

UToledo Spotlights Unlikely Friendship Sparked by Landmark Same-Sex Marriage Case

The U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage five years ago in its landmark Obergefell v. Hodges case.



This week the named parties on opposing sides of one of the most important Supreme Court rulings in recent history will be at The University of Toledo to discuss the case and their resulting friendship.

Jim Obergefell, the plaintiff who sued the state of Ohio for refusing to recognize his marriage on his husband's death certificate, and Rick Hodges, the defendant and UT Toledo alumnus who served

as director of the Ohio Department of Health at the time of the case, will take the stage for "Finding Friendship in a Contentious Place: A Conversation With Obergefell and Hodges From the Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Case on Same-Sex Marriage" Thursday, Feb. 13, at 6 p.m. in Doermann Theatre.

D. Benjamin Barros, dean of the College of Law, will moderate the free, public event presented by The University of Toledo Law Review.

Rob Salem, professor and dean for diversity and inclusion at the College of Law, will provide legal commentary of the challenges same-sex couples still face

five years after the decision.

"We're honored to host these guest speakers not just because of their prominent role in a landmark Supreme Court case, but because they embody the spirit of civility and celebration of differences," Salem said.



Obergefell

Obergefell works as an LGBTQA+ activist and serves on the Board of Directors for Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders, the oldest and largest national nonprofit organization that advocates for and provides services for LGBTQA+ older Americans. Obergefell co-authored the book "Love Wins" with Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist Debbie Cenziper.

Hodges is an executive in residence and visiting professor at Ohio University. He also is the director of the Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health. Hodges is a former member of the Ohio House of Representatives. He earned his master's degree in public administration from UT Toledo in 1991.

For those unable to attend, the event will stream live on the UT Toledo Alumni Association website at toledoalumni.org/events/law-finding-friendship.html.

Vaccine Researchers Awarded \$2.3 Million to Explore Preventing Drug-Resistant Infection

By Tyrel Linkhorn

A multidisciplinary research group at The University of Toledo has been awarded \$2.3 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop a vaccine against a bacterial infection that, once established, is nearly impossible to eradicate.

Pseudomonas aeruginosa is a common bacterium that is generally harmless to healthy individuals. However, in people with compromised immune systems or specific conditions such as cystic fibrosis, it can be deadly.

Chronic lung infections, including those caused by drug-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, are the leading cause of death in cystic fibrosis. For example, 60% of individuals with cystic fibrosis experience such an infection, which is often chronic and leads to serious morbidity or mortality. In addition, ventilator-associated pneumonia represents a serious, and often deadly, hospital-acquired infection most commonly caused by infections from the bacterium.

"*Pseudomonas*, and many other bacteria, are becoming increasingly resistant to even the best currently available antibiotics. It's a major source of

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Rocket Romance in the Air: Show Love for UT Toledo and Donate

Love is in the air with the Rocket Romance campaign, which launched Feb. 1 and runs through Saturday, Feb. 29.

All month long, the University is celebrating love for UT Toledo and the many Rocket romances that have bloomed on campus throughout the years.

More than 70 couples spanning from their 20s to their 90s are featured in a multi-channel fundraising campaign to help Rockets fall in love with UT Toledo all over again.

"The campaign is a great way to reignite your passion for the University while sharing your love stories," said Heather Slough, director of annual giving and leadership engagement. "Help inspire others to give and create the next chapter for future generations of Rockets."

Fueling futures and love – that's The University of Toledo. Blue Crew members Triplicious and Mr. Business met when they were freshmen in 2008.

"We were friends for two years before we started dating," Brittany Seigneur Kupresanin, success coach in the Center for Success Coaching, said. "We spent so

much time together traveling to games and events."

So when Marshall Kupresanin decided to pop the question in 2016, he engineered a surprise on campus.

"He proposed to me at the exact spot on campus where we met. We're still involved with Blue Crew as alumni, and he said there was an initiation ceremony on campus for a new Blue Crew member," Seigneur Kupresanin recalled. "As we turned the corner to enter the east courtyard by University Hall, I see all these people, and Blue Crew members held up signs that said, 'Will you marry me?' And Marshall got down on one knee. It was very sweet, especially because our family and friends were there."

The two married in 2017. Brittany received a bachelor's degree in bioengineering in 2013 and a master's degree in counselor education in 2015, and Marshall graduated with bachelor's degrees in history and theatre in 2012, and a law degree in 2015.

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TRUE BLUE: Brittany Seigneur Kupresanin and Marshall Kupresanin were members of Blue Crew when they met in 2008. They married in 2017 and welcomed a new little Rocket, Oliver, in November.





