The US Supreme Court: Taking the Pulse

A Masterclass by Dr. Jilda Aliotta

Thursday, June 23, 2011
1877 Club, Harry Jack Gray Center
5:30-6:00 – Registration and Cocktail Reception
6:00-7:30 – Presentation and Discussion
EVERYONE LOVES A PARTY! But some parties are better than others. We had expected that our May 4 fundraiser would kick off our $50,000 campaign to raise money for the clearing of the space in the library where the College’s new seminar and classroom space would go. But the event turned into a victory party instead. Not only were we able to declare that we had reached our $50,000 goal at one go, but we also announced that major gifts from two benefactors of the University, totaling over $250,000, had financed, equipped and endowed the new space. May 31 was fixed as the date when work would begin, and September 1 was the target date for completion of the project. We can’t thank our contributors enough — and not just our major donors, but all those who, in their various ways, have worked to make this plan a reality. Our special thanks go to Louise Wilder, who both opened her gorgeous home for the event and also underwrote the cost of the festivities. Thanks also to the other members of the organizing committee, Janet Bruner, Marcia Cornell, and Nancy Mather. President Walter Harrison and Dianne Harrison took time to be with us, and President Emeritus Stephen Joel Trachtenberg came all the way from Washington. Their presence helped increase our numbers and remind us of the importance of this effort. Also on hand were Provost Sharon Vasquez and Deans Joseph Voelker and Ralph Mueller.

Moving an apostrophe turns out to be quite difficult. There’s all that stationery to change — and fixing the newsletter banners, the website, and 101 other places is going to take longer than we had any of us imagined. Bear with us (as they say) while we repunctuate to serve you better....

In this issue of the newsletter we have good things to announce: a fascinating session on Connecticut’s prehistoric past, and the return of one of our star speakers, Jilda Aliotta, on the U.S. Supreme Court. On June 9, Nancy Mather and a group of volunteers will head to the CT Business Expo to spread the word about the Presidents’ College.

Then, on June 11 and 12 we will once again have a booth at Celebrate West Hartford. This is my responsibility — and I’m desperate for volunteers. If you can give us some time at the booth, write tonkin@hartford.edu to let me know. See page 6 for details.

Also in this issue there’s a sneak preview of our amazing fall program, a reminder about Showcase (September 18), and news that we are off to London once more....

HUMPHREY TONKIN
Yeats and the Irish Literary Renaissance

Did the Irish literary Renaissance of the late nineteenth century lead to the resurgence of Irish nationalism that ultimately brought independence, or was it simply one more element in the move to throw off British rule? Either way, the period saw an extraordinary convergence of artistic talent. The brilliant poet William Butler Yeats, after his years in London, returned to Dublin in 1896 to lead a revival of interest in ancient Irish history and myth, opening up the entire field of Celtic ancient history and art. His brother Jack established himself as a leading painter. Lady Gregory wrote plays and helped found the Abbey Theatre; her home at Coole became a center for the writers and artists of the Celtic Revival. The poet George William Russell (Æ) was also associated with the Abbey Theatre's beginnings, as were Sean O'Casey and John Millington Synge. Under the leadership of Professor Kathleen McGrory, this course will review the work of these contributors to Ireland's revival as it moved from Celtic Twilight to Celtic Tiger.

Kathleen McGrory holds a PhD from Columbia University in comparative literature. A native of New York City, she was a Sister of Divine Compassion in New York, then professor of English and founder of the Irish Studies graduate program at Western Connecticut State University, Danbury. She was Dean of Arts and Sciences and Academic Vice President at Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU), President of Hartford College for Women before its merger with the University of Hartford, National Endowment for the Humanities fellow at Stanford University, and senior fellow at the University of Virginia's Commonwealth Center for Literary and Cultural Change.

As Executive Director of the Society for Values in Higher Education at Georgetown University, she also taught medieval literature at Georgetown. She currently teaches part-time at ECSU and is completing a book-length study of the legend of the Holy Grail.

