



Summer, 2004

Beckwith Residence Hall

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Beckwith Newsletter, and we invite you to stop by for a visit on your next excursion to Champaign or, if you prefer, a virtual visit via the Internet at www.disability.uiuc.edu/beckwith.

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Welcome

...to the Fourth Edition of the *Beckwith Newsletter*. This is our opportunity to share highlights of our students' accomplishments and programmatic successes during the preceding year. Our first story is a follow-up article by former resident and recent law school graduate, Kristin Kaminski. Kristin talks about her last internship experience before graduating in December 2003 with her J.D. Next, we've included an article describing the substantial facility renovations that were introduced over the summer. We also feature a story showcasing some of the awards earned by Beckwith residents during the year, an update on a recent alumnus, and a tribute to a former employee who passed away in December.

On a personal note, I'd like to share with you that this will be the last *Beckwith Newsletter* that I will personally produce. After nine years of service as the Associate Director and Director of Beckwith (I also served as a Beckwith Graduate Advisor one year), I will be seeking a career change. For those of you unfamiliar with me, I was a resident of Beckwith from 1989-1993 and began working as Associate Director immediately after receiving a Masters in Rehabilitation-Counseling in 1995. My two years as Associate Director and seven as Director have been anything but boring. While the years have been challenging, I am extremely proud of the progress that we've made in Beckwith programs, services and administration during that period, and I believe the program's future has never looked brighter. I would like to say thank you to all of the individuals with whom it has been my pleasure to work. Specifically, I would like to thank the Beckwith staff for the outstanding job they have done throughout the years in keeping the facility and services running smoothly. To my academic colleagues at Beckwith and the Division of Rehabilitation-Education Services (DRES), I would like to say that it has been a pleasure working with you. I thank you for your support which has kept me going during the tough times. Finally, to the students whom I will miss working with the most, you have taught me so much, and leaving you is by far the hardest part of this decision. I wish the current students luck with the rest of their studies and careers at the University and beyond. I look forward to receiving future editions of the *Beckwith Newsletter* so that I can keep in touch with the successes of the program, the staff and its students; I know there will be many to report.

Peace,
Kat Madayag
Director, Beckwith Residence Hall

Diary of a Law Student—Part 2

My name is Kristin Kaminski and I just finished my last semester of law school this past December. Last spring I was offered two opportunities for a summer internship. The first offer was to extern with the parole board in Springfield and the second was to clerk with Judge Joe B. McDade of the United States Federal District Court (Central District of Illinois) in Peoria. It was a difficult choice to make, as



both seemed fascinating. Ultimately, I chose to be a summer clerk for Judge McDade, because I believed it would give me an opportunity to improve my research and writing skills. I definitely made the right decision.

The move to Peoria was easier than I expected. I was able to sublease a totally accessible furnished apartment on the Bradley University campus. I simply called the student housing department, the director made some calls and within twenty minutes I had a place. I chose the Bradley campus area because it is close to the courthouse. It is also close to a nursing school, and I felt I would have the best fortune there in finding personal assistants from the student body. In the end, I was able to convince a personal assistant from home to come with me. It was a great relief to not have to worry about finding and training personal assistants and starting a new internship at the same time.

As a summer clerk, I researched and wrote orders for the judge on two cases: a Social Security case and an ERISA case. In writing the Social Security order, I essentially applied an eight-step test developed through statute and years of case law. Because of a slight twist in my case, it required numerous rewrites and meetings with the judge. I did become somewhat frustrated and began to question my competence. I finally was able to draft an order that the Judge signed. As I started my second order, ERISA, I had a little more confidence. However, I soon became frustrated as it was very complicated. I had to comb through documents online in order to figure out the basic structure of the act. In the end, however, I was able to draft an order that did not require near the editing that my first order did. In addition, the ERISA order required a lot more analysis and argument on my part than did the Social Security order. I was thrilled when, on my last day, the Judge called me in to discuss it and told me it was “great” and signed it without re-write! I was able to do all of my research online, so I did not have to ask for assistance getting books. (Fortunately, the only modification needed was to put the table on blocks, which they readily did.)