Inspiring Message

Activist Tiffany Loftin, director of the NAACP Youth and College Division, told the crowd in Doermann Theatre Thursday night to get involved and continuously work for equality. She visited campus to give the keynote address for UToledo's celebration of Black History Month. For the NAACP, Loftin serves more than 700 youth councils and high school and college chapters fighting for civil rights. She was passionate when she told students they need to organize and build unity on campus, in the city, in the state and in the nation.

Photo by Daniel Miller

UToledo Announces Spring Enrollment Numbers

By Meghan Cunningham

The University of Toledo's continued focus on supporting student success is reflected in the spring 2020 semester enrollment with the highest undergraduate fall-to-spring retention rate in at least 12 years.

For the third consecutive year, more than 90% of new students enrolled in the fall continued their studies in the spring semester. The undergraduate fall-to-spring-semester retention rate rose to 91.5% for the 2019-20 academic year.

The total enrollment for spring semester 2020 is 18,547, according to official 15-day census numbers. There were 18,804 students enrolled in spring semester 2019.

In addition to the positive retention data, UToledo experienced an increase in transfer students interested in earning a degree from the University. The number of new transfer students jumped to 352 for the current semester, an increase of 27.1% compared to the previous year.

And the number of new high school students earning college credit at UToledo also increased, up 7.2% to 965 students.

The spring enrollment consists of 14,334 undergraduate students and 4,213 graduate students.

Vaccine Researchers

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hospital-acquired infections and has a high mortality rate," said Dr. Katherine Wall, professor and chair of the UToledo Department of Medicinal and Biological Chemistry, and principal investigator on the NIH grant. "The infection is very hard to get rid of once it gets established."

The World Health Organization recently placed the bacterium among the most critical antibiotic-resistant pathogens, particularly because of the threat it poses in healthcare settings. In the United States alone, more than 32,000 infections of multidrug-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* occurred in hospitalized patients in 2017, causing an estimated 2,700 deaths. Thousands more deaths occurred worldwide. In addition to lung infections, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* can cause serious blood infections.

Researchers have been working on vaccines targeting the bacterial infection for decades, but as development of new antibiotics lags, preventing the infection has taken on a new urgency.

A 2016 report commissioned by the British government, for example, found antimicrobial resistance could cause up to 10 million annual deaths and cost \$100 trillion in economic damages by the year 2050.

The five-year NIH grant, which comes through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will fund UToledo research aimed at developing new methods for creating synthetic vaccines

and a workable vaccine that could protect against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

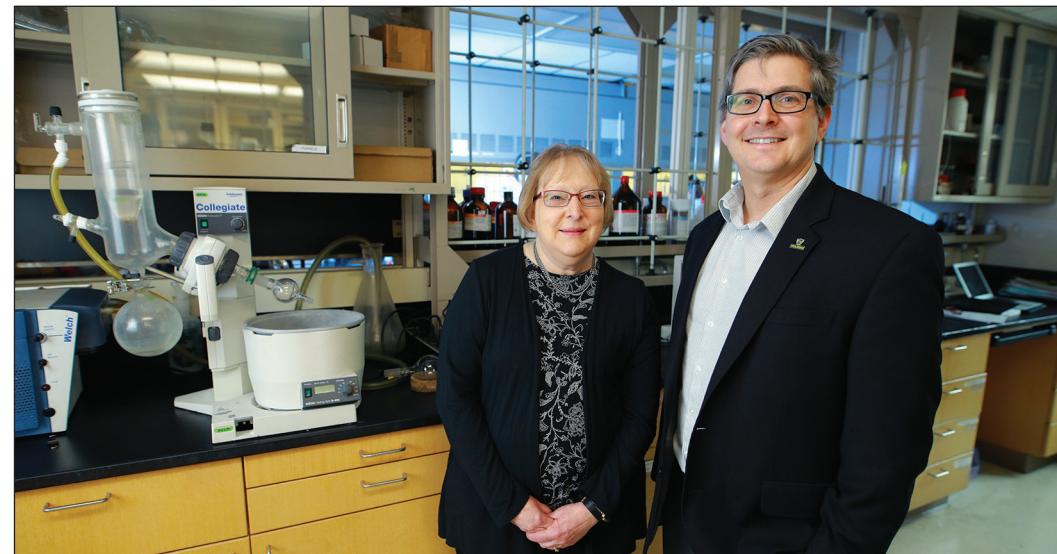
"There have been many attempts to make protein and carbohydrate vaccines. One thing that is unique about this project is that we are combining well-defined organism-specific carbohydrate antigens with organism-specific protein antigens," said Dr. Steven Suseck, professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and lead principal investigator on the grant.