Mondays and Wednesdays, June 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon. $90 (Fellows $70)

Friday, June 10
Fridays at the Mortensen: Window into the Jurassic World – Fossils of the Connecticut Valley

Our guest at Fridays at the Mortensen in June will be Nicholas G. McDonald, Connecticut Valley fossil expert whose new book, Window into the Jurassic World, takes an authoritative look at early Mesozoic life in Connecticut and Massachusetts, including dinosaurs, fishes, invertebrates and plants. The author will describe local Triassic and Jurassic environments and the animals that created the famous trackways at Dinosaur State Park.
Nicholas G. McDonald is a geology and biology instructor at Westminster School in Simsbury and emeritus chairman of the Science Department. His abiding interest in paleontology was awakened at the age of 12 during a Sunday afternoon field trip to a local Jurassic fossil site. After graduating from Franklin and Marshall College, he continued his geologic studies at Wesleyan University, completing a Master’s thesis on the fossil fishes of Connecticut and Massachusetts. An inveterate collector, Nick has brought to light literally thousands of well-preserved specimens from early Mesozoic rocks once thought to be largely devoid of fossils. His discoveries of fishes, plants, mollusks, insects, crustaceans and trace fossils have broadened the understanding of Jurassic ecosystems in the region. For more than 20 years the author has been a Visiting Scholar (research associate) in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Wesleyan, and he is currently a Curatorial Affiliate at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History.

Each session of Fridays at the Mortensen begins with a reception (5:45 pm) and light dinner, prepared by Presidents’ College volunteers, followed by a talk. Final session of the season: June 10.

Session, incl. dinner, $45 (Fellows $35). Registration for two sessions (May and June), $80 (Fellows $65).
The US Supreme Court: Taking the Pulse

Hartford Masterclass
Featuring Dr. Jilda Aliotta, Associate Professor of Politics & Government

Thursday, June 23, 2011
1877 Club, Harry Jack Gray Center, University of Hartford
5:30-6:00pm – Registration & Cocktails
6:00-7:30pm – Presentation & Discussion

Masterclasses come to Hartford and to the Presidents’ College! These highly popular alumni events, held at various locations up and down the East Coast, come to Hartford. The Alumni Association and the Presidents’ College invite you to join us for a Masterclass featuring Dr. Jilda Aliotta, associate professor in the Department of Politics and Government.

Recently, all eyes have been on the Supreme Court as it carves out for itself a particular historic position on aspects of jurisprudence. As its current session comes to an end, a number of major and far-reaching decisions are likely to be handed down in the next several weeks. What are their likely outcomes, what will their impact be on both society and the law, and what can we expect from the Justices in the coming session?

Cost: $25 per person; includes hors d’oeuvres, beer and wine.

Registration will be handled by the Presidents’ College. Use the registration form with this newsletter to sign up.

Dr. Jilda Aliotta, a popular teacher and an exacting scholar, teaches classes in law, American politics, and women in politics. She has published on decision-making in the Supreme Court, women in law, and related topics. Her current research investigates the impact of women on the judiciary in the United States.
MAKE A DATE WITH

CELEBRATE! WEST HARTFORD

Celebrate! West Hartford is a highly attended, annual tradition that promotes, embraces and celebrates community life.

Attracting well over 30,000 people each year, Celebrate! also provides festival attendees with a wide range of wholesome family activities – an award winning juried arts & crafts show, great food, entertainment, games, rides, a certified 5K road race – as the saying goes, "something for everyone".

The event offers civic, service, sports, schools and charitable organizations a way to increase community awareness and an opportunity to raise funds for their worthy causes.

Saturday and Sunday
June 11 & 12, 2011
10:00-6:00 & 12:00-6:00

ONCE AGAIN THE PRESIDENTS’ COLLEGE WILL BE REPRESENTED.
SIGN UP NOW TO HELP RUN OUR BOOTH.
CALL 860-768-4269.
London Theatre 2011
Join Malcolm Morrison and Humphrey Tonkin in London
November 11-18!

Following last year’s successful theatre trip, Malcolm Morrison and Humphrey Tonkin will once again be taking a Presidents’ College group to London. The visit will begin in London on the evening of Friday, November 11, and will end on the morning of the following Friday, November 18. Participants will be responsible for their own travel arrangements.

Accommodation will be at the comfortable and well-appointed Strand Palace Hotel, a stone’s throw from London’s theatre district (Covent Garden is just around the corner and Drury Lane a couple of blocks away), convenient for all of the delights of London’s West End. The Strand Palace is notable for having numbers of single rooms at moderate prices. We have been able to secure a group of club rooms (the superior accommodation level), several of them singles, and can accordingly propose to participants a far lower single supplement than is customary for trips of this kind.

We expect to arrange at least four theatre visits (details to be announced closer to the date), talks by London experts on theatre (last year we heard from Michael Billington, theatre critic for The Guardian, and from actor Henry Goodman) back-stage visits, historic walks around London’s theatre district, four dinners, three lunches, and other pleasures of the heart, head, and stomach. And we will have immediate access to three Brits (Malcolm and Humphrey, and our on-the-spot organizer Richard Mangan) with a wealth of knowledge about London, about theatre, and about British history and society – and with entrées to things the rest of us don’t normally see. The week coincides with the Lord Mayor’s Show, a splendid mix of pageantry and zaniness.

