

Spring 2013 – Wow!

How's that for an attention grabber? I promised you a more upbeat Alumni Update, and I aim to deliver. But first I am obliged to thank those of you who sent in notes of remembrance on Mac. They were thoughtful and appreciated, and not just by me. I compiled them for Johanna and Mac's two children, who also thank you.

The "Wow!" I had in mind was my promised update on our multiplicity of faculty searches. That's still fresh, but it has been bumped in the priority queue by the festivities attending yesterday's Commencement (this is written the day after, but won't be sent until Tuesday at the earliest. I need my helper Linda for that, but she and our other terrific staff have off today, compensation for coming in yesterday to do the setup for our mid-day reception).

The weather outside was dreary, but inside it was all sunshine and happiness. The commencement-day reception is a new Departmental tradition, and it is a nice one. We recognize all degree recipients – BAs, MAs and PhDs – and yesterday the Coleman Room was packed. I have to think it our best turnout ever. If not that, then close.

As the Department's official greeter, my duties include warming up the crowd. We had pictures posted of all the graduates (with little mortar-board caps photo-shopped in – our Terri is something else!) and the father of an undergraduate major asked if it was unusual to have more PhD graduates than undergraduates. Until then it hadn't even registered with me, but indeed it is unusual – seven to six.

This is the largest single year PhD total I can recall, which is why my "Wow!" now is doing double duty. Seven would be tiny for many Sociology doctoral programs, but that's not the only, and perhaps not even the biggest, "wow" for this particular group. Their destinations are striking as well. I went through the list yesterday with our celebrants and I take pleasure in sharing it with you as well:

Laila Bushra has returned to her teaching position at Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan;

Liza Dayton is on a postdoctoral fellowship at the Stanford School of Education and Center for Education Policy Analysis; and I can report that this period of intensive labor has yielded on product already: on April 21, Liza and Steve added Caroline Dayton Compton to their family. Welcome Caroline, and congrats to Liza and Steve!;

Felipe Filomeno is Assistant Professor of International Politics at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil (his "dream job" he says);

Kevan Harris, the only one of the seven in the room, is mid-way through a two-year Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University;

Ben Scully is moving into a tenure-track Assistant Professor position at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa (en route as I was talking);

Erdem Yoruk has a position as Assistant Professor at Koç University in Turkey;

Shaohua Zhan is an Assistant Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Oh, and there's one more. Rachel Core wasn't commencing yesterday, but she will finish over the summer (guaranteed!) and begin a two-year Postdoc in the Fall at Singapore's Nanyang Technical University. Rachel was in the room and she is sooooo close that I didn't want to slight her. So the "Hopkins Seven" quickly grew to eight, and our largest graduating class in memory got larger still.

The total – whether seven or eight – is noteworthy in itself, but what of the geographic reach of our teeny-tiny graduate program? I joked at the time that I should have had a map of the world in the room with push-pins, but you can do the same exercise in your heads: we’ve got the U. S. east and west coasts covered with Stanford and Princeton, as well as a goodly swath of the world beyond: Pakistan, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore and China.

We value diversity in all its many guises, and having our recent PhDs dispersed throughout the world makes one facet of that both vivid and concrete. We are proud of them one and all, and proud too that Hopkins Sociology helped get them launched. None too shabby I would say!

There is one more commencement announcement that also bears repeating: we gave a raucous “well done” to Sahar Karatasli and Sefika Kumral’s on the occasion of their marriage, which took place in DC at the Turkish Embassy the very same day of my year end departmental debriefing session to review where things stand with our multiple faculty searches (more on that below). Students sometimes stretch to justify an excused absence; theirs is iron-clad: congratulations to Sahar and Sefika! And a shout-out as well to Erik Westlund and his new wife Tina, who also tied the knot recently. They are not a within-the family two-some like Sahar and Sefika, but blended unions count too, and we offer them our heartfelt wishes for a lifetime of happiness!

Let’s turn now to my second “Wow!” You’ll remember the Dean’s four-year hiring plan that I shared in an earlier Update? It is a pleasing plan, one that takes account of two senior retirements – Mel Kohn’s last year and mine a year hence. But “pleasing” on paper is one thing; the follow-through is quite another, and this year has been an absolute whirlwind. It is not all settled – far from it – but we have one terrific hire settled and several others in prospect. And should all these possibilities break our way.... Well, judge for yourselves as I review the particulars.

We began way back in the Fall with the Global Social Change junior search that came to a happy conclusion when Michael Levien accepted our offer. I shared this news with you in a previous Update, but there has been a bit of activity since: Michael checked in a couple weeks back to report that his Berkeley dissertation has been filed. That’s welcome news, and relevant in practical terms because it means Michael will start in the Fall as Assistant Professor (the fallback is Instructor until the dissertation is certified). Hearty Congratulations Michael!