Antigens are the toxins from a bacteria or virus that trigger the body's immune response.

"In this work, we combine a synthetic carbohydrate antigen with organism-specific protein antigens to increase the antigen coverage," Suseck said. "If the strategy is successful, it greatly expands the potential applications of synthetic carbohydrates in vaccines."

Many of the common vaccines we receive in childhood, such as chicken pox and polio, are manufactured with dead, weakened or altered pathogens to generate immunity to the infection.

Synthetic carbohydrate vaccines instead use complex chemistry to create well-defined carbohydrate antigens that can be conjugated with proteins to create a vaccine.



IN THE LAB: Dr. Katherine Wall, professor and chair of medicinal and biological chemistry, and Dr. Steven Suseck, professor of chemistry and biochemistry, have received a \$2.3 million from the National Institutes of Health to develop a vaccine for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

Suseck and Wall have been collaborating on vaccine development for more than a decade, beginning with a project to develop synthetic vaccines to help the body's natural immune system better engage against cancer cells.

The new *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* project, which also includes Dr. Erin Prestwich, assistant professor in the Department of Medicinal and Biological Chemistry, is a significant expansion of that, taking the basic vaccine development platform and shifting its target to bacteria rather than tumor cells.

Suseck also is working on discovering new drugs to fight tuberculosis, another bacterial infection that is becoming increasingly difficult

to treat because of antibiotic resistance. In 2018, he and a former colleague now at the University of Nebraska received a five-year, \$2.1 million NIH grant to continue their work.

"There's an expertise in the lab related to carbohydrates that we're trying to leverage in different ways. You can use them to make vaccines, or we can try to target bacteria such as *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* with small molecules. That's the broader theme that runs through my work," Suseck said. "We're always trying to do work that's impactful and addresses an urgent need. New approaches to treating drug-resistant bacteria is one of those urgent needs."

Researchers Seek New Treatment for Sepsis Through Innovative Approach

By Tyrel Linkhorn

New research from The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences suggests it may be possible to treat septic shock with drugs that are already part of the clinical repertoire.

Screening existing pharmaceutical agents for unexpected applications is increasingly seen as a valuable tool for establishing new treatments, particularly within the field of oncology research.

Dr. Kevin Pan, professor and chair of the UToledo Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology, is applying that innovative approach to sepsis, a life-threatening condition in which the body's extreme immune response to infection damages its own organs.

"Severe sepsis is a big problem in the clinic," Pan said. "There are about 750,000 annual cases in the U.S. alone, and we do not have very effective treatments beyond targeting the original infection with antibiotics. We are hoping to find new ways within our existing drug library to regulate the immune response and directly treat sepsis."

By focusing on existing drugs, researchers hope to advance therapies more quickly and with less cost than the novel drug discovery process.

Pan and his collaborators at Southern

Medical University in Guangzhou, China, recently published a study in the journal *Scientific Reports* that found a drug called rolipram protected mice from *E. coli* induced septic shock.

"Our research shows rolipram can reduce inflammatory cytokine production and increase mouse survival. This suggests rolipram might be a novel therapeutic agent for fighting against sepsis in the clinical setting," Pan said.

Rolipram was originally developed as an anti-depressant and has been studied for a number of other potential applications, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Pan's team is the first to show it might protect against sepsis.

Treatment for sepsis is largely limited to flooding the body with antibiotics and fluids. However, the growing problem of antibiotic resistance means many bacterial infections can be difficult to kill, allowing the body's overheated immune response to go on unchecked.

By exploring new ways to modulate that immune response, Pan and



Pan

Photo by Daniel Miller

his collaborators hope to provide a complimentary treatment to go along with antibiotics that can prevent damage to critical organ systems.

"This is early stage research, and rolipram is known to have difficult side effects. However, our work proves the

potential of repurposing drugs to treat septic shock," Pan said. "We plan to continue working with rolipram and are beginning tests on a number of other drugs."



UToledo Cares campaign donors may pick up gift

University faculty, staff and retirees celebrated their pledges to the 2019 UToledo Cares campaign at a breakfast held in their honor Jan. 30 in Savage Arena.

Pledges totaled more than \$114,000, which will assist nearly 300 nonprofit organizations throughout the region.