Also included will be a Sunday excursion to a local place of interest. Last year we went down the river to Greenwich; the year before we visited Henry VIII’s palace at Hampton Court.

Total cost at present rates of exchange will be $3600 per person, double occupancy (single supplement $150), for Fellows of the Presidents’ College (you must be a Fellow to participate). Price includes accommodation, full breakfast, all taxes, entrance fees, theatre tickets, and most meals. A deposit of $500 per person is required to reserve a space (fully refundable up to September 1 if your plans change), with full payment necessary six weeks before the program begins. We expect to limit participation to sixteen people on a first-come-first-served basis.
How do you move an apostrophe?

How do you move an apostrophe? One way, of course, is with a couple of keystrokes.

But maybe a better way is to give a party and invite three presidents. That’s what The President’s College did on Wednesday, May 4, when it renamed itself The Presidents’ College after twenty years under its old name. On hand for the event were two former University of Hartford presidents, Stephen Joel Trachtenberg (president 1977-1988) and Humphrey Tonkin (1989-1998), along with current president Walter Harrison. The occasion was a dinner, held at the Bloomfield home of Presidents’ College supporter Louise Wilder, to raise funds for the relocation of library offices to make room for a new state-of-the-art seminar and conference space in the Mortensen Library. The new room will serve as a home for the renamed Presidents’ College and will also be used as an additional teaching and conference space for other programs housed in the Mortensen Library. Included in its equipment will be full videoconferencing capability, allowing for the expansion of Presidents’ College programming to off-site locations.

The Presidents’ College is an outreach program of the University Libraries offering short non-credit courses to members of the Greater Hartford community. Operated in part by volunteers, it describes itself as a learning community for adult learners. It also aims to build audiences for events on campus and to create stronger links between the University and the larger community.

The fundraising effort is part of a larger multi-year Library Renewal Program, which has already seen the creation of the Woods Family Classroom in the Mortensen Library, the creation of the i-Commons, a computer center on the main floor of the Library, and the building of the increasingly popular Dorothy Goodwin Café, named for a former Regent of the University and Library supporter. The Program has also allowed for significant strengthening of the University Libraries’ acquisitions. Funds are currently being raised to expand the University’s holdings of reference databases and other electronic materials.
The fundraising dinner became more than just a celebration of the first twenty years of The President’s College when President Harrison unexpectedly announced the successful completion of the current phase of the program – relocation of library offices and construction of the seminar space – thanks to numerous generous contributions from President’s College members and Library supporters, plus major gifts from two donors to fund the seminar and conference space itself. Harrison also announced that the libraries were already halfway towards the funding target for the acquisition of databases. Director of University Libraries Randi Ashton-Pritting announced that work on the seminar and conference room will begin immediately, with September 1 as target completion date.

The renaming of the Presidents’ College, explained Tonkin, its current director, signifies that the College has become an important part of the legacy of its various presidents. The space to be occupied by the new seminar and conference room was added to the library when the Gray Center was built during the presidency of Stephen Trachtenberg, the Presidents’ College was founded during Humphrey Tonkin’s presidency, and the College owes much of its continued expansion to the support of President Harrison.

Referring to his time as president, Trachtenberg remarked, “What was clear then to the pioneers in the school’s development, and even more evident today is that universities are organisms that must constantly renew their spirits. On the one hand, we teach history, philosophy, mathematics, and appreciate age-old traditions. On the other hand,
without an eye toward the future, we become stagnant and out of date in a nanosecond.”

Tonkin added, “New developments in communication and new ways of conserving knowledge make libraries like ours far more valuable than they used to be, when everything depended on the acquisition of printed materials and the space to house them. Books continue to matter, but now we can share old knowledge and new with ever-increasing circles of learners. The Presidents’ College is one way in which we share the riches that we possess with the community that surrounds us.”

PC Plans Trip to Cape Cod

Monomoy Theater. We’re looking into the possibility of organizing a trip to Cape Cod to see *The Comedy of Errors* at the Monomoy Theater, Chatham, Mass., in the last week of August. The director of the Monomoy Theatre is Alan Rust, director of the Theatre Division of the Hartt School. The Monomoy productions are some of the best summer theatre in this part of the country. Plans call for departure from Hartford around mid-day on Tuesday, August 23, in time for dinner in Chatham. On Wednesday, August 23, the day would begin with a morning conversation with the cast and director and an introduction to the play by Humphrey Tonkin. In the afternoon we plan to arrange a boat trip around the bay, and, following dinner, to go on to the play. We will provide assistance in locating accommodation in the center of Chatham, and local transportation will be provided, as needed. If you’re interested, please let us know (you can indicate your interest on the attached registration form). Minimum number needed: 10 people.

