

***He was the first in his family to go to college,
and she is not 'another housewife from the suburbs.'***

A brief conversation with Priscilla and Gary Tate

Priscilla and Gary Tate both arrived at Texas Christian University in 1971. Gary was hired as the director of the composition program. The chair of the department came to Gary and told him that one of the part time faculty was ill, and he was replacing her with a woman who had just finished her PHD and lived in town. "I made the mistake of saying 'Oh another housewife from the suburbs.'" With a big smile, Gary added, "I have paid for that over the years."

Priscilla was born in Dallas. She attended TCU for undergraduate studies and received her Master's there at the age of 20, then taught for 2 years at Austin College. After moving to Fort Worth, she taught in public school for 6 years. When North Texas State University (now University of North Texas) started a PHD program in English, Priscilla entered the program, driving 60,000 miles between Fort Worth and Denton to complete her PHD, doing her dissertation on Keats. When the chair of the department at TCU called and offered her a part-time appointment. she accepted it because there were no full-time positions available.

Gary was born in Hiawatha, Kansas, and moved to Seneca. His father dropped out

of school in the 7th grade and went to work for the railroad, later working in a pool hall, where he worked until he retired. Gary was a reader all his life. His mother would send him to the library. "My mother liked certain kinds of books... novels with lots of conversation, but not much description, so I learned to go through books and pick out the ones she would like."

On the night of commencement from high school, a friend told Gary he was going down to Baldwin City to work that summer and then enter Baker University. The friend asked Gary to come along. "I went home and told my folks and they said, 'Sure, go ahead.' And with that my parents bought a house trailer and went to Albuquerque. So I went to Baldwin City and it changed my life." Gary was the first in his family to enter college. That first summer, before Gary had enrolled in college, he met the mother of a tennis friend. She was an English teacher at Baker, and after meeting her, he decided to enroll in her freshman composition course. That first day of that first course, she asked all the students to get comfortable and write for an hour. When the hour was up, Gary had been able to write very little. He went to the back of the line, and slowly handed in his

paper, saying "I was only able to write one sentence". The woman snatched the paper out of his hand, looked at it, and roared, "Yes, but my God, kid, what a sentence!" Gary walked out of that building thinking "Maybe I can do college."

While at Baker, Gary visited his parents in Albuquerque and learned quite a bit about the University of New Mexico. After graduation, he entered a PHD program in English. While in that program, during the Korean War, he was drafted and spent two years in Germany. "I had struggled a bit before the war, but when I came back I was a much better student." After receiving his PHD, he taught at Univ. of Wyoming, Ohio Wesleyan, Univ. of Tulsa for 10 years, then Northern Arizona University. Gary wrote to a good friend at Ohio State, saying he was unhappy in Arizona, and the same day the friend received Gary's letter, he also got one from TCU saying they were looking for a Director of Writing. And Gary took the job.

The dean of the graduate school at TCU was the first person to note problems with gender equity on the campus. "At the time I was the only female PHD teaching 4 courses (3 was a full-time load.) Eventually she became associate dean of the graduate school. By this time, Priscilla and Gary were married, and, as Gary said, "I was sharing a single bathroom with 3 teenage daughters." Priscilla and Gary have been together for 35 years.

"She became a legend," Gary says with a smile. "The last day I was at TCU... I'd graded all the papers, filled out my grade sheet, and I thought, 'I'll hand this in

myself.' So I gathered them up and walked over to the building, walked into the registrar's office. He came out and I explained that after 31 years, this was my last grade sheet. He looked at me and said, 'Oh... how's Priscilla?' Gary laughs a deep laugh, "That was the story of my life at TCU."

Priscilla continues, "I was really very fortunate." She was the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences for 16 years, and as she was retiring, the Dean put his arm around her and said, "You know, we have never had a major disagreement." Priscilla explains that they would interview prospective faculty candidates, and as the candidate closed the door on his or her way out, "We would say, 'Yes' or 'No,'" but they always agreed. Gary added that the Dean gave Priscilla complete freedom to make the lives of faculty and students better in the college. She started a women's studies program, and later became the first faculty sponsor of the gay and lesbian student's group on campus.