Individuals who made a pledge but could not attend the breakfast should plan to pick up a complimentary thank-you gift – a UToledo scarf – at the following times and locations:

- Thursday, Feb. 13 and Feb. 20 – Mulford Library Room 128 on Health Science Campus from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m.
- Friday, Feb. 14 – University Hall Room 3580 on Main Campus from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Donors who cannot pick up their gift during those times may contact diversity@utoledo.edu to make special arrangements.

UToledo Student Artwork on Area Digital Billboards in February

By Angela Riddel

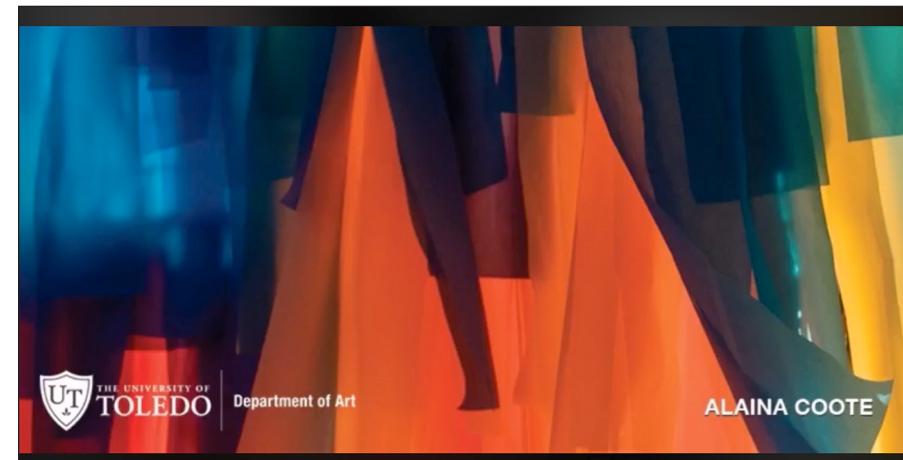
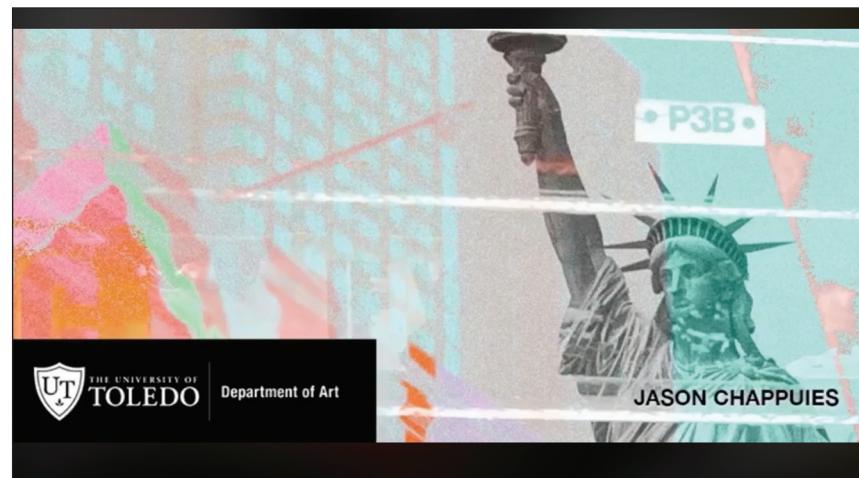
In collaboration with Lamar Outdoor Advertising, University of Toledo Department of art students are displaying their work on digital billboards in the area through the end of February.

Barry Whittaker, associate professor of graphic and interactive design, who coordinated the project, said this is the sixth year UToledo art students have been invited to have their work displayed.

The digital billboard locations are at the Anthony Wayne Trail at City Park, Alexis Road at Lewis Avenue, Monroe Street at Laskey Road, Byrne Road at Airport Highway, Monroe Street at

Douglas Road, Erie Street at Monroe Street, Erie Street at the Anthony Wayne Trail, I-75 at Monroe Street, I-75 and I-280, and Reynolds Road at Glendale Avenue.

Works on billboards were created by Austin Baker, Donna Beauregard, Tenayah Bowmer, Jason Chappuies, Alaina Coote, Justin Fisher, Lindsay Haynes, Emilie Mitchell, Jazele Rabbani, Jane Sullivan, Lydia Yant and Tara Yarzand.



Rocket Romance

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Falling in love on campus runs in the family. Seigneur Kupresanin's parents met while students. Mark Harris, a 1981 UToledo alumnus, met Ann Seigneur Harris at a Sigma Phi Epsilon party in 1980.

And the family welcomed a new member, Oliver, who was born in November. Coincidentally, Brittany went into labor exactly 11 years to the date she and Marshall met on campus.