Kathy and I were in LA when I received the news, visiting with Chris and Brian (our sons). I told Michael we would drink a toast that evening in what is hands down the finest little gem of a restaurant in all of LA: Salt’s Cure. We did that, and had a fine meal to round out the celebration.

Michael, you’ll recall, studies land-taking for development in rural India and its effects on the local population. It is terrific work – that’s not just our opinion; it is sustained by a publication record that would be the envy of many well-established Assistant Professors – and it complements nicely the interests and geographic focus of the current GSC faculty. We look forward to extending a warm Hoppie welcome to Michael and his wife when they join us in the Fall.

Michael’s hire is the only one settled, but two others are moving, inexorably as they say, to a happy conclusion, and two others seem promising. I’ll begin with the near certainty. Arts and Sciences is about to launch a Social Policy concentration for undergraduates that should eventually include a graduate component. It is a cooperative venture of the Departments of Economics, Political Science and Sociology (with Andy Cherlin and Stefanie DeLuca at the point for Sociology) and all three departments were authorized faculty searches to add onto existing capabilities. For the Sociology search we interviewed Kathy Edin and her husband Tim Nelson, both at Harvard. Kathy is Professor of Public Policy and Management and Chair of Harvard’s

Multidisciplinary Program on Inequality and Social Policy; Tim, a Senior Lecturer in Sociology, is renowned for his teaching, while maintaining an active research program, including collaborative work with Kathy.

Kathy is one of the nation's leading poverty researchers. Her work is focused on family life, neighborhood context, public policy and the constraints of low-wage work. It is primarily qualitative – intensive interviews and observation – but she has been working collaboratively long before it became fashionable and many of her current projects, including those on-going in Baltimore with Stefanie Deluca, are authentically multi-method. Kathy probably is best known for two high impact books: *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work*, with Laura Lein (the highest selling volume ever published by the Russell Sage Foundation): and, with Maria Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*. During their visit she and Tim presented on different parts of their just published book *Doing the Best I Can: Fathering in the Inner City*, which uses in-depth interviews with unmarried low-income fathers to allow their voices to be heard.

These hires aren't quite a "done deal," but the discussions are far enough along that we are penciling Tim in for teaching in the Fall and looking for space to accommodate Kathy as a Visiting Professor until her appointment can be finalized in the Spring semester (it will take that long for it to move through Hopkins's internal procedures). I hardly need say, but I will anyway, that this is an exciting opportunity for us, and it is one that could not be done on our own. To bring Kathy and Tim to Hopkins we are partnering with the Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health in the School of Public Health, where Kathy also would have an appointment. The Hopkins Population Center, which Andy Cherlin directs, is housed administratively in this Department and one of their senior faculty, Stan Becker, teaches Population, Health and Development for us. There thus is a strong collaborative foundation already in place between our two Departments and the arrangement we are working toward for Kathy will take it to another, and most welcome, level.

Our other prospective hires are in partnership also, with the School of Education. I've written about this previously and if all goes well it will be paying dividends. Our strategic plan (AKA "White Paper") argued the need for a senior hire in Sociology of Education to address the hole that will be left by my retirement. Dean Newman heard that and responded; so too, it turns out, did the Dean of the School of Education, David Andrews. Together we launched a search for a senior Soc of Ed scholar and it has yielded an extraordinary prospect: Steve Morgan, presently at Cornell and Director of Cornell's Center for the Study of Inequality.

Steve is widely regarded as one of the top quantitative sociologists of education of his generation. In fact, this past semester Andy Cherlin was using Steve's book *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research* in his advanced stats course.

Steve's substantive work in education centers on student plans and their place in the so-called status attainment process. Those of you who have heard me hold forth at my Proseminar session will recognize that as the perspective I was introduced to in graduate school and have been using in various guises ever since to frame practically all my research. Steve's work is in the rational actor tradition that has students responding to contingencies, incentives and information, but in a way that is situationally or contextually embedded. His approach probably is most fully realized, or at least articulated, in his book *On the Edge of Commitment: Educational Attainment and Race in the United States*.

Steve's recruitment is public -- he visited under the auspices of our job search and has given me permission to share the news that he is being considered for appointments with us. But his recruitment is not nearly as far along, or as close to certain, as Kathy's and Tim's. He has been recommended to our two Deans by the faculty of both Schools and both Deans have committed to trying to bring him to Hopkins. That's where things stand just now, but if all goes well you can look forward to more good news in future Alumni Updates. The timing would have him arriving in the Fall of 2014 and if the negotiations come a happy conclusion, his appointment will be followed by a second search in Soc of Ed, this one for a more junior hire.