I also had the opportunity to do a great deal of court watching. It was kind of a slow summer in terms of trials in the Central District, but I was able to watch a number of sentencing, bond hearings, and other proceedings. I observed and evaluated different attorneys’ styles and determined what I felt was effective and what clearly was not. I also saw behind-the-scenes activities and how Judge McDade made his decisions. He would often explain his rationale to me and the other externs after the proceedings. Additionally, I observed other proceedings

unrelated to criminal law. There were two naturalization ceremonies, both conducted by Judge McDade. It was incredibly poignant to see the faces of these immigrants from all over the world as they became American citizens. Judge McDade and his staff recognize the importance of these moments and create events that these individuals will always remember, as will I.

In my last week as a summer clerk, we finally got a trial! It was not before Judge McDade, but we were encouraged to sit in anyway. The other remaining extern and I did not miss a thing. This trial was especially exciting as the defendant decided to represent himself, in spite of the strong recommendation by the judge not to. He was charged with possession and intent to distribute crack cocaine. The defendant was caught by police at a kitchen table cutting and bagging a large quantity of the drug. We observed the jury selection process, which was fascinating. Court began with a jury pool of about one hundred people, and after a morning’s work and about two-thirds of the pool dismissed, twelve jurors and two alternates were chosen. My colleague and I tried to determine the rationale behind the selection of the jurors and what type of juror we would look for under the circumstances. I was very impressed to see that while every juror was very candid, not one juror made an effort to be excused. They all seemed very willing to perform their duties. However, we were very troubled to see that while the jury pool was a random selection of names from all over the district, racial minorities were essentially unrepresented.

We then watched the government present its case, which consisted of three police officers who conducted the search and a laboratory technician who testified that the substance found was,

in fact, crack cocaine. The defendant attempted to demonstrate that the police were lying and that they had tampered with the evidence. His cross-examinations were ineffective at best and utterly confusing at worst. His defense was not much better. He focused mainly on his disability, (a rare neurological disorder impairing his hands and feet) calling several witnesses, including a physical therapist, a physician, and his mother to testify as to his limitations. The government, however, was quickly able to diffuse this by pointing out that the physical preparation of the drug was not an element of the crime alleged.

Finally, we were able to watch three totally different closing arguments. First, the government's lead attorney made an aggressive, impassioned argument that seemed a little superfluous to us. Second, the defendant made a disjointed argument consisting of a great deal of improper argument. Finally, the government's co-counsel made a simple, logical, and low-key argument that both my colleague and I found very persuasive. The entire

trial lasted only three days and the jury deliberated only an hour or so before finding the defendant guilty. The whole experience was very educational. Watching the actual jury selection, opening statements, testimony, and closing arguments demonstrated very clearly the process of a jury trial. The fact that the defendant represented himself not only made it more interesting, it also provided a lesson in the rules of the court. As the defendant had no formal training, the Judge had to stop the proceedings with some regularity to give him brief lessons on the rules, which also refreshed the memories of the partially trained legal minds in the gallery!

Following the trial, my colleague and I had the opportunity to meet the FBI agent who led the investigation. He let us look at the crack cocaine that was confiscated in the search. He explained to us in great detail how the drug is cut, weighed, packaged, sold, and used. While this was not particularly pertinent to my legal training, it was definitely a once in a lifetime opportunity!

I learned so much that summer. I truly believe I learned more in this experience than I did in my first-year legal research and writing courses. I worked under the supervision of two great law clerks. Their doors were literally always open for me to ask questions. They gave me great assistance in the writing and editing of my orders. They also gave me great insight into legal careers in general, finding a job and interviewing skills.

On my last day of work, Judge McDade asked me about my future plans. I told him that based on my experience this summer, I would like to pursue a permanent clerkship. He told me he thought that I have talent and that he would help me reach my goals. The research and writing skills from this experience, insight I gained from watching behind-the-scenes activities, advice from my law clerk supervisors, and confidence I obtained from the Judge's kind words and encouragement combined to make this the best experience of my law school career.

Beckwith Hall Receives a Make-Over

This past summer, Beckwith received some significant upgrades to its fire protection systems. Fire protection and evacuation procedures have always been a priority for review every year by Beckwith management and the Division of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). With a two-floor facility and the reduction of live-in staff, an evacuation policy became harder to adhere to and there were several attributes of the building that needed brought up to current codes. In early 2002, Beckwith management, the Office of the Provost, EHS and the fire departments of Champaign and Urbana held meetings to discuss a change from the evacuation policy to a defend-in-place strategy. This strategy, recommended by the Na-

tional Fire Protection Association, is based on a combination of sprinkler systems, detection and alarm systems, horizontal movement, compartmentation and staff training to provide the residents with the protection necessary to ensure survival in a fire emergency while remaining in the building. Since Beckwith has an extensive sprinkler system and is divided into six separate fire compartments, the defend-in-place strategy was deemed to be the safest and most effective emergency response alternative, and will protect residents from having to be outside in inclement weather.

In adopting the defend-in-place strategy, it was concluded that changes would need to be made to the staff

response plan and the fire detection and alarm systems within the building would need to be substantially upgraded. Beginning in Fall 2002, Beckwith management, along with members of EHS and Facilities and Services, met with architects and engineers to discuss what would need to be done to upgrade the systems in Beckwith. In the end, Beckwith received a new fire alarm system (which would allow staff, as well as the fire department, to know the exact location of the troubled alarm), an extended sprinkler system, new and automatic fire exit doors, sidewalks and ramps from the exit doors, re-strengthened balconies, and a larger generator to accommodate the new systems. The timeframe for production and completion was a very

short two months, so weekly meetings were established with the contractors to keep everyone on track. Despite a few glitches, the project was completed on time and Beckwith was operational for the Fall 2003 Term.

During the planning phases of this project, Beckwith management evaluated its staffing needs to determine what level would be required to meet the new policy. The defend-in-place strategy requires that there be enough staff available to perform the necessary functions to keep the residents safe while remaining in the building. To do this, it was determined that at least three staff would be needed to respond in the event of a fire alarm. Each staff member is assigned specific duties. The most important component of the defend-in-place strategy is compartmentation. Each wing and floor of Beckwith is separated by a firewall that provides a fire and smoke barrier for the entire hallway when the fire doors close, which happens automatically as the alarm is set off. The grouping of every two resident rooms acts as another compartment to further protect the residents should a fire be located in their hallway. Students are encouraged

to stay in their rooms with the doors closed every time they hear an alarm rather than potentially get caught in the hallway with smoke. Managers on duty are assigned to respond to the location of the triggered detector and determine if there is a fire or another cause for concern. Should they find a fire, they are to remove any student from the area to another compartment. This is called horizontal movement and negates the need to evacuate. The two other responding staff members are performing duties such as closing room doors, therefore closing off each compartment within the building to prevent fire and smoke from reaching each area. To assist the staff in efficient communication during this time, Beckwith has walkie-talkie cell phones so that all responding members can communicate with each other all over the building and assist immediately if needed.

In addition to this past summer's activities, Beckwith has built upon its excellent relationship with the Champaign Fire Department in helping them to make their response as efficient as possible. Management has regularly given tours to fire suppression

personnel in each engine company to show the facility and discuss the types of disabilities that they will encounter at Beckwith. These tours give the fire personnel a chance to familiarize themselves with the building when it is not an emergency situation. At the same time it allows the personnel to give us suggestions as to how we can help them be more efficient when responding to an alarm in the building. Finally, they have always been available for help with problems and concerns that arise during the year.

Thanks to the efforts of Vice Chancellor Van Anderson, the Division of Environmental Health and Safety, Facilities and Services, and the Champaign Fire Department, Beckwith has been transformed from a very safe residence hall into an even safer one through the introduction of state-of-the-art fire detection and suppression technologies and life safety procedures. With this \$400,000 investment, the campus has once again demonstrated its extraordinary commitment to the programs and services of Beckwith Hall and, more importantly, to the students who reside there.

University Study Affirms High Employment Among Former Residents

During the Fall 2003 Term, the University of Illinois Office of Planning and Budgeting used the University's alumni database to perform an employment study of Beckwith residents who graduated between 1986 and 1997. The study found 58.3 percent of the former Beckwith residents who responded to the survey were employed one year following graduation. This correlates highly with DRES data indicating that

60 percent of alumni who graduated between 1986 and 1997 and who formerly resided at Beckwith Hall obtained employment in the year following graduation, and another 32 percent were admitted to graduate schools. Thus, a total of 92 percent of alumni who resided at Beckwith obtained employment or entered graduate and/or professional school following graduation.

In Memory

On December 28, 2003, Beckwith lost long-time employee and friend, Ellen Bowie, to cancer. Ellen had recently retired in August, 2003 after 20 years of service to Beckwith and its residents. She started as a part-time weekend housekeeper and became full-time in 1997. Ellen grew up in Indianapolis and most recently lived in Urbana. She attended Parkland College and the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Ellen had two children, Lawrence and Elizabeth. Lawrence, who lives in Jacksonville, Florida, was recently married and had Ellen's first granddaughter, Chloe, whom Ellen got to meet before she passed.

For Director Kathleen Madayag, Ellen will be remembered for her dedication to the residents. "I've known Ellen since I was a student here in 1989, and I believe she thought of Beckwith as her second family. She always showed concern for the residents, including me when I lived here as a student. She was a hard worker and even came in when she was sick, but it was her commitment to each resident that made her unique." Former live-in



personal assistant, Lubna Ali, agreed. "She was a very warm person. She was like a grandmother to me. Every time I'd leave for class in the morning, I'd see her and when I'd come back, I'd see her again and we'd talk. If I didn't see her for one day, it would feel weird. She even came over to my house for dinner once in Chicago." Associate Director Katherine Johnson expanded on Ellen's sincerity, saying "She became more than an employee; she was a friend. Ellen took great interest in the students and her co-workers, listening to their difficulties as students and offering words of support and comfort."

Ellen took great pride in her work and it was very important to her that the building looked good at all times. "Ellen was an exemplary employee from a management point of view. She was dependable and hardworking, staying late some evenings to make sure a student's laundry was returned to them. As her supervisor, she was open to my suggestions and requests on improving our techniques in implementing universal precautions and sanitizing areas, often coming to me with her own improvement ideas." recalls Johnson, adding "I miss my co-worker and friend."

Outside of Beckwith Ellen was no different. She was an active member of the Urbana Assembly of God Church, a volunteer at the Common Ground Food Co-op and served on the advisory board of the Urbana Community School District. Ellen left her impression on many places and many people, and Beckwith is a very different place without her.

Award Winning Students

At the 55th Annual Delta Sigma Omicron (DSO) Awards Banquet held in November, current and former Beckwith residents were recipients of several awards:



Mike Gorman received his award from Dr. Kim Collins and her son, Quinn.

Pamela Borelli and Family Achievement and Leadership Award

The Borelli Award is given to two students who have demonstrated leadership in a campus social organization and have maintained a C+ or better GPA. Mike Gorman was one of the recipients. Mike finished his junior year, majoring in Finance with a GPA of 3.98. He has been an active member of the Finance Club and the Wall Street Club, two registered student organizations at UIUC. This past year he joined the Phi Chi Theta business fraternity serving on the Community Service Committee, and is the Vice President of Beckwith Student Government. Mike has a

long history of community service and peer mentoring dating back to his teenage years. Last year Mike was the recipient of the Odelius Award.

Matthew Allan Odelius Award

The Odelius Award was established to honor the memory of former Beckwith student Matthew Odelius. Matthew is remembered for his independence, and above all, his positive attitude. The annual award is given to a UIUC student with a disability residing at Beckwith. They must be in good academic standing and demonstrate leadership in advancing the involvement of students with disabilities in all aspects of academic and co-curricular life. This year the recipient was Esther Lee. Esther finished

her third year at Beckwith, majoring in English and Rhetoric, and is also a pre-law student. Esther has been active in the University community since she arrived, joining DSO and later serving as editor of their Sigma Signs publication. She is a member of the Volunteer Illini Project and served on the I-Vote Committee. Esther is most proud of being the founder of the Bocchia Club and holding the office of president since it began. Esther previously won the 2001 Kevin T. Early Poetry Award, the 2002 Borelli Award, and the 2001 and 2003 Bruce Schurman Scholarships.

Carol Ann Kosta Award

The Kosta Award was established in memory of Carol Kosta who was a student from 1980-1987. It is given annually to enhance the educational opportunities for students with disabilities who utilize the programs and services of DRES. Recipients of the award must demonstrate academic excellence. Brian Smith was this year's recipient. He too has a long history of active involvement and advocacy for people with disabilities dating back to high school. While at

the University, Brian has been active in Beckwith student government and social committees and served as treasurer for one year. Brian was also the treasurer of the Bocchia Club from 2001-2003 and was a member of the team that took first place at Nationals in summer 2003. Brian is a senior in the College of Applied Life Studies majoring in Sports Management.

Timothy J. Nugent Award

The Nugent Award was established in 1970 by members of the Alpha Chapter of Delta Sigma Omicron to honor the founder and Director Emeritus of DRES. It is given to a student in recognition of service performed for the rehabilitation program and fellow students. The honoree is judged on the following attributes: personal integrity, human dignity, intellectual endeavor, pride in self and concern for others. This year's recipient, Dylan Boot, was a senior in Psychology and a former Beckwith resident. During his three years at Beckwith, Dylan was an active member of the student government and president for two of

the three years he lived there. Since freshman year, he has been a member of DSO and treasurer for the past two. Academically, Dylan is a member of



Pat Thiessen presented awards to Brian Smith and Ester Lee.

Phi Kappa Phi and Psi Chi, and has worked with the University program, Learning in the Community, where he assisted in the development of a horticulture center and adapted physical education equipment for a local area school for students with severe disabilities. Within the community Dylan worked for two years for the Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation District as a camp counselor for after school programs and summer camps. Dylan graduated in May and is pursuing a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Alumni Update



Amy Campos never expected to enjoy her time at the University of Illinois so much. In the mid 80s, the 17 year old from Buffalo, New York, was not enthused about attending a school "in the middle of nowhere." Encouraged by her parents to at least try UIUC

for a year, Amy began her freshman year in 1985 and after a few weeks of settling in, said her parents "had to drag me home for the holidays." Born Amy Grishkat, she sustained a C5-6 spinal cord injury at the age of nine, the youngest on record at the time. Being the mid 70s, doctors told her parents to put her in an institution because she would be "little more than a vegetable." Instead, with the help and support of her family, Amy underwent surgery and rehab for a year, and then returned home to a typical childhood at a more accessible grammar school.

Attending UIUC from 1985-1990, Amy started as an engineering major

but graduated with a Bachelors in English. She felt the accessibility on campus was outstanding and it was one of the reasons coming from out of state was worthwhile. She agreed the services for students with disabilities were equally impressive, noting that "the bus system, not to mention the bus drivers, were a treat and made the long winter months bearable," but it was her time at Beckwith that was her fondest memory. She enjoyed the social atmosphere and the closeness she had with the other residents. Like most freshmen, she was experiencing freedom for the first time and found herself spending a lot of time in the social scene, eventually finding the right balance between that and her



academics. Amy says the most important lesson she learned at Beckwith was independence. She had been accustomed to family and friends helping her with her every need and leading a somewhat sheltered life, but at Beckwith “I had nobody looking over my shoulder telling me such things as when to study, how to maintain my wheelchair and other medical equipment, order prescription medicines and schedule appointments when I needed them.” Despite some over-indulgence in social activities, she learned to be responsible, self-reliant and disciplined.

Outside of Beckwith, Amy was active in her sorority, Phi Mu. She was the first female with a mobility disability to attend formal sorority rush in the United States, a story which was picked up by United Press International. Amy found her sorority sisters to be extremely inviting and helpful for whatever she needed, including her personal needs. The house was not accessible, but Amy and her sisters were creative in figuring out ways to get her into the house and riding the buses to formal functions, such as barn dances.

In 1986, Amy met pre-med student, Lee Campos, who was a new live-in personal assistant that year. They fell in love and married in 1991. Lee is now running his own family practice and they live in Libertyville, Illinois with their two children, Emily and Holden. After seven years of marriage and many doctor consultations, Amy and Lee decided to

have children. With Amy’s spinal cord injury, there were several health risks to her body during pregnancy and labor. Fortunately she found an obstetrician with experience in pregnant women with disabilities who monitored her and the baby closely. At 36 weeks, Amy went into labor naturally and gave birth to Emily on Sept 9, 1998. Three years later she gave birth to a son, Holden, on June 29, 2001. Overall, Amy’s pregnancies went very well; her biggest concern was low blood pressure which eventually forced her to stop driving, a blow to her independence but well worth it. She said her second pregnancy was harder on her body. She was more tired and it affected her blood pressure more, and for that reason, labor was induced when it was safe at 36 weeks. Life since then has been challenging. While Amy was able to hold and feed her children while they were infants, she needed help diapering, dressing and bathing them. However, Amy never felt this took away from her role as mom. “Although I may not be doing a lot of the hands-on work, I’m always right there to help and to just be mom. They have never looked at the hired babysitters as parental figures...I’m always there to kiss their bumps and bruises and to hand out reprimands as needed.”

In addition to being a full-time mom, Amy is a full-time employee for Canine Companions for Independence (CCI). Amy is the director of their Chicago satellite office and is responsible for fundraising, public relations, volunteer management and donor relations. CCI is a non-profit organization that places highly skilled assistance dogs with people with disabilities. Amy’s relationship with CCI began as a recipient of a dog in 1991, and soon after she was an active volunteer. When they decided to expand their program, they offered her the position which she happily accepted. She says she loves her job. It’s an organization she believes in

and now that she has children, the fact that she works from home has been a huge bonus.

When there is free time, Amy and her family love to travel. Before having children, Amy and her husband, Lee, were world travelers. They have traveled throughout Europe, Mexico, the Caribbean, and parts of South America and Africa, as well as all over the U.S., even swimming with a dolphin in Hawaii. The most interesting was viewing the ruins of Carthage in Tunisia. She says that the plane rides were the worst part for her, but with a little creativity she managed.

Otherwise, using her manual chair made traversing these old cities easier, and she had few problems. She recalls having a flat tire in Sicily and her husband walking through all the alleys looking for a tire insert. She has now switched to solid inserts on

her manual chair. Since having kids, they have remained stateside in their travels, but as the children get older, Amy and her husband look to plan a trip back to Italy.

Amy has always lived by her life’s motto, “If life hands you sour grapes, you have the ability to do two things with it - make vinegar or a very fine vintage wine; I choose the wine.” Amy has always been a strong person and she has never let anyone discourage her or alter her beliefs. To that end, Amy’s advice to fellow Beckwith residents is to “Believe in yourself and DO NOT let anyone tell you that you can’t or are unable to do something because of your disability. The sweetest revenge is accomplishing something that others have told you that you’d be unable to do!”





Mission

Beckwith Hall was opened in 1981 to accommodate the residential needs of students with disabilities requiring the help of personal assistants to perform basic activities of daily living. While aiding students in the management of their activities of daily living (transferring in and out of wheelchairs, dressing, grooming, bathing, etc.), Beckwith also offers individualized training designed to help students learn to independently manage their disability-related needs and, whenever possible, to transition to mainstream community housing. The ultimate goal of Beckwith Hall programming is to make it possible for graduates to go anywhere their lives and career aspirations take them, confident that they can manage their own needs.



route. In addition, Beckwith offers the unique convenience of private sleep-study rooms with adjacent semi-private bathrooms. A computer lab with four workstations, voice activation systems, and a wide range of peripheral assistive input devices is also available. For additional information about Beckwith Hall or to obtain an application for residency, contact: Katherine Johnson, Interim Director, Beckwith Hall, 201 E. John St. Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 244-8919 (v/TDD) or send an email to johnso15@uiuc.edu.

Beckwith is much like any other university residence hall in that it has a cafeteria, student government, laundry room and a campus location along the Division's bus

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*This Beckwith Hall Newsletter
was produced by Kathleen Madayag,
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newsletter please go to:
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