"We all hope Oliver is a future Rocket," said Seigneur Kupresanin, who just returned from maternity leave to work at her alma mater.

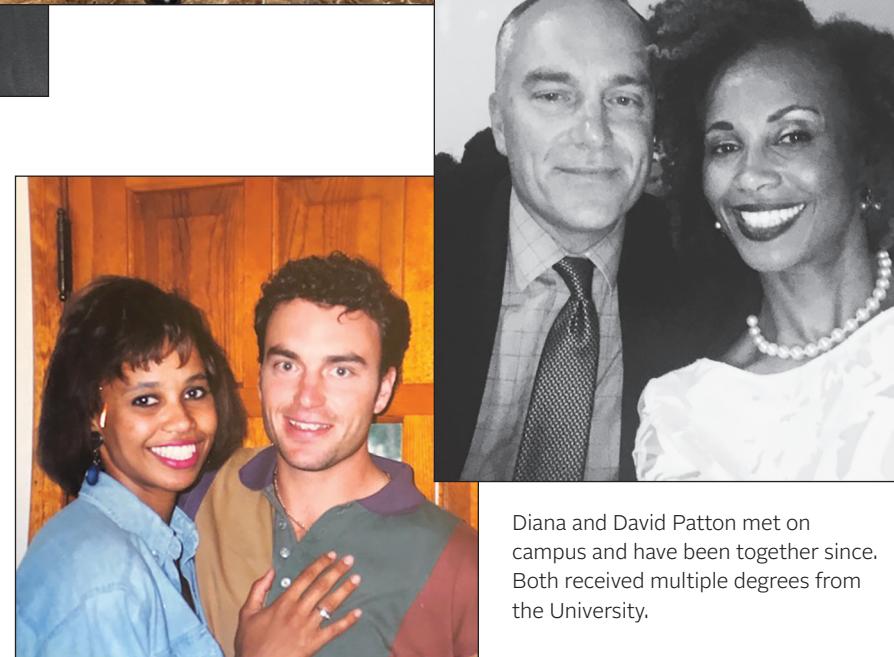
This month, UToledo alumni, employees, students and fans are asked to ignite the flame in others and show they care. Make gifts to the Rocket to Rocket Fund to provide emergency assistance for students in need, to the Rocket Fund to provide unrestricted support for Rocket athletics, or to the UT Foundation General Scholarship. Then spread the love and post or tweet favorite love stories or photos on social media with #RocketRomance to celebrate.

All gifts to the campaign are tax-deductible, and there are a variety of payment options available; these include installments and payroll deduction for UToledo employees.

"Whether you give \$5 or \$5,000, every gift is valued and appreciated, regardless of amount," Slough said.

"Because we're sharing the love, too, all donors to this campaign will receive a special gift," Slough added.

For more information or to make a pledge, visit the Rocket Romance campaign website at tinyurl.com/rocketromance.



George and Maurine Glasser were set up for a date at a dance. George was an undergraduate, and Maurine was still in high school. Maurine went to a different college, but she transferred to The University of Toledo to be closer to George. The two married. George, who received bachelor's and law degrees from UToledo in 1951 and 1953, is a retired judge from the Sixth District Court of Appeals. After raising their family, Maurine finished her bachelor of arts degree in 1987.

Diana and David Patton met on campus and have been together since. Both received multiple degrees from the University.

UToledo Department of Art Faculty Exhibiting Work

By Angela Riddel

The faculty of the UToledo Department of Art are exhibiting their work through Friday, Feb. 21, in the Center for the Visual Arts Main Gallery on the University's Toledo Museum of Art Campus.

"We take this show as a gauntlet tossed, a time to model for our students, and for one another, what it is to be deeply engaged in the practice of researching and making," said Barbara Miner, professor and chair of the Department of Art. "This show represents a challenge to push for the 'next,' the next piece that needs to be made after the grading and the syllabus reconfiguration, the budget alignment and the recruiting report. These are works produced by artist-scholars who live in our fields of study, who carve out precious time to keep our hands in the process."

She added, "We offer our inner dialogues as part of this exhibition and invite our students and our audience to converse with us about our work."

A total of 15 UToledo art faculty have work in the exhibition. The artwork ranges from 2D and 3D work to photography to digital/interactive and performance art.

