Kefa Otiso honored by president of Kenya

Since coming to the United States from Kenya, Dr. Kefa Otiso, geography, has worked to raise awareness about his home country, to promote community and a better quality of life among Kenyans living in the U.S. and in Kenya, and to conduct meaningful research about relevant social issues and share it with others.

His efforts have been noted by Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, who in December 2008 named Otiso an Elder of the Order of the Burning Spear, one of the country’s highest civilian honors. Kenyan Ambassador to the U.S. Peter Ogego presented the honor to Otiso April 29 at a ceremony in Hanna Hall attended by a large number of friends, colleagues and students.

Speaking on behalf of President Kibaki, Ogego called Otiso a “professor, a mentor and a leader who has promoted outreach and understanding about Kenya.” He is engaged in mentoring and helping fellow Kenyans have access to higher education opportunities here in the U.S., and has worked closely with other Kenyan community organizations to unite and improve the socioeconomic status of Kenyans in the U.S. and at home.

“No one better deserves such an honor,” Ogego said.

In accepting the award, Otiso thanked President Kibaki and Ogego, and also BGSU, “for welcoming us and making a place for us to thrive. I couldn’t ask for better colleagues to work with and grow academically.”

Praising Otiso’s contributions, Ogego noted his role as founder of the Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA), based in Bowling Green, which has advanced international dialogue and research on Kenya. Otiso organizes an annual KESSA conference (www.kessa.org) in which scholarly and scientific work about Kenya is disseminated in the U.S. and Africa. Ogego said the award is also a testimony that the government and people of Kenya take seriously the Kenyan diaspora and will “support you as you forge ahead to bring unity to our country. You will always be rewarded,” he said, referring to the near-disastrous presidential elections of 2007, when the Kenyan government nearly broke apart.

At last year’s conference in Bowling Green, KESSA hosted then-U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Dr. Jendayi Frazer, who had been sent to Kenya by President Bush to be “the point person on the ground” in the situation. KESSA gave her a plaque in recognition of her important role in mediating the conflict between the two factions and forming a coalition government. The story was well received in Kenya and “caused more students to want to come to Bowling Green,” Otiso said earlier in the week. “BGSU has done very, very well in terms of educating Kenyan students and should be commended for that. There are many of them here now, and we’ve easily had about 250 in the last 10 years.”

Dr. Bruce Edwards, associate vice provost for academic technology, has worked with Otiso for more than 10 years and said the conferences have “enhanced Bowling Green’s reputation. We are in his debt for bringing key global issues to our attention and for speaking about them so eloquently, both in writing and in person. Kefa is also a veteran and most able distance educator.”

Also speaking at the ceremony was Dr. Joshua Bagaka of Cleveland State University, a longtime friend and colleague of Otiso’s and co-founder with him of the national organization Gusii Educational and Advancement Resources (GEAR), which seeks to improve educational standards in the Gusii districts of Kenya. Now in its second year, GEAR plans to place education centers in various locations around the country.

Since its independence in 1963, Kenya has been one of the United States’ most important allies in Africa, Otiso said. “There has long been close cooperation between the two, and
Kenya is very important to American foreign policy. It is a major base of American security operations in Somalia and a destination for rest and recuperation for U.S. military personnel working in the Middle East," he added.

**BGSU to award diplomas to 2,250 students**

About 2,250 students, including more than 300 graduate students, will receive degrees from BGSU during commencement ceremonies Friday and Saturday (May 8 and 9) in Anderson Arena in Memorial Hall.

The graduating class represents 71 of Ohio's 88 counties, 38 states and 25 nations.

Ceremonies for students in the Graduate College will be held at 7 p.m. Friday. The students include 285 candidates for master's degrees, 28 candidates for doctoral degrees and one candidate for a specialist degree. The speaker will be Dr. Joan Kaderavek, a speech-language pathologist and professor of early childhood education at the University of Toledo who earned her Ph.D. in speech-language pathology from BGSU in 1993.

Students in the College of Arts and Sciences will graduate at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, when the speaker will be Dr. Logan Stone. A 1967 BGSU biology graduate, Stone retired in 1999 as a principal scientist at Procter & Gamble Co., where he had worldwide human safety responsibility for the company's food and beverage products.

