

## DENISE DE VITO NAMED HEAD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Denise De Vito, PhD, is the department head of secondary education in the College of Education and Professional Studies at Jacksonville State University. When asked what she was looking forward to most at JSU, she responded “I am impressed with the CEPS’s fifth year program, as alternative education programs are gaining national recognition. Most of all I am looking forward to having colleagues and discussing with secondary education faculty the challenges that face today’s secondary teachers.”

Dr. De Vito says that she has a passion for secondary education. “Lots of people I speak with don’t like the adolescent students and I thoroughly enjoy them.” She taught in the fifth largest school district in the United States for eight years. She recalled that one semester she faced having eighty-four students in a tenth grade honors class. Luckily, as the semester went on the number dropped to around forty. She has also taught college at the University of Maine, where she worked primarily with first generation college students.

Currently, her research interest examines young adult literacy acquisition with graphic texts. Sequential art, or graphic fiction links both prose and graphic representations to unfold a narrative. She explained that for many nations in South America, the Mid-East, Asia, and Europe, the sequential art form maintains a more respectable presence than it does in the United States. “There is a long history of dismissing anything viewed as ‘comic’



Dr. Denise Devito, department head of Secondary Education

in the United States,” said Dr. De Vito. “Since sequential art contains both prose and pictures, vocabulary acquisition may be increased when reading.” Dr. De Vito has completed a quantitative study to measure vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension utilizing graphic fiction. She said, “I am down to crunching the numbers and writing the study. The research participants were eleventh graders and the text was *American Born Chinese*, by Gene Yang.”

“Unlike comic books, graphic novels follow conventional prose novels by being formatted spatially or chronologically. Graphic novels have a beginning, middle, and end. The main character in a graphic novel develops throughout the plot. The story is complete in itself and does not need several successive parts published

separately to complete the action,” explains Dr. De Vito.

*Maus*, a Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel, is an example of this narrative form. Art Spiegelman, the author, uses animals to represent different human races as he shares the holocaust survivor experiences of his parents and his experiences as a resident of present day New York. Some of Dr. De Vito’s articles on sequential art have been published in the *Arizona Reading Journal*, *MiddleLink*, and in the international journal *Fonelex*. “Some of my favorite graphic texts are anything by Chris Thompson or Guy Delisle, *City of Glass*, *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, *Golem’s Mighty Swing*, *Persepolis*, *American Born Chinese*... I could list so many.”

Dr. De Vito holds a BA, MA, MEd, and a PhD from the University of Nevada in Las Vegas. She holds a dual undergraduate degree in English and philosophy and a PhD in curriculum and instruction with cognates in technology and in ethics. She taught secondary English eight years in the Clark County School district in Las Vegas, Nevada. She served two years at the University of Maine, at Farmington, Maine and six years as an assistant professor and secondary education master’s program director at the University of Arizona South in Tucson, Arizona.



## MS. KATHY MATTHEWS NAMED JSU EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Mrs. Kathy Matthews has been named JSU Employee of the Month for June, 2012. Ms. Matthews works in the Department of Technology & Engineering. She has worked in the Department of Technology and Engineering since August, 1992. Ms. Matthews is originally from Bowling Green, Kentucky, where she attended Western Kentucky University. She is married to Mark Matthews, Acting Director of Telecommunications, and they have one daughter, Kelsey. Kelsey will be a senior at Jacksonville High School this fall. Ms. Matthews and her family are very active at Jacksonville First United Methodist Church.

“Ms. Mathews could be employee of the month every month. She fosters a cooperative, efficient atmosphere for

departmental operations. Her abilities and attitude are outstanding. She is well respected and genuinely liked by students, faculty, and co-workers. Our technology students know and rely on her. Her knowledge of the department and our programs is a real asset,” said Mr. Terry Marbut head of the Department of Technology and Engineering.



## WLJS RECEIVES FCC RENEWAL

Ever since it first signed on the air in 1975, Jacksonville State University’s radio station WLJS has been required to renew its broadcast license with the FCC every few years. Its most recent renewal, approved back in 2004, lasted through March of this year.