Faculty artists in the show are:

- Brian Carpenter, assistant professor of art and gallery director;
- Dr. Jason Cox, assistant professor of art education and head of the Art

Education Program;

- Deb A. Davis, professor of new media;
- Dan Hernandez, co-chair of the BFA Program and associate professor of art, interdisciplinary art and foundations;
- Julia LaBay Darrah, instructor and technical assistant;
- Yusuf Lateef, adjunct professor of art;
- Thomas Lingeman, professor of art, 3D studies and sculpture;
- Linda Meyer, art instructor;
- Barbara Miner, professor and chair of art;
- Deborah Orloff, associate chair of the department, photography coordinator, and professor of art, new media studies and photography;
- Dr. Mysoon Rizk, head of art history and professor of art history, modern and contemporary art;
- Karen Roderick-Lingeman, senior lecturer of 2D studies and ceramics, and coordinator of the



Photo by Deborah Orloff

IN THE GALLERY: Works by, from left, Debra Davis, Deborah Orloff, Yusuf Lateef, Barry Whittaker, Tom Lingeman, and Dan Hernandez are included in the UToledo Faculty Art Exhibition.

Ceramics Program;

- Arturo Rodriguez, associate professor of art, head of studio art and co-chair of the BFA Program;
- Barry Whittaker, associate professor of art and new media design practices; and
- Eric Zeigler, assistant professor of art and head of the Art Print Center.

Artist profiles and statements are available at utoledo.edu/al/svpa/art/galleries.

The free, public exhibit can be seen Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information on the exhibition, contact Carpenter at brian.carpenter@utoledo.edu.

Triple Play



The Bezonian Trio — from left, Merwin Siu, violinist with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra; Dr. Michael Boyd, UToledo professor of piano; and Damon Coleman, cellist with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra — will perform for the 2019-20 University Dorothy MacKenzie Price Piano Series Sunday, Feb. 16, at 3 p.m. in the Center for Performing Arts Recital Hall. Bezonian is Latin for "scoundrel." The trio of "scoundrels" are longtime musical friends and will present a free, public concert featuring works by Kodaly, Ravel and Bright Sheng.

Now Showing



Jackson Howard, left, Carlos Washington Jr. and Gillian Martin star in the Department of Theatre and Film's production of "The Flick." Shows will continue Friday through Sunday, Feb. 14-16, in the Center for Performing Arts Center Theatre. "The Flick" is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company. Tickets are \$10 for students; \$12 for UToledo faculty, staff and alumni, and military members and seniors; and \$18 for the general public. Call 419.530.ARTS (2787) or go to utoledo.tix.com. Tickets also will be available at the door.

Spring Festival to Ring in Chinese New Year

Celebrate the Year of the Rat at the Chinese New Year Spring Festival Carnival Tuesday, Feb. 18.

The Confucius Institute will present the free event from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Thompson Student Union Auditorium.

This event that honors the beginning of a new year on the lunar calendar is an annual favorite, according to Xinren Yu, assistant director at the UToledo Center for International Studies and Programs.

"Students love this celebration because they get to experience different aspects of the Chinese culture, so we thought it's important to continue the tradition," Yu said.

The rat is the first of the repeating 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. People born in the Year of the Rat – 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020 – are sociable, optimistic, energetic and kind.

Those who attend the event will have a chance to take part in more than a dozen cultural activities, including Chinese paper cutting, paper folding, calligraphy, Chinese mask painting, lucky knot making and more.

Several games such as pitch-pot, ring toss and pingpong challenge also will be available to play.

"Stop by for fun and to make new friends. We are giving away lots of rat souvenirs, and free lunch is provided," Yu said.

The Confucius Institute serves northwest Ohio by providing education in Chinese language and culture. It also offers opportunities for cultural exchange between China and the United States.

For more information or questions, call the Confucius Institute at 419.530.7750 or email confuciusinstitute@utoledo.edu.

**CHINESE NEW YEAR
CELEBRATION 2020**



**Tuesday, Feb. 18
11:30 a.m.- 2 p.m.**

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Lots of prizes for participants and FREE
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For more information, contact:
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LUC2020

Feb. 17 Deadline to Nominate Outstanding Teachers, Advisors

Do you know an outstanding teacher or advisor at The University of Toledo?

The deadline to nominate someone for the 2020 Outstanding Teacher Award and the 2020 Outstanding Advisor Award is 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17.

The Outstanding Teacher Award recognizes outstanding UToledo faculty members who have made a positive impact by inspiring, motivating and challenging their students.

A maximum of six full-time faculty members will receive the award – a \$1,500 cash stipend and a certificate of recognition.

All full-time faculty at the University are eligible for the award, with the exception of past recipients. Winners will be selected by the Outstanding Teacher Committee based on an evaluation of nominations submitted by students, faculty and alumni.

