

The Natural Inquirer



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

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Werth family names FHSU's College of Science, Technology and Mathematics with \$5 million gift

The FHSU Foundation announced a pledge of \$5 million from Peter and Pamela Werth at a dedication in the Memorial Union's Sunset Atrium on November 3rd. The Kansas Board of Regents approved naming FHSU's College of Science, Technology and Mathematics the Peter and Pamela Werth College of Science, Technology and Mathematics at their October meeting.

Peter Werth is a Hays native, a 1959 alumnus of FHSU with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry. Following his time at FHSU, Werth earned a master's degree in organic chemistry from Stanford University. In 1982, he founded ChemWerth, Inc. in Woodbridge, CT, to develop active pharmaceutical ingredients to produce generic drugs.

Dr. Greg Farley, dean of the Werth College of Science, Technology and Mathematics, said this gift will benefit students and different departments. "This generous donation reflects a great investment in science education at Fort Hays State," Farley said. "We can now add improved equipment to our teaching and research labs, initiate novel interdisciplinary efforts, provide student internships for professional development and enhance myriad student-centered activities."

Werth said with state budgets tight, it is important for others to do what they can to support schools. "I feel that state schools are under a lot of pressure," Werth said. "If you want something great, people are going to have to step up, give the money. And I want Fort Hays State to be great. I hope you really make great progress with what we're giving here, change the world," he added. "I have a simple motto: Do good. Make a difference. Change the world."



Peter Werth, front center, with members of his family and FHSU representatives at the college renaming press conference.



Biology students plant seedlings for a new pollinator garden in the flowerbed north of Albertson Hall in late April. To see how the garden turned out, turn to page 6!!

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Meetings and Presentations

Botanical Society of America meeting, July 30-August 3, in Savannah, GA.

Poster presentations:

Herbivory preferences among ecotypes of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*). M. S. Pittenger, K. L. Caudle, S. G. Baer, L. C. Johnson, and B. R. Maricle.

Genetic and environmental influences on stomates of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) ecotypes. N. A. Varvel, C. J. Hilt, S. G. Baer, L. C. Johnson, and B. R. Maricle.

Phylogenetic distribution of an endogenous strain of Dahlia mosaic virus in members of Asteraceae. K. L. Caudle and E. T. Gillock.



Madison Pittenger



Nick Varvel



Keri Caudle *

*Keri was also awarded the **Li-Cor prize** for oral presentation by a student.

The FHSU group on the beach at Tybee Island, near Savannah, GA (l-r: Dr. Brian Maricle, Nick Varvel, Keri Caudle, Madison Pittenger)



Meetings and Presentations, continued:

Central Plains Society of Mammalogists meeting, October 21-22 at Emporia State University (Ross Natural History Reservation in Americus, KS).

Poster presentations:

Diet of the evening bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*) in northwest Kansas. H. Wilson, C. J. Schmidt, and E. J. Finck.

Identification and characterization of northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) hibernacula in Kansas. A. Sprague, C. J. Schmidt and E. J. Finck.

Way to go!

Congratulations to these students for completing their master's degrees this semester!



Tej Man Tamang: “Determination of evolutionary history of big bluestem ecotypes through chloroplast DNA analysis”



Brendon McCampbell: “Organismal composition and photosynthetic traits of biological soil crusts in prairie ecosystems of the Great Plains”



Kaitlin Moore: “Isolation of soil *Bacillus* spp with inhibitory activity against methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)”

And to these students for completing their oral exams!

Keri Caudle
Ifeoma Oraemesi
Anuja Paudyal
Angelica Sprague
Holly Wilson



Awards



Dr. Chris Bennett, professor of biological sciences, was named the President's Distinguished Scholar at the Fall Convocation in August. Bennett received a medallion and a \$1,500 cash award. He was selected by President Martin from recommendations forwarded by an evaluation committee of previous presidential scholars.

Dr. Yasuhiro Kobayashi, associate professor of biological sciences, was named the John Heinrichs Outstanding Research Mentor of the year. This award recognizes a faculty member for commitment, time and energy devoted to fostering research by undergraduate students. The award comes with a commitment of \$500 of budget funding for the winner's academic department to benefit the recipient's work.