Details on the trip, including prices, will be announced shortly.

A preview of our fall program!

We’re not ready to announce our fall program yet, but here are some highlights to consider. **All dates are tentative.** We still have two or three programs and courses to arrange.

**Michael Lankester and Patrick McCaughey** will be featured speakers in a six-session course on *Vienna 1870-1930*. After Michael’s course last semester, you may be pardoned for supposing that Modernism burst into the world on a street in Paris, but the Vienna of Mahler, Webern and Schoenberg, of Schnitzler and Musil, of Klimt and Schiele, of the great Sigmund Freud – this city too can claim that Modernism appeared between its paving stones (likely dates: September 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31).

If you enjoyed **Virginia Hale**’s course on Chaucer – or if you regret having missed it – she will be back this fall with another course on *The Canterbury Tales*, covering different ground from the first (September 20, 27, October 4, 11, 18).
The Hartt School will perform Molière’s *Tartuffe* in October, so Humphrey Tonkin, director David Watson, and French professor Marie Healey will team up for a course on this greatest of all French writers of comedy (September 7, 14, 21, October 5, 12).

Opera Maestro Willie Anthony Waters will be back for a day-long course on the operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (September 24).

The James Joyce Book Club, under Joseph Voelker’s guidance, will tackle *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist* (September 21, October 5, 19, November 2, 16).

In a stunning recent announcement, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said no to nuclear power, reversing earlier policy. Tom Filburn will explore the scientific and policy implications surrounding nuclear power in the wake of the Japanese disaster. Can it ever be safe? (October 19, 26, November 2)

Dali, Picasso and Gertrude Stein in Hartford will be the tantalizing topic of historian of between-the-wars Hartford, Eugene Gaddis, of the Wadsworth Atheneum (October 14, 21, 28).

Dianne Harrison will return to the Presidents’ College for a course on Stieg Larsson’s brilliant trilogy that began with *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (October 25, November 1 and 8). Summer reading, anyone?

Early and not-so-early Mozart will be the topic of the engaging and versatile Michael Schiano’s course this fall (November 7, 14, 21, 28, December 5).

Pianist Watson Morrison will offer a commentary with illustrations (or a recital with comments?) in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Franz Liszt (November 3).

The Hartt School’s production of *Sunday in the Park with George* opens on December 8, so John Pike will offer a course on the work of Stephen Sondheim (November 11, 18, December 2).

And, finally, Humphrey Tonkin plans the first meeting of The Faerie Queene Book Club, on poet Edmund Spenser, in December (date to be determined), with further monthly meetings during the spring semester in January, February, March and April.

Still to come: courses by, among others, Jilda Aliotta and Michael Robinson.

To learn more about these courses and other events in the fall, plan to attend the University of Hartford Showcase 2011 on Sunday, September 18. This day-long Presidents’ College event is a series of lectures, panels, discussions and other activities featuring many of the professors giving courses in the Presidents’ College and other star teachers besides. It ends with a reception hosted by President Walter Harrison.
Precedents for Life

Registration Form and RSVP

Please check relevant items and indicate amount paid at right.

☐ Fossils in Connecticut: Fridays at the Mortensen: June 10. $45 ($35 Fellow)  
☐ Irish Renaissance: Mondays and Wednesdays, June 1, 6, 8, 13, 15. $90 ($70 Fellow)  
☐ Monomoy Theatre: Yes, I’m potentially interested in the trip (August 23-25)  
☐ London: (November 11-18). Deposit $500  
☐ The US Supreme Court: Thursday, June 23. $25

Total: 

Name: ____________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________
STREET…………………………………………………………..CITY...........................................
STATE ZIP

Telephone: DAYTIME: (____)_____ - _________ EVENING: (____)_____ - _________

To receive correspondence from course coordinators, please include your email address, if available.

E-mail: ________________________________

Fee may be paid by: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Credit Card# _____________________________________________ Security Code ________ Exp. Date__________

Signature_____________________________________________________________Date ______________

Checks payable to: University of Hartford.
Send form and (where appropriate) check to:

Presidents’ College: Education for a Lifetime
Mortensen Library
University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117-1599.

Questions? 860.768.4269 or pcollege@hartford.edu.