When she retired, the women faculty and staff endowed a scholarship at TCU in her name. She has known the joy of following the first student to hold the scholarship through her recent graduation. Gary had not been back to Baker for 56 years, so after some encouragement from Priscilla, the Tates endowed a scholarship in his name at Baker and stipulated that it be given to someone who was the first in his or her respective family to go to college.

So how did two PHD's in English, wind up in Maine? John Hitt (the graduate dean at TCU) had become academic vice-

president at U. Maine-Orono. On a trip back to Texas, he asked the Tates if they would come to Maine for a writing conference Orono was having. They came up, and after the writing conference figured they might as well "spend a few days on the coast of Maine." Neither of them had ever been in New England (other than Boston). They went to Bar Harbor and it was foggy. "We stayed, waiting, day after day, but the fog never cleared." But they came back every summer. Each year they stayed at different places. One year Gary saw a picture in *Downeast Magazine* of Wonderview Cottages and called and had a long conversation with the owner's son, who happened to be home from Yale. Gary thought, "That's the place I want to go." So they went to Wonderview and looked down on their current bungalow at Colonial Gables, but "We never dreamed we'd be able to buy a cottage here." They bought the cottage in 1997.

Before there was Senior College, Priscilla taught a course at the Belfast Free Library on writing the memoir. When Senior College was started, Sharron Walsh wrote and asked if they would teach a course on writing the short story. Because they had no experience in this, they suggested teaching a course in keeping a journal. It was the first time they had ever taught a course together. As the first class of 18 people began, a photographer came in to take pictures. They then learned that this was the first course taught at Senior College (Summer of 2001). With the encouragement of Betty Becker-Theye and the curriculum committees through the years they have taught every summer since then. Priscilla adds, "One of the things we have loved

about Senior College is that it gives you hope for getting older. Senior college has given us the best retirement we could hope to have... to be able to continue teaching without having to go to faculty meetings and grade papers." Both Tates are busy thinking about what courses they might offer in 2009.

Though Gary and Priscilla winter in Texas where they have lived for so long, they say they have more friends here. Gary adds "That is because people are more interesting here. We can sit down with friends and start talking, and continue all evening. I thought there would be that New England distance, and we did feel it a little in the beginning, but between St. Margaret's and Senior College, a network of friends has been created." When they come back in the spring, it is a joy to hear someone say, "Oh, look, the Tates are back." And we hope they keep coming back for a long time.

Waldo County YMCA Events

Tuesday, September 16th
Ogunquit Museum of American Art

Following a visit to the museum, they'll head to Perkins Cove for lunch (at your own expense). Leaving at 8 am and back by 5 pm.

Sunday, December 7th. A
Christmas Carol, Portland Stage Company

Call the Y for more details.
338-4598

From our President

Membership registration this summer has been the highest yet! Normally we see an increase of membership with the class registration. I think this reflects the real sense of community that has developed over the years amongst our members.

As you have seen in the class catalogue mailed this August, we continue to offer interesting and exciting learning opportunities. Also keep informed about Special Events. Timely registration is very important! Classes and events fill up quickly.

The updates on the Hutchinson Center expansion is an insert to this letter. A "Thank you" to Sue McCullough and staff for keeping us updated. Even now you can go to the University of Maine website www.Hutchinsoncenter.umaine.edu and access the webcam ("FHC WEB cam" is the last listing under News and Events) This camera allows you to see what is happening at the sight!

It will be great to have our own Senior College office space in the future. This will allow us to have access to the Senior College computer which we have recently purchased (at a good price !) One of the improvements we are working on is access to information by all our chairs and Board of Trustee. We are doing this through GMAIL. Todd Zoroya was a great teacher! As you can imagine, we all needed various levels of education to learn the process. But, isn't that what we are all trying to do?...Keep learning. The volunteer leadership of

Senior College continues to accept the challenge to stay progressive!

I hope you continue to enjoy life...no matter the season.