Starting back in fall 2011, the radio station and its staff began the process of license renewal by inviting the public to make comments about WLJS’s operation. Following the procedure set out by the FCC, the station made regular on-air

announcements about the renewal process.

No comments were received by the station or the FCC during this period, and on March 29 the FCC officially renewed WLJS’s broadcast license for another eight years.

“We’re glad to continue the station’s tradition of serving the university and the surrounding community,” said Mike Stedham, manager of student media at JSU. “We’ve got great things planned for the coming year. Our newly established WLJS Board of



Advisers will be announcing plans for a major project this fall. As we say in the radio business, stay tuned for more details.”

## DR. PATRICIA K. LOWRY’S NEW ROLE IN THE CEPS

Dr. Patricia K. Lowry began her new job on June 4, 2012. She is the Pre-Education Advisor for the College of Education and Professional Studies, specifically ECK (elementary education with collaborative, grades K-6), ECP (elementary education with early childhood education, grades P-6), ESE (all areas of secondary education, grades 7-12), FCS (family and consumer sciences education), and

SPE (collaborative special education, grades 6-12). No one has ever been in this position, so she is enjoying getting the job up and running.

She will be working with freshmen and sophomores, some juniors, and other students as they make their way back to complete a degree at JSU.

Students that are not admitted to Teacher Education Program will work with Dr. Lowry until the semester

after they are admitted to the program.

Dr. Lowry says that she is really enjoying her time with the students. Hopefully, they are learning new things about the college in general, their program area, and their major. In addition, they seem to be asking all the right questions. Please come by B-2 Ramona Wood Hall to see her in her new area.

## RETIREMENT OF DR. PATRICIA K. LOWRY



On May 31, 2012, Dr. Patricia Kramer Lowry retired from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, the College of Education and Professional Studies, and Jacksonville State University. She had served the University for more than twenty-five years as an assistant professor, associate professor, department head, and professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. She had taught most of the courses, both undergraduate and graduate, in all areas – social studies, science, mathematics, and general methods – except those in reading and language arts.

She also taught at the University of Alabama for five years from 1982 until 1987. In 1987, she was contacted by Dr. Charlie Walker to see if any of her graduate students in Tuscaloosa might be interested in an opening at Jacksonville State University. Little did he know that she indeed was interested in the position. With the years in Tuscaloosa, that gave her over Thirty years of teaching in the Teacher's Retirement System of Alabama.

She was assigned to the basement of Ramona Wood the first several years. The joke was always when

you needed Dr. Lowry she would be in the basement. Of course that is where most of her classes were taught in this building, Room 108. She is responsible for getting the ugly gold carpet pulled up and replaced with red and white tiles. She had severe allergies and after the second sinus surgery the dean decided to replace the carpet with tile in Room 108. When the computer lab in Room 210 was given new furniture, she went to Mike Zenanko and asked for the old tables and cushioned chairs. That is the set-up now for Room 218 in Ramona Wood Hall.

Her favorite years of teaching came during the time that she taught the undergraduate science methods courses and the graduate mathematics methods courses. She loved to be up walking around the classroom, setting up experiments for the science class,

or demonstrating how to use specific math manipulatives in teaching. Toward the end of her career, she taught general methods courses for both undergraduates and graduates in the EED program area. Those are the courses she ended with upon her retirement.

In almost every elementary school she enters today, there is at least one teacher or several teachers that she has taught. A smile comes to her face when they remember something special from her classes. She always liked the “hands-on or manipulatives” from the science and mathematics courses. In addition, several of her students are employed as adjunct or prorata instructors in C&I. Also, a few of them are employed by the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI).



Dr. William A. Meehan, president of JSU, Dr. Patricia K. Lowry, professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and Mr. Alan Lowry

## RETIREMENT OF DR. RONNIE HARRIS



Dr. Ronnie Harris has retired from Jacksonville State University after forty-six years of service to the university through the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Dr. Harris grew up on a farm in Geraldine, Alabama. Dr. Harris started as a JSU student in 1960 where he earned his BS and MS. In 1966, Dr. Theron Montgomery and Dr. Houston Cole hired Dr. Harris to teach at JSU. As he worked at JSU he also completed his EdD at the University of Alabama. In total, Dr. Harris has been involved with JSU for fifty-one years.