Addressing graduates in the colleges of Musical Arts and Education and Human Development at 1 p.m. Saturday will be Dr. Mark Clague, a music faculty member at the University of Michigan and former professional bassoonist in Chicago.

Three bachelor's degree candidates will speak at Saturday's 4:30 p.m. ceremonies for the colleges of Business Administration, Health and Human Services, and Technology. They are Amanda Braddock of Bellevue, who will receive a business administration degree; Chelsea Scholl of Bowling Green, social work, and Whitney Taylor of Wooster, visual communication technology.

On the undergraduate level, 134 bachelor's degree candidates are expected to graduate summa cum laude for maintaining a grade point average between 3.9 and 4.0. Fifty of those students have perfect 4.0 averages and will receive Presidential Honors.

Magna cum laude honors will go to 145 students for maintaining grade averages in the 3.76-3.9 range, and 266 students will receive cum laude recognition, for averages in the 3.5-3.75 range. In addition, eight BGSU Firelands students receiving associate degrees will graduate with distinction, in recognition of their academic achievements.

**Balzer named new dean of BGSU Firelands**

Dr. William Balzer, psychology, has been named dean of BGSU Firelands effective July 1.

The move will be more of a return for Balzer, who was interim dean of Firelands from 1999-2001. He has served in a number of leadership positions at BGSU, most recently as associate vice president and dean of Continuing and Extended Education.

Dr. Mark Gromko, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, said Balzer was selected after a national search that included input from a broad range of constituents.

"We're very excited to have Dr. Balzer returning to Firelands," Gromko said. "Bill is an outstanding leader and is a perfect fit for the position."
President Carol Cartwright praised the decision. "I am very pleased he accepted. Firelands will play an increasingly important role in BGSU's future," she said. "I'm confident that Dr. Balzer will provide the leadership we need."

Balzer began his career at BGSU in 1983 as an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology. From 1984-89, he was director of the Institute for Organizational Research and Development. He became a full professor in 1992 and served as chair of the department from 1993-99.

In 1996 Balzer was named an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow. The prestigious, highly competitive ACE fellowship program enables promising faculty and staff in higher education to gain administrative experience by working with a chief academic officer or president on their own or another campus. Balzer spent his year as an ACE Fellow working in the president's office at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Following his stint as interim dean at Firelands, Balzer was dean of Continuing and Extended Education until June 2008, adding the title of associate vice president in 2003.

An expert in industrial/organizational psychology, he received his doctoral degree from New York University, his master's from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and his bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Muir honored for mastery of metals

"Masterful Metalsmiths," "The Art of Gold," "Innovative Tools for Personal Use"—The titles of exhibits in which Tom Muir, Distinguished Professor of the Arts, has been represented reveal a bit about the artist and his work. From jewelry to sculpture to teapots, his style elegantly and playfully blends functionality with aesthetic beauty.

Shown all over the world and written about in numerous publications, Muir's exquisite creations in silver and gold, and his revival of the art of hollowware, have earned him applause and honors over the years. Now the Ohio Designer Craftsmen have presented him the Outstanding Achievement Award for a lifetime of work. The award was bestowed May 3 at the Ohio Craft Museum in Columbus, during the opening reception of the national competition, "The Best of 2009."

Since 1976, the achievement award has been given to individuals and organizations to honor their successes in their fields. It also recognizes the work they have done for the craft field, and their effectiveness in helping others to do well in their careers.

Past recipients include Dominick Labino, the Columbus Museum of Art, Errie Sauder and Don Drumm (creator of the Jerome Library exterior murals). "Tom is one of the very best in the country," said craft museum Director Betty Talbott. "He has been in the show every year since the very beginning, and he's won a number of awards."

Muir is head of the jewelry and metalsmithing area in the School of Art. He furthers his educational mission with frequent lectures on art history and workshops on the craft of metalsmithing.

"His artistry dovetails seamlessly with his teaching to create a masterful environment for creativity and learning. Tom's students have gone on to important graduate programs in jewelry and metals and highly successful careers as artists—and chocolatiers! His restless imagination and quirky sense of humor make working with Tom an endless process of discovery and surprise. He is truly unique," said School of Art Director Dr. Katerina Riedi Ray.

BGSU student artists shown

Several alumni of his program are participating in the "Best of 2009" show in Columbus. Chelsey Radabaugh, a 2006 BFA graduate of the jewelry and metals program now in her second year of graduate school at Indiana University, received the Emerging Artist Award.
Other BGSU graduates represented include Pamela Morris Thomford of Perrysburg and Andrew Kuebeck and Marissa Saneholtz, both of Bowling Green. Kuebeck is in his first year of graduate school at Indiana, while Saneholtz is at East Carolina University.

“He’s so committed to his students,” Talbott said of Muir. “He pushes them to enter and encourages them. His students always do well because they have Tom, and when they graduate they have that on their resumes.”

The “Best Of” exhibit will run through early June in Columbus and then travel the state till December.

International reputation
Muir is currently one of three American silversmiths chosen to participate in the international design competition of the Silver Art Foundation in the Netherlands. His pieces have been purchased by the Art Institute of Chicago, the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian. In 1993, his work was chosen for the White House collection of crafts holiday exhibit, which was seen by one and a half million people.

Muir joined the School of Art faculty in 1991. He earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University in 1985 and a bachelor's degree in visual arts from Georgia State University in 1982.

To see Muir’s work, visit www.tommuir.org.

Festival Series to mark 30th year with new concerts, Grammy winners

The inaugural Rising Stars Concert, a new holiday tradition and a Grammy Award-winning group will help mark the 30th year of the College of Musical Arts’ Festival Series.

All Festival Series concerts are held in Kobacker Hall of the Moore Musical Arts Center.

The 2009-10 series kicks off with the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra in the first Rising Stars Concert, at 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13. The concert will also feature violinist Elena Urioste (cq) and the Harlem Quartet. The orchestra, comprised of top alumni from the national Sphinx Competition for young Black and Latino string players, will perform a diverse program of well-known works by Mozart and Vivaldi and music by African-American and Latino composers, including Astor Piazzolla.

The renowned percussion group NEXUS (cq) will perform at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 8. The first entirely improvised NEXUS concert, in 1971, marked the formation of a group that would touch and entertain people of all levels of musical learning, in all genres of percussion music. Standing out in the contemporary music scene due to its innovation and diversity, as well as an impressive history of collaborations and commissions, NEXUS’s revival of the 1920s novelty ragtime xylophone and its influential improvisatory ideas set the group apart from ordinary percussionists. The group’s appearance at BGSU will also include a three-day educational residency.

The Holiday Concert, at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2, will feature Handel’s beloved oratorio “Messiah” with soloists, the University Choral Society and the Toledo Symphony Orchestra. This is the beginning of what will become a Festival Series holiday tradition in the coming years.

Pianist Barry Douglas will present the Lois M. Nitschke Memorial Concert at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2010. Douglas enjoys a successful international solo career, which has developed since he won the Gold Medal at the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow. Some of his recent orchestral highlights include concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic and Dresden Philharmonic.
The series will culminate with the Grammy Award-winning group Chanticleer at 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 3, 2010. Based in San Francisco, the 12-member, all-male a cappella group is known worldwide as the “orchestra of voices” for its seamless blend of voices ranging from countertenor to bass and its original interpretations of vocal literature, from Renaissance to jazz and gospel to venturesome new music. The group was named 2008 Ensemble of the Year by “Musical America.”

Traditional series subscriptions are now on sale for all five events, priced at $80, $112 and $145 for adults and $60, $90 and $120 for students. Those prices reflect a 20 percent discount over single ticket prices.

Subscribers can save 12 percent over single ticket prices with the new subscription category, Audience Choice, which allows them to choose five tickets in any combination. Tickets for this option are $88, $117 and $158 for adults, with a $3 handling-fee charge per order. Audience Choice will be available beginning July 15.

Single tickets for individual concerts will be $20, $28 and $36 for adults and $15, $22 and $29 for students.

To order tickets, call the Moore Center box office from noon-6 p.m. weekdays at 2-8171. Subscription order forms are also available at www.bgsu.edu/festivalseries.

Senior Luke Ahern’s art to be shown in New York gallery

Underlying painter Luke Ahern’s colorful paintings of bright shapes and forms is an awareness and reflection of the structures of nature. And underneath that is an exploration of the dichotomy between Western science and Eastern philosophy.

Gallery-goers in New York City will get the chance to see Ahern’s work this summer at the Hollis-Taggart Gallery on Madison Avenue. Ahern won honorable mention in the art competition sponsored by the Joyce Dutka Arts Foundation and will be included in the winners’ exhibit. The cash award will enable the senior from Marysville to go to New York for the show in June.

The foundation was created by the late Solomon Dutka to support the arts by identifying talented artists and providing financial assistance. (See www.jdutka.com/html/winners.html.) Foundation President Joyce Dutka called to inform Ahern he was a winner.

“This is a juried national competition that is not only open to students, and the judges are all prominent artists. We’re very happy on his behalf. His hard work has paid off,” said his faculty mentor, Mille Guldbeck, art.

Ahern’s modest, quiet demeanor belies an intense dedication to his art. “He’s very mature and devoted to improving,” and can be found working in the studio at all hours and during summers, Guldbeck said.

Majoring in two-dimensional studies, he has been winning awards for his artwork since coming to Bowling Green. “We have almost 800 majors, and he has been consistently singled out,” Guldbeck said. He received Faculty Achievement Awards in both his sophomore and junior years, in addition to a photography award as a sophomore and a James W. Strong 2-D Achievement Award. He received a $200 travel-for-research-presentation grant from the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship, and presented his thesis project, “An Intrinsic Relationship,” at the BGSU Research Conference this year.

Ahern is also committed to professional development for himself and his fellow students. As treasurer of the Two-Dimensional Art Association, he has been involved in fundraising and arranging trips to cities such as Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C., to view art and to bring visual artists to BGSU.
Ahern's earliest artistic influence was perhaps his grandmother, who was also a painter. "Our home was filled with her art," he recalls. But he came to BGSU as a photography major. "I tested the waters but came back to acrylics" as his preferred medium, he said.

Other influences have been abstract impressionists Mark Rothko and Franz Kline, along with contemporary artists Ingrid Calame and Thomas Nozkowski. Equally important in the development of his style has been his interest in the biological sciences and images from microscopic examination of shapes and forms from the natural spectrum.

More recently, his interest in Eastern philosophy has informed his work. A philosophy minor studying with Dr. Marvin Belzer, he has become especially interested in Chinese and Indian thought and says the work of writer Alan Watts "has been very influential; he's been pivotal in my development as a painter."

This has manifested itself in a study of contrasts. "Western science teaches us to manipulate the world to help ourselves, but Eastern philosophy takes the opposite stance—how can we change to be in harmony with the world?" Ahern said.

He plans to continue in this vein of thought next year in graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, but anticipates new directions as well. "It'll be interesting to see what will stay and what will go," he said. "I could imagine painting like this for a while if I find new avenues to explore."

**IN BRIEF**

**On-campus lab tests offered at health service**

There is a new, convenient option on campus for faculty and staff to have medical lab tests done. The Student Health Service offers professional lab services, and is open through the summer.

According to Barbara Hoffman, interim director of the health service, faculty and staff have two options:

- If they have a written order for a test from their doctor, they can bring it in and the Student Health Service will also submit the charge to their insurance.

- If they decide they would like to have a test, such as cholesterol screening, for example, they can self-order and pay cash for the lab service.

"We encourage faculty and staff to be proactive about their wellness," Hoffman said. "This lab service is one way of making that easier."

For a list of lab tests available and to set up an appointment, call the health service at 2-7442.

In addition to lab tests, the health service offers a number of other services to faculty and staff. These include:

- Allergy injections
- Travel immunizations and individual counseling for those going abroad
- Flu shots
- Hepatitis B vaccinations
- Routine immunizations
- Walk-in blood pressure readings
- Wheelchair loans and crutch purchases
- Prescriptions at the BGSU Pharmacy for employees, spouses and their dependents. New or transferred prescriptions can be purchased, and an online refill system makes ordering easy. The service offers free delivery on campus as well.

For more on the Student Health Service, visit www.bgsu.edu/health.
Attend fourth session in Student Life Cycle series

The BG@100 Project Team will present “Beyond Enrollment and Heading for Graduation,” the fourth installment in the Student Life Cycle series, during the May BG@100 Open Forum at 1:30 p.m. Thursday (May 7) in 315 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Topics will include Class Wait Listing, Viewing Transfer Credits, Viewing Grades, Viewing an Unofficial Transcript Internally, Changing Diploma Names, and How to Apply for Graduation.

Project team members will also be available to answer questions regarding BG@100 and the Campus Solutions (CSS) implementation. More information about the BG@100 project to implement CSS as the system of record for student administration is available at www.bgsu.edu/bgat100.

The series has followed a student progressing through CSS, providing participants insight into the process from the perspective of the student as well as that of a BGSU faculty or staff member. Previous presentations in the series are available at www.bgsu.edu/offices/cio/page15349.html.

CSS transition nearly complete, processes to change

Throughout the past year, the process of transitioning from the mainframe-based (CICS) administrative systems to the PeopleSoft (CSS) system has been implemented through monthly go-lives.

During the transition, temporary interfaces have been used to keep critical business processes that were still running on the mainframe functioning until they could be transitioned to PeopleSoft. At the end of this semester, the transition will be complete. University business processes, including enrollment information for summer 2009 and beyond, will be exclusively maintained within PeopleSoft, now the University's system of record.

Many of the temporary interfaces will no longer be run as of May 15. Screens such as STAF, ADD1, NAME, DEMO, RESI, STUD(STU1), and SRCH will contain outdated information. Focus reports pulling data from any of the tables associated with these screens will no longer be accurate. Users who are continuing to use SIS for data that may not be available with their CSS security access will no longer be able to use this method.

For more information on PeopleSoft CSS, training and access, visit www.bgsu.edu/bgat100.

CALENDAR

Monday, May 4
Final Exams Begin.

Tuesday, May 5
Planetarium Show, “Is This the End of the World?” 8 p.m. $1 donation suggested.

Wednesday, May 6
Powered Industrial Trucks Training Sessions, 7:30-10 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m., 2 College Park Building. Register by calling 2-2171 or visit www.bgsu.edu/offices/envhs/page22440.html.

Coming Out Support Group, 5:30-6:30 p.m., 107 Hanna Hall.

Friday, May 8
Graduate College Commencement Ceremony, 7 p.m., Anderson Arena. Graphic Design Senior Portfolio Show, featuring recognition of the top three portfolios as determined by two regionally based
graphic design professionals, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Gallery Lobby, Fine Arts Center. Planetarium Show, "Is This the End of the World?" 8 p.m. $1 donation suggested.

Saturday, May 9
Undergraduate Commencement Ceremonies, College of Arts and Sciences at 9:30 a.m.; colleges of Musical Arts and Education and Human Development at 1 p.m.; colleges of Business Administration, Health and Human Services, and Technology at 4:30 p.m., all in Anderson Arena.
Creative Arts Program Piano Recital, 4 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Monday, May 11

Continuing Events Beginning May 6
Art Exhibit, "Graduate Arts Student Organization National Juried Show," Bowen-Thompson Student Union Gallery. Hours are 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays.

Beginning May 11
Dance Classes, featuring basic ballroom dance steps including the waltz, tango, fox trot and rumba, Mondays through June 22, 6-7 p.m. No class May 25. The fee is $75 per couple or $40 per single. To register, call 2-8181 or visit http://pace.bgsu.edu/regis- teronline.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY
College of Arts and Sciences. Associate Dean (two positions). Call the college, 2-2017. Deadline: May 15.

Labor Postings
http://international.bgsu.edu/index.php?x=facinfohires

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED
On-campus classified:
www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:
www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE
www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY
There were no obituaries posted this week.