Dr. Eric Gillock, professor of biological sciences, was presented the FHSU Outstanding Teaching Award for Fall 2016 during his microbiology class on December 9. Dr. Gillock was cited for the wide variety of classes he teaches, and his "broad experiences in biology and science". The presentation also noted that he has been nominated several times for the FHSU Pilot Award and "frequently receives the 'Top Professor' Award from Mortar Board."



L-R: Dr. Graham Glynn (Provost), Dr. Eric Gillock, Mr. Deron O'Connor (Commerce Bank), and Dr. Greg Farley (Dean).

Awards, continued:

Noyce scholars:

Biology–secondary education students **Alyssa Gottschalk**, **Raquel Tomsic**, and **Samantha Rohleder** each received a \$2,000 Summer Noyce Scholarship to work at FHSU's Science and Math Education Institute's summer camps for 6 weeks in June and early July (see article at: <http://www.fhsu.edu/news/SMEI-camps-help-FHSU-students-make-career-choices/>).

In addition, three biology-secondary ed students received \$13,000 Noyce Scholarships for the 2016–2017 academic year: **Katie Ellegood**, **Samantha Rohleder**, and **Katie Showalter** (her second year). The scholarship can be awarded for up to 2 years (junior and senior years only). They follow Alysia Schwarz and Tucker O'Hair, who just completed their student teaching in spring 2016, supported by their Noyce Scholarships (Alysia's second year). Karli Henning and Julie Weber received the scholarships in the program's first year (2013–2014). Bill Weber (Math), Janet Stramel (Teacher Ed), Paul Adams (Teacher Ed), and others pursued the NSF grant that has funded these scholarships for our science and math education majors.



The following students were awarded K-INBRE (Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence) research scholarships and funds:

Adam Urban, K-INBRE Star Trainee, and **Naomi Quispe**, K-INBRE Summer/Semester Scholar. K-INBRE mini-grants were awarded to: Adam Urban, Naomi Quispe, and **Ifeoma Oraemesi**.

Madison Pittenger was awarded a \$1000 Kansas Academy of Science Undergraduate Student Research Grant for her work on: "Herbivory preferences among ecotypes of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)".



Kansas Academy of Science

Nick Varvel was awarded a \$1000 Kansas Academy of Science Undergraduate Student Research Grant for his work on: "Genetic and environmental influences on stomates of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) ecotypes".



Dr. Thomas Binder received an Alumni Achievement Award on September 30th. Dr. Binder (B.S. '79; chemistry and biology) retired this year as senior vice president of research at Archer Daniels Midland. He earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Iowa State University in 1985 and began work for ADM as a research biologist in 1986. Dr. Binder is regarded as a leader in renewable chemicals and biofuels research and is author or co-author of 41 patents and applications and 10 peer reviewed publications. He also served six years on the Technical Advisory Board of the U.S. Departments of Energy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Binder presented "Simulated Moving Bed Separations in Biological Systems" on Thursday September 29, in Tomanek Hall.

The Alumni Achievement Award recognizes graduates who have made outstanding and unselfish contributions in service to their community, state or nation as citizens, in chosen career fields or through philanthropic work.



Dr. Hendratta Ali and graduate students from the Department of Geosciences invited **Kansas Academy of Math and Science (KAMS)** students over to Tomanek Hall to participate in learning stations that included geologic formations, common rocks and minerals found in Kansas, and petroleum geology.

Left: KAMS students using flavored sugar (with different granule sizes) and chocolate rocks to learn about geological formations. Pictured (l-r): Mason VanHoozier, Darion Meyer, Alli Depew, Grant Nichol, Amelia Richter, Jason Park, Katie Weisenborn.

 *
 * *It turned* *
 * *out great!* *
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Six months of sun and campus sprinklers resulted in a lot of pollinators using the flower garden north of Albertson Hall (October 2016)

Alumni news

Jeff Sekavec (M.S.'13) completed his Doctor of Management degree, with a concentration in Homeland Security, from Colorado Technical University in October.

Kasandra Brown (B.S.'13; M.S.'15) has accepted an Environmental Scientist position working for Stantec, a consulting company in Kansas City, KS. Kasandra