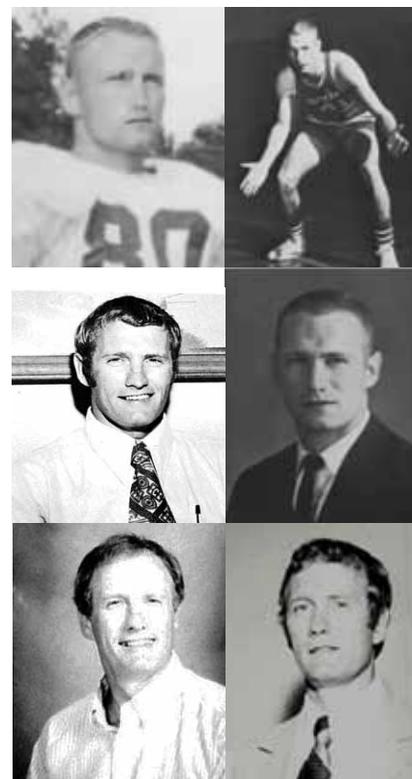
In high school Dr. Harris lettered in four sports. He came to JSU on a football scholarship and was a starter all four years at JSU in football and basketball, was captain of both the football and basketball team and was MVP in both sports. As a senior at JSU, he was nationally recognized in being selected as a second team All-American in football. As a JSU student Dr. Harris served as SGA president for one summer.

Dr. Harris started teaching in the Department of Health and Physical Education in 1966. He was married that year and he and his new bride served as the house parents for Logan Hall. After teaching for five years, Dr. Harris became department head in

1971, appointed by Dr. Montgomery and Dr. Ernest Stone. He had input in curriculum development and facilities. At that time HPER was located in Stephenson Gymnasium and he moved with it to the newly built Pete Mathews Coliseum in 1974. Dr. Harris' ideas influenced the design and placement of the Coliseum, the new outdoor track, and new tennis courts.

In 1974, Dr. Harris was given the additional responsibilities for all JSU's intercollegiate sports other than football, basketball, and baseball, which included men's and women's tennis, men's and women's gymnastics, men's and women's track, men's and women's cross country, women's basketball, women's volleyball, men's wrestling, and a co-ed rifle team. With the Physical Education department members, he ran the intramurals, which included students, faculty and staff participants. He started intercollegiate competition in women's sports at JSU under the old AIAW and then division II of NCCA. The Women's Gymnastics Team won the first ever National Championship at JSU in 1984 and 1985. During his tenure as department head a major in recreation was added. He became a full professor in 1978. In all, Dr. Harris has served as director of twelve men's and women's sports for fourteen years, department head for seventeen years and forty-six years as a faculty member.

Dr. Harris served as department head for seventeen years where he developed a great staff including these other recently retired faculty: Dr. Margaret Pope, Dr. Jim Reynolds, Dr. Ronnie Akers, Coach Dick Bell, Ms. Barbara Wilson, Dr. Mac Gillam, and Dr. Glenn Roswal. He is very proud of those individuals. During that time, the curriculum expanded, adding a recreation major and an exercise science and wellness major.



Dr. Harris has taught subjects that he loved and his guidance has touched thousands of students. It is not unusual to see him running, riding a bike, doing the martial art of Aikido, and teaching line dancing, folk dancing, square dancing, or swing dancing. He has participated in thirty-seven Peachtree 10K Road Races held in Atlanta, Georgia, on the Fourth of July. "It is amazing to be running with 60,000 other runners down the middle of Peachtree Street in Atlanta," said Dr. Harris.

Dr. Harris says, "JSU has been wonderful for me. I received an education where I experienced great teachers and coaches such as, Dr. Don Salls, Mr. Tom Roberson, Mr. Ray Wedgeworth, Ms. Julia Roebuck, and Dr. Ruebuen Boozer. My wife, Charyl Hudson Harris and I got jobs at JSU. We had we one son, Brad. Through JSU, I have made many friends. Now I am ready to enjoy the grandchildren and serve as taxi service for Raine, Ryleigh, and Carson. I will also do some adjunct teaching."

