts annually. California also produces more than 400 different commodities. The challenges each industry faces are unique, he notes, “whether it is combating a pest or disease, developing food safety practices, or creating demand for the commodity itself.” As a result, Joe’s job is never mundane or repetitive. He’s thankful for the “faithful guidance” he received while at Nevada from family and mentors, without which, he says, “I would not be where I am today.”

At Nevada, Joe chose Rena Hanks, advising coordinator emerita, as his Senior Scholar mentor: “Rena Hanks worked diligently with me all four years I attended the University. She always held high expectations of me and constantly challenged me to reach my full potential.”

Hanks says she “is not surprised” that Joe has done so well: “He was an excellent student and a student leader with the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources Ambassador Program. These elite students traveled to high schools giving presentations on careers in the college, as well as serving as hosts at alumni and college advisory board events.”

Daphne now works as a registered nurse at Mercy Hospital of Folsom in its 42-bed medical-surgical telemetry unit. She discovered she has both passion and aptitude for teaching, and, noticed by management, has been given a number of nurse educator roles. She leads a class for orthopedic patients who are about to undergo surgery, as well as serves as the chief preceptor for new-hire nurses, guiding them to successful integration into the health care team. In addition, she teaches student nurses from the Sacramento area when they do clinical rotations in her unit.

Daphne loves her job: “I find my work to be stimulating and gratifying in that I truly make a difference in others’ lives every day.”

She credits her education at Nevada, as well as the influence of her mentors and parents, with giving her the foundation to build a successful career: “My mentors and parents always made sure that I knew in my heart that I was capable of great things and was and would continue to be a leader. Diligence, hard work and a commitment to continual learning—traits honed in my collegiate studies during my tenure at the University—serve me well as a registered nurse in a fast-paced, acute care hospital setting.”

Her Senior Scholar mentor for her biochemistry degree, Gary Blomquist, professor and chair of biochemistry and molecular biology, remembers Daphne as “an exceptionally good student who was a pleasure to work with. She has a delightful personality and seems to do everything really well without

effort. Students like Daphne make my job fun and rewarding. She’s the best.”

The Monsons live in Folsom, Calif.

Sara (Huston) Vienna '03

Design Director

Reynolds School of Journalism

Mentor: Bourne Morris

Sara Vienna has the kind of job designers dream about: She owns her own business, has clients from Los Angeles to New York and occasionally travels to Canada, Europe and Asia for meetings, vendor approvals and press checks.

She works with luxury brands, jewelry companies, fashion houses, cosmetics companies, art museums, Web start-ups, large Web retail stores, nonprofits and think tanks.

“For 10 years, I’ve designed brands, packaging, products, magazines, books, Web/user experiences, music promotion and packaging, and events,” she says. “My favorite projects usually involve designing packaging, magazines—print or online—and books. My biggest reward is seeing someone interact with a product or user experience I designed.”

She’s also been rewarded with actual awards: *CMYK Magazine*, Winner “No Briefs” Competition; ADDY Award, Art Direction; and the American Advertising Association’s Person of the Year Award, as part of the University’s winning creative team for the National Student Advertising Competition.

Vienna found her path to design work while studying in the Reynolds School of Journalism. She took advertising classes and was able to tour a few San Francisco ad agencies—where she hoped to launch her career. She decided to pursue art direction in advertising, which eventually showed her that what she really wanted to be was a designer.

Vienna thanks her Senior Scholar mentor, Bourne Morris, now emerita professor of journalism, for not only being a mentor, but being a role model, as well:

“Bourne Morris was a huge influence on my success as an undergraduate. I loved that she was a



Photo by Theresa Dennis-Douglas

Bourne Morris

tough, smart, creative female in the ‘boys club’ that was advertising. She worked in the days of *Mad Men* (the AMC television series about men and women working on Madison Avenue in the 1960s) and was incredibly successful. I truly admire that.”