Stepping back, let's imagine everything breaks our way. In that case, your department will be well positioned for years to come. The only sad note on the horizon is that if all this should come to pass, my glorious exit will barely register a blip on the Department's Richter Scale – "be sure to close the door behind you" is about what I can expect to hear on the way out.

Moving quickly away from that downer of a thought, there are more happy events on the family front to acknowledge: Nancy Fotz (sociology staff) and Dan Pasciuti (current graduate student) for their little boys (Nancy's in March and Dan's in April) and Wei-ting Chen (current graduate student) for her marriage just this week. Congrats to them also, and I have to assume that some of you on the receiving end of this note also have experienced consequential life course milestones that ought to be shared for all to celebrate. "Ought to" -- unless you let me know, they will go unremarked.

We have covered much territory and many pages already, and I am inclined to stop here. My next note, sometime this summer, will center on Alumni news, so please do send along interesting tidbits. But I do not want to neglect our alums altogether, so I will add just two items.

The first is an attachment, sent to me from Henry Perry (1977), one of our MD – PhD graduates. Henry has received mention in previous notes for his good work bringing health care to underserved populations throughout the world. Today it is for a noteworthy accomplishment closer to home. Henry was this year's commencement speaker at Appalachia State University, located in the mountains of North Carolina. It is the area where Henry grew up and, if you look through his presentation, his family lineage in the area, and at Appalachia State, is impressive indeed. I found that part of Henry's story fascinating, but also his call to service, which is altogether in keeping for the Henry Perry I know. It is an easy read and if you have the few minutes it takes, I have no doubt that many of you will find a worthwhile read.

And here is an altogether pleasing note from Cindy Truelove (1989) who, as you will see, heeded my counsel to get onto it while it is fresh:

"I am doing just as you have suggested...going straight to the keyboard to ensure that i do not miss the opportunity to catch up with everyone. I am sitting in the lovely Springtime Sonoran desert in Scottsdale where I stopped on my way back to the San Fran Bay area after a Water Environment Federation conference on Energy and Water in Nashville, where I had the pleasure of speaking about our California water and energy integrated resource management innovation, as well as about our Stanford Water in the West research in that regard. In July of last year, I moved from working as a Senior Policy Analyst for Water and Water and Water Energy at the California Public Utilities Commission over to direct a nascent water and energy research program at Stanford University's Woods Institute for the Environment. This was a wonderful opportunity to combine my several years of pioneering water and energy work across California's many state agencies with my earlier work as a sociologist working across political economy, participatory action research, regional development, and all things natural resources and water. We expect to start another research round in early June which will probably go for another 18 months or so where we will deepen the engagement of Stanford professors and researchers in moving regulatory and policy innovation, as well as amazing engineering technology and process innovation, forward and outward to shape shift our combined water/wastewater and energy frontiers across California and the nation. It's really fun work and I've savored the opportunity to bring together so many elements of my 24 year post Hopkins Sociology career across the academy and the public policy arenas!

On the personal front, I married my partner, JaNell Cook, on October 24, 2008, and we are among the legally married LGBT folks in California. We are thrilled to be change agents on the path to marriage equality for all. We love living in the San Fran Bay area though both of us simply treasure the desert and Southern Utah and will certainly always call some combination of Las Vegas, Southern Utah, and the Bay area home."

So you see, there indeed is another wedding to celebrate, which we heartily do, if rather belatedly!! Maryland last year was the first state to pass Marriage Equality at the ballot, a very big deal indeed! Kathy and I got caught up in the moment, to the extent even of hosting a fundraiser at our water-view retirement pad downtown (life is good!). Our former colleague Pam Bennett was there, as was her spouse Carrie Evans, Executive Director of Equality Maryland, who helped pump up the crowd with inspiring remarks. Pam and Carrie had to go off to Canada to marry, and two other friends of ours in attendance sealed their vows in DC. We did not attend Pam and Carrie's wedding, but we did make it to Frank and Jay's. A friend of ours from the building, also gay, asked why Kathy and I were doing this. The question at first threw me, as until then it hadn't occurred to me that it needed explanation. But I came up with a reason when it was my time to offer greetings, two actually: 1) there is the lofty, principled motivation, as a fundamental civil rights issue; but also 2), when you see people you care about being treated unfairly, it is hard to look away. The fight continues; let's hope for some good news soon from the Supreme Court.