## RETIREMENT OF MS. PAULA NAPOLI



center students, and college students. Ms. Napoli will truly be missed but her influence and contributions in the area of child development will continue through decades. She and her husband Vince, avid travelers, plan to spend some of their retirement time with their three young grandchildren, Maria, Turner, and Helena.



After twenty years of service to Jacksonville State University, Ms. Paula Napoli, director of the Dr. Cynthia H. Harper Child Study Center, has retired. Ms. Napoli came to the JSU Child Center in 1992 and was promoted to director in 2002. During her tenure, Ms. Napoli taught over two hundred pre-school children and instructed more than 2,000 college students. The faculty and staff of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences hosted a reception in Ms. Napoli's honor on Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, in East Mason Hall. The event was attended by Dr. William Meehan, Dr. Rebecca Turner, current and former colleagues, current and former child



Mrs. Paula Napoli's costume of Snow White was her choice to wear when she escorted the pre-K students around campus for Halloween treats.

## PLAYS WITH THOUGHTFUL HUMOR



During the week, Mr. Mike Stedham is manager of student media at JSU, serving as faculty adviser to the campus newspaper and radio station. On the weekends, he's involved with murders.

These murders take place as part of the murder-mystery dinner theater production he has been writing and directing for local charities and other organizations since 2006. So far, he's written five scripts, each of which has been produced several times throughout Calhoun and Cleburne counties.

"I started directing dinner theaters for the Anniston Junior League about ten years ago," Mr. Stedham said. "They were buying the rights to scripts that weren't very funny, so the cast and I had to add a lot of jokes and physical humor to make the shows enjoyable."

The Junior League was making a lot of money from the productions, but Stedham said he knew they could be doing better.

"I told the Junior League that I could write a script for them that would be twenty-seven percent funnier than the ones they had been using. That led to my first play, *A Brush With Death*."

Each year since then, Stedham has produced a play for the Junior League. The scripts have also been used by other local organizations such as the Red Cross, the Homebuilders Association and two area high schools.

All of the shows follow a traditional murder-mystery pattern: A group of eccentric characters is introduced, one of them is murdered at the end of Act 1, and the suspects are questioned by police in Act 2. The audience gets a chance to solve the case, and the guilty party is revealed at the end.

"My most recent script is *Parole Models*, which takes place at a halfway house for women who have murdered people," Mr. Stedham said. "Each of the suspects in that show is already a murderer, so that makes it harder to solve the case."

This summer, two of Mr. Stedham's plays are being produced. The Heflin Arts Council is reviving *A Brush With Death*, and the Community Actors Studio Theater is producing *Murder On The Set* at Garfrerick's restaurant in Oxford. Stedham plans to have a new script ready for the Junior League by next spring.

Mr. Stedham is setting up a web site in an effort to market these scripts to theater groups and charities that want to produce them.

"I hope other folks can have as much fun with these shows as we have," Mr. Stedham said.

From: ***Parole Models*** by Mike Stedham

ACT 1

*Percy, a state psychologist, is introducing Honey to the halfway house where she will be living for six months. It's designed for women who have been convicted of murder and who are nearing the end of their sentence*

PERCY:

Welcome to your new home, Honey. I bet you'll like it a lot better than the state prison.

HONEY:

Don't call me Honey. Everybody in the joint calls me Killer.

PERCY:

Forget your prison nickname. This is a halfway house – a place of change, a place of second chances, a place for new lives to be forged from the broken wreckage of the past. We believe everyone who comes here can make something of herself, and you don't have to be trapped by your old labels. (Pause) Besides, we already have two other women here named "Killer."

SPECIAL THANKS TO: DR. DENISE DE VITO, DR. DEBRA GOODWIN, MR. RONNIE HARRIS, DR. PATRICIA K. LOWRY, AND MR. MIKE STEDHAM.

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Please visit <http://ceps.jsu.edu>  
E-mail at [edinfo@jsu.edu](mailto:edinfo@jsu.edu)  
Phone 256.782.5445