In addition, Morris inspired Vienna to do her very best. In 2003, Vienna was on the integrated marketing team that won first place in the National Student Advertising Competition. Sponsored by the American Advertising Federation, the annual contest is considered the “World Series of Advertising.”

“Bourne was so proud of all of us. I loved making her and our other professor, Bob Felten, proud,” she says.

Morris remembers Vienna as a dedicated student who was bound to succeed: “Sara was absolutely dedicated to mastering design skills. So none of us was surprised at her success after she left the University. She is generous and thoughtful and lights up the room whenever she shows up. She is one of those special people we all remember.”

After graduation, Sara interned at an ad agency in Hamburg, Germany. She then lived in San Francisco for six years. Two years ago, she moved to Washington, D.C., with her husband, Ryan. They are expecting their first child in May. To see Sara’s work, please visit: www.saravienna.com.

Timothy Janiga '97, '01M.D. Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

College of Science

Mentor: Mary Paszek '89, '93M.S.

Dr. Timothy Janiga’s workday might find him repairing a child’s cleft lip and palate, sewing fingers back on a man who lost them in an accident, or reconstructing a woman’s breasts following a mastectomy.

“Often plastic surgery is automatically assumed to only be cosmetic surgery, when in reality it is an extremely large and diverse field,” Janiga, a board-certified plastic surgeon, says. “My job is definitely enjoyable,” he adds, noting that in addition to mundane operations such as surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome, or those typically associated with a plastic surgeon: nasal surgery for aesthetic purposes, postbariatric body contouring or other cosmetic surgery, he also performs head and



Photo provided by Timothy Janiga

Timothy Janiga '97, '01M.D. and his wife, Jennifer '01M.D. have a joint plastic surgery/dermatology practice in Reno, the only one in town that combines those specialties.

neck surgery for traumatic injuries, skin cancer resection, acute and chronic burn care, wound care and flap surgery for pressure ulcers, pediatric surgery for congenital anomalies such as fused fingers, and microsurgery for repair or reconstruction of other defects.

After earning two degrees at Nevada: his undergraduate biology degree and his medical degree, Janiga completed an internship and residency at Michigan State University, Ann Arbor. He then worked as an assistant professor of surgery for two years at the University of Toledo, and then returned to live in Reno with his wife, Jennifer '01.M.D., a board-certified dermatologist and also an alumna of the School of Medicine. The couple met in medical school and now practice as a husband/wife team:



Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas

Mary Paszek '89, '93M.S.

Janiga MDs Plastic Surgery and Dermatology.

“We are the only practice in northern Nevada that combines plastic surgery and dermatology together under one roof,” Janiga says. “The synergy between the two practices is a natural fit and ultimately offers the best patient care possible.”

His years spent studying at Nevada have impacted Janiga’s life in many ways: “I was able to get a tremendous education at an affordable price in an amazing location. As an

undergraduate, I felt that the University was small enough to still have a personal touch but large enough to offer a world-class education.”

He chose Mary Paszek '89, '93M.S., who worked in the Honors Program, as his Senior Scholar mentor. “She was always someone who I could bounce ideas off of and get honest advice from. Mary has always been a down-to-earth person, who is fun to be around”

Paszek was inspiring to him because she managed to juggle family and work, yet maintain a positive attitude, he says.

“My fondest memory of Mary was when she would invite my brother, Mark, and me over to her house for dinner. We would hang out with her children and her and have a great time.”

Dr. Mark Janiga graduated from the School of Medicine in 2000.

Paszek says she felt “honored to have been able to work with Tim. He is one of those rare individuals who has a balance of intelligence, dedication and not taking himself too seriously. While being extremely committed to his education, he always took time for his family and to have at least a little fun once in awhile.”

In addition, Paszek notes: “Tim has a high moral standard, which is coupled with his compassion for people. I would trust him treating my son—Oh, wait. I did!”

Drs. Timothy and Jennifer Janiga have two children, 3 and 6. [N](#)

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