Dianne

Fall Special Events

Wednesday, September 10th
8:30 am—6:30 pm

Hawkwatching Trip to Mt. Desert.
(See flyer)

Thursday, September 11th
10 am, Hutchinson Auditorium

Susan Erb, Humanitarian Relief Worker.
(See flyer)

Thursday, September 25th

Annual Membership Meeting 11:45 am to 12:45 pm. This year we will serve a light lunch

Tuesday, September 30th,
Moosehead Lake:

3 Hour Cruise on the Katahdin

We're heading up north to take a leisurely 3 hour cruise on the Katahdin, taking in the natural beauty and history of Moosehead Lake.

Sunday, October 5th,
Monmouth Theater. We'll see Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*
Cutoff date is September 15th.

Tuesday, October 28th
8:30 am—4:30 pm

Trip to Bowdoin and Colby College's art museums.
Cutoff date is September 25th.

*******PARKING*******

Due to construction, parking will be at a premium. Consider riding with a friend. If you are able to walk, park in the lower lot and leave the upper lot for those with difficulty getting around.

**Morning Classes,
9:30–11:30 am**

Maine Wildflowers—Summer and Fall

Wanda Garland, instructor
Weather permitting, this will include a field trip or two.

Maine’s Ice Age Trail: Down East

Harold W. Borns, Jr, instructor
2 lecture classes, and an all day field trip on Oct. 3rd.

Great Russian and Czech Operas

Beaumont Glass, instructor
Covers 7 operas.

***Critical Thinking: Evaluating the Information You Are Told**

Arthur Hildebrandt, instructor
Will look at the arguments, pro and con, and the premises behind them.

History of Art, Part V: Romanesque & Gothic, 1000–1400

Baird Whitlock, instructor
Covers art and architecture of the period to show the genius of the period.

***National Security: U.S. Intelligence for the 21st Century**

Dick Topping, instructor. A look at the basics as well as case studies.

**Afternoon Classes,
1:00–3:00 pm**

Introduction to Architectural Design

Christopher Glass, instructor
Learn to “read” the stories buildings are trying to tell.

Senior Adult Fitness Program

Ann Krumrein, instructor
Addresses general fitness of our age group.

Grand Slam and Other Mysteries

Sheila Nickerson, instructor
How to plan and play your hand and the secrets of bidding slams.

***Producing *The Wind in the Willows*: Seniors Collaborate with Belfast Maskers**

Charlotte Herbold, Instructor
You will participate in a production of the Maskers in November.

***The Rise of the US as a World Power—A Review of the 20th Century**

Ron Jarvella, instructor
A review of the political, economic, and military history of the 20th century.

***Deconstruction, Derrida and You**

Nancy Mimeles Carey, instructor
Take a journey where the boundaries between literature and culture, fiction and anthropology are blurred.

*A textbook has been chosen for this class. Please register for this class by September 4th to insure that you will have a book for the first day of class.

senior COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE HUTCHINSON CENTER

Senior College Officers

Dianne Smith, President
Elizabeth Hieronymus, Secretary

Jim Patterson, Vice President
Doug Smith, Treasurer

Senior College Committee Chairs

Curriculum—
Cathy Bradbury and Charles Courant
Membership—
Francine Brown and Mary Gray
Nominating—
Sharron Walsh
Public Relations—
Mary Frenning and George Squibb
Special Events—
Vicky Sears
Volunteers—
Ray Smith

Senior College Board of Trustees

Dianne Smith, President
Jim Patterson, Vice President
Doug Smith, Treasurer
Elizabeth Hieronymus, Secretary

Betty Breslin	Joel Karp
Cloe Chunn	Sallie Leighton
Ron Jarvella	Debbie Mitchell
Alden Johnson	Michael Simon
Pat Jones	Marie Underwood

Newsletter Editor, Debbie Mitchell—338-1255—dmitch2663@msn.com

Senior College admits members regardless of race, color, sexual orientation,
and national or ethnic origin

80 Belmont Avenue, Belfast, ME 04915 www.belfastseniorcollege.org (207) 338-8033

PRST STD
US Postage Paid
Permit # 16
Belfast, Maine

senior COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE HUTCHINSON CENTER

80 Belmont Avenue, Belfast, ME 04915