The Outstanding Advisor Award is for academic advisors who have gone above and beyond to help empower their students.

Nominees should demonstrate strong interpersonal skills; educate and empower students to make informed academic decisions; prioritize their commitments to maximize academic success; and be knowledgeable of UToledo policies and resources.

There will be two recipients of the Outstanding Advisor Award, each receiving \$1,500. Any full-time advisor is eligible, with the exception of previous award recipients.

Students, alumni, faculty and staff are encouraged to submit nominations.

The online nomination forms for both awards may be found at utoledo.edu/offices/provost/awards.

Past award recipients are not eligible; lists of winners are online with the nomination forms.

Winners of these honors will be recognized at the UToledo Outstanding Awards Reception Monday, April 27, at 5:30 p.m. in the Thompson Student Union Auditorium.

At that event, the University also will recognize recipients of the Outstanding Research and Scholarship Award and the Edith Rathbun Outreach and Engagement Award, as well as Distinguished University Lecturers and Distinguished University Professors. And a new UToledo Faculty Mentoring Award also will be presented.

IN MEMORIAM

Marvin C. Dunseth, Bryan, Ohio, a painter who worked at UToledo for more than three decades, died Feb. 5 at age 72. He joined the staff in 1969 and retired in 2004. He is survived by his daughter, Talia Dunseth, custodial worker on campus, and his granddaughter, Janelle Dunseth, resident director in the Honors Academic Village.

Marilyn J. (Kinsey) Poore, Toledo, a nurse who worked at UToledo's Health Services, died Jan. 29 at age 88. She retired from the University in 1991.

Presidential Ambassadors Seeking Student Applicants

The University of Toledo Office of Special Events is accepting applications for the Presidential Ambassadors student organization through 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14.

Ambassadors come from many different academic backgrounds, but they all share a number of important traits: excellence at the University, professionalism, hospitality, character and Rocket pride.

"We're looking for a diverse group of students who want to engage with UToledo leaders, University donors and alumni," said Michele Ross, events coordinator and Presidential Ambassador adviser.

"We only accept the finest students on campus," Ross said. "A minimum 3.0 GPA is required to be eligible, and students must show leadership qualities by being active on campus."

Students selected for this honorary organization have the opportunity to interact with distinguished business, government and educational leaders by attending and assisting with UToledo events.

The Presidential Ambassadors have been around for nearly three decades. Members volunteer at special University events, including ribbon-cutting ceremonies, donor recognition events, dedication ceremonies,



Photo by Deb Driscoll

REPRESENTING UTOLEDO: President Sharon L. Gaber posed for a photo with Presidential Ambassadors Hannah Leabu, left, and Abby Mathias.

community-wide events such as the Veteran's Day Breakfast and the MLK Unity Celebration, athletic contests, and more.

Approximately 20 new members will be selected this year.

"Ideal candidates are outgoing,

responsible, professional and enthusiastic, and have a love for The University of Toledo," Ross said.

The application and more details are on the Presidential Ambassadors' website at utoledo.edu/offices/special-events/ambassador.

UTOLEDO NEWS

UToledo News is published for faculty, staff and students by the University Marketing and Communications Office weekly during the academic year and periodically during the summer. Copies are mailed to employees and placed in newsstands on Main, Health Science, Scott Park and Toledo Museum of Art campuses. UToledo News strives to present accurate, fair and timely communication of interest to employees. Story ideas and comments from the UToledo community are welcome. Send information by campus mail to #190, University Marketing and Communications Office, Vicki Kroll. Email: vicki.kroll@utoledo.edu. Fax: 419.530.4618. Phone: 419.530.2248. Mailing address: University Marketing and Communications Office, Mail Stop 190, The University of Toledo, Toledo, OH 43606-3390.

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Men's Basketball to Hold Rockets for Life Feb. 14

By Steve Easton

The University of Toledo and Life Connection of Ohio will hold their fourth annual Rockets for Life game to promote awareness for organ donation. The men's basketball team will host Buffalo in Savage Arena Friday, Feb. 14, in a 6:30 p.m. tipoff that will be televised nationally on CBS Sports Network.

Before and during the game, Savage Arena will be flooded with Donate Life messages, including videos, announcements, on-court features and promotions. Fans are encouraged to join Head Men's Basketball Coach Tod Kowalczyk, UToledo staff and Life Connection of Ohio volunteers by wearing neon green and navy to show their support for the cause.