That's it for now, really. Please do send me notes for sharing in my next Alumni Update. For that one I hope to be able to direct you to a page on the Department's website for alumni postings (of a professional nature – e.g., job openings and funding possibilities) and to say about my directory of Alums doing Sociology outside the academy (with summer now here, I intend to follow-through on my threat to harass you individually. You can avoid that by being proactive and sending a brief position description, adding whether you are willing to have contact information made available).

Have a great summer everyone!

Best to all,

Karl

**Charting Our Paths into the Future:
A Call for Engagement in Tomorrow's World**

Appalachian State University Commencement

Henry B. Perry, III

12 May 2013

Graduating students, family and friends of the graduates, faculty, Vice Provosts, Dean Calamai, Provost Gonzalez, Chancellor Peacock, other university officials, and trustees. Let me first and foremost offer my congratulations to those of you who are graduating today – congratulations for your hard work, for your dedication and commitment to your academic pursuits, and for reaching this new stage of achievement in your life.

I Am a Product of This Place and Its People

I am joined to this place – this university, this town, this county, and of course these mountains. I was born only a few hundred feet from here – in what is now Founders Hall but at that time was Watauga Hospital. My birth was attended by my father and grandfather who were physicians here. And I will be laid to rest here when my time comes. My great-grandmother Lillie Shull Dougherty, her husband Dr. Dauphin Disco Dougherty, and his younger brother Dr. Blanford Bernard Dougherty dedicated their lives to the founding and building of this great institution, and each one of them worked toward this goal until the very end of their lives. Remarkably, B. B. Dougherty served as President for more than 50 years until he was 85 years of age.¹ These three people saw public education as the greatest hope for the uplifting of what were called at that time the “lost provinces” of North Carolina. I can’t think of any three finer founders a university could have – brilliant, inspiring teachers and hard-working, frugal visionaries. At that time it was said that the only way to get to Boone was by being born here. Roads were muddy, rocky and steep, and it was a five-day trip to Wilkesboro and back. The school they founded gave dignity, opportunity and hope to mountain people.

I. Linking the Worlds of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

My forbearers – the Doughertys as well as my paternal grandfather Dr. Henry B. Perry, Sr., who entered the very first class of this institution in 1899 and who gave his life to serving the medical needs of the citizens of Watauga County – they were pioneers who brought the benefits of public education and modern medical care to their people. In those days, folks in Watauga County cared for each other and lifted each other up. The effort involved and the personal sacrifices required seem extraordinary by today’s standards.

As I look back on the life and times of my forbearers in Watauga County a century ago through my own lens of four decades of international health and development work, some striking parallels immediately become apparent. Just as providing educational opportunity for young people in the “lost provinces” was a pressing issue in North Carolina a century ago, today providing educational opportunity for those who live in the modern day “lost provinces” of low-income countries is a pressing issue. The world needs champions in the cause of public

¹ Doris Perry Stam, *Mountain Educators: The Dougherty Family and the First Fifty Years of Appalachian*. Watauga Press. Boone, NC. 2010.

education for the isolated and forgotten children in low-income countries just as much as the “lost provinces” of North Carolina needed the Doughertys a century ago.

Why do I say this? Basic education for all young people, especially for girls, is the greatest engine of development. Although great progress has been made, still one in 10 children in low-income countries and one in four children in Africa do not attend primary school. Today, there are 122 million young people 15-24 years of age who are illiterate. In low-income countries, a mother’s level of education is one of the strongest predictors of her children’s nutritional status and survival.²

More than 1 billion people still live in conditions of extreme poverty.³ Far too many, including 7 million children, are dying every year from readily preventable or treatable conditions such as childhood pneumonia, diarrhea, and malnutrition. But, as one wise person said, “Figures do not measure the tears of the mother at her baby’s grave.” Given the financial resources and technical knowledge in our world today, this is no longer morally acceptable. Furthermore, a world in which the bottom billion are increasingly left behind is an unjust and unstable world.

From my work in Bolivia, Bangladesh, Haiti, Guatemala, Sierra Leone and elsewhere, I have learned firsthand that these impoverished areas of the world – the “lost provinces” of today – have young local people who are just like the Doughertys and my grandfather Perry were: gifted, eager, and ready to dedicate themselves to improving their communities.

I believe that you and I as well as institutions like Appalachian State University can make important contributions to the well-being of our global family by identifying and uplifting these young visionaries and social entrepreneurs, just as many individuals and organizations reached out to help the Doughertys and my grandfather Perry in their quest to help their own people.