Life Connection will give away green pom-poms and glowsticks to all fans, and Rockets For Life PopSockets to students. Tom Doerger, who is the father of Rocket football player Luke Doerger, will be recognized at the game. Doerger received a life-saving liver transplant last fall.

"Life Connection of Ohio is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with University of Toledo Athletics and Coach Kowalczyk for our fourth annual Rockets for Life event," said Kara Steele, Life Connection of Ohio's director of community services. "The goal of Rockets for Life is to raise awareness about the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation. There are countless people touched by organ, eye and tissue donation in our community, and we look forward to honoring those who gave the gift of life and celebrating with those who received a second chance at life through this event."

Organ donation is something that has touched Kowalczyk personally. One of his best friends, Trey Schwab, received 12 additional years of life because of a double



lung transplant. Trey, who coached at the college, Continental Basketball Association and National Basketball Association levels, passed away in 2016 waiting for another transplant.

"A 19-year-old young man and his family gave Trey and 14 other people an opportunity to live and that's why this is such an important cause for me," Kowalczyk said. "We have been fortunate to play on national television the last three years on this special night and that's been great to showcase the work Life Connection of Ohio is doing. I think it's vital that we spread the word for people to become organ donors. I certainly am a donor, and my family and all our players

are as well."

An awareness event like Rockets for Life couldn't come at a more crucial time. Currently, there are more than 112,000 people on the national transplant waiting list; this includes 3,100 Ohioans. The organ shortage continues to grow at a staggering rate, as another person is added to the waiting list every 10 minutes. Sadly, 20 people die every day waiting for an organ transplant. The good news: One person has the power to save up to eight lives through organ donation and heal 125 more through tissue donation.

Life Connection of Ohio is the nonprofit organization that has promoted and facilitated organ donation in

northwest and west central Ohio for more than 25 years. Last year, Life Connection of Ohio coordinated the recovery of organs from 93 donors, providing 310 life-saving transplants. For more information or to register as an organ, eye and tissue donor, visit lifeconnectionohio.org.

Tickets for the game are available for the special price of \$14 and \$10 if purchased prior to game day with the promo code RFL. For tickets, visit utrockets.com, call 419.530.GOLD (4653), or stop by the Rocket Ticket Office.

Coach Inducted into U.S. Tennis Association Midwest Section Hall of Fame

By Katherine Jamtgaard

Brian Eisner, former University of Toledo men's tennis coach, was inducted into the 2019 United States Tennis Association Midwest Section Hall of Fame.

The induction ceremony took place Jan. 31 at the Alexander in Indianapolis.

A native of Ann Arbor, Mich., Eisner coached at the Division I level for 37 years, coaching through 755 matches for a combined win-loss record of 523-231-1.

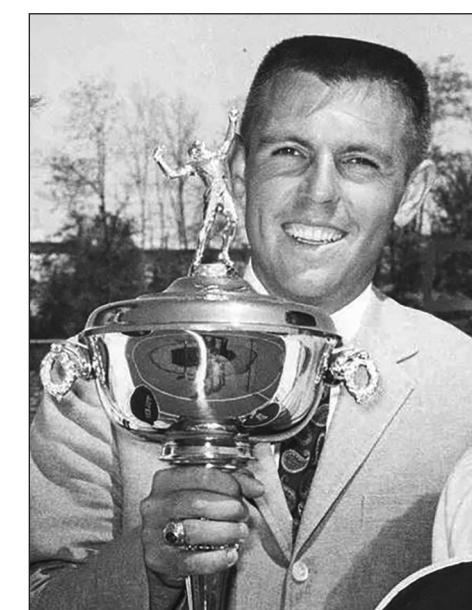
Eisner coached at The University of Toledo from 1963 to 1969 and led the Rockets to four consecutive Mid-American Conference Championships from 1965 to

1969. He also led Rockets to 12 individual and nine doubles titles at the MAC Championships. Eisner's dual-meet record at Toledo was 74-30-1.

Following his tenure at Toledo, Eisner coached at the University of Michigan for 31 seasons, winning 18 Big Ten Conference Championships, including a streak of 16 consecutive titles. Eisner also was named Big Ten Men's Tennis Coach of the Year four times and coached six Big Ten Players of the Year and 12 collegiate All-Americans.

Eisner played collegiate tennis at Michigan State University, where he was a finalist in the 1960 Big Ten singles championship and was a team captain in 1961 and 1962.

He is a member of The University of Toledo's Varsity T Hall of Fame, as well as the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Men's College Tennis Hall of Fame and Michigan Athletic Hall of Honor.



Eisner