II. Charting Our Paths into the Future

I got started on my life’s path in global health 44 years ago by spending a summer as a student going from village to village in rural Bolivia where people had no access to modern medical care. Then, two years later I worked in rural Nicaragua in the middle of a measles epidemic, caring for children who were dying from complications of this disease. I learned that there was important work to do, and I wanted to devote my life to it.

From my perspective, the deep needs of today and tomorrow are among those who lack opportunities for basic education, among those whose grinding poverty saps their amazing

² United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. 2012. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202012.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

dignity, grace and humanity, among those who live with the prospect or reality of sickness and death from conditions we know how to prevent or treat, and among those who are trying to make it from day to day and meal to meal. We need to learn how to better link resources and expertise to harness the capabilities, knowledge, and resources that communities inherently have.

Education and other forms of empowerment are the driving force of development – essential for freeing women from the social and cultural bondage in which they often find themselves, essential for ending sub-human poverty in which one out of eight members of our global family now live, and essential for preventing millions of deaths which, all too often, are due to a lack of cleanliness, sanitation and safe water, to inappropriate use of available foods including breastmilk, and unsafe sexual practices.

We can all care about matters of importance, whether they are among the poor in low-income countries or at our doorsteps. We can channel our talents, gifts, and opportunities into areas that matter. Public education, modern medical care and improved roads were matters of importance for this impoverished area a century ago. How can you channel your talents and energies into matters of importance here in Western North Carolina, the region and the world?

For those of us who earn more than we need to support ourselves and our families in a comfortable and meaningful way, our great moral challenge is to overcome our lack of careful and reasoned thought about how that additional income should be used. Our failure to recognize our responsibility to our sisters and brothers living in poverty – wherever they might be – is one of the great moral challenges of our time. The lavish lifestyles of so many of us are a message of indifference louder than words – a message of indifference to the tragedy of so many of our people, especially children, dying from readily preventable or treatable conditions, and also a message of indifference to the severe poverty around the world. I am convinced that this indifference will be looked upon in the future with the same moral repugnance that we hold today for the indifference that society in the 18th and early 19th century had for slavery and for the slave trade, the indifference that society in the 19th century had for denying women the right to vote, and the indifference that so many of us had for racial segregation during most of the 20th century.

It is no longer inconceivable to envision a world without illiteracy and ignorance, without severe poverty, and without readily preventable deaths. Serious calls are now being made to end in a generation preventable child deaths, AIDS, and blindness. The opportunity is yours to envision and to help bring about sooner rather than later a world in which every person everywhere has the opportunity to obtain an education, to become a healthy and productive member of society, and to live a life of dignity.

Isn't this the kind of world you want for yourself, your family and your children? If you can't work directly for one of these laudable missions, perhaps you could volunteer some time to an organization that is working on these issues or contribute financially.

What inspires you? How will you contribute to a world where everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential? Are you willing to put yourself on a road that will enable you to work toward achieving this goal? The road may very likely be, just as the roads of Watauga County were a century ago, filled with obstacles and challenges. But I believe that the Doughertys found deep happiness in traveling such a difficult road knowing that they were on the right road for them.

Your university has long been engaged with members of our global family who are living at the margins. It has recruited faculty and students who have previous experience in low-income countries. It has encouraged and supported faculty and students to develop exchanges, service activities and learning opportunities in low-income countries. These will continue as your alma mater is now embarking on an ambitious five-year plan for enhancing global learning for Appalachian students. As Appalachian continues to expand global learning opportunities for its faculty and students, I hope that you will explore opportunities to expand your own engagement with the broader world.

What better moment is there than now, building on your rich experience here at Appalachian, to envision what you want to achieve in your lifetime? As you do, be proud of your alma mater and its founders. What the Doughertys accomplished in their lifetimes was a reflection of "strong will, deep convictions, hard work, steadfastness of purpose and wise, sound management of ... what ... [they had]."⁴ What better set of values could one adopt?

Congratulations to you, the graduating class of 2013. As you go forth from – or remain in – these mountains, may each of you strengthen your convictions, work hard, maintain steadfastness in your purpose, and manage well what you have. And as you go, remember the words of President Theodore Roosevelt who reminded us that, "Life's greatest gift ... [is] the opportunity to work hard at work worth doing."

The Doughertys found life's greatest gift through building this institution, while another forbearer of mine on the other side of the family chose to go to Kentucky to make moonshine and we never heard from him again. Whatever you do, may you in your own way bring more love, joy and opportunities for a better life to those in our rapidly shrinking world who have been left behind. And may you find deep happiness in doing so.

⁴ From an editorial in the Greensboro *Daily News* about B. B. Dougherty, quoted in O. L. Brown, *Blanford Bernard Dougherty: A Man to Match His Mountains*. 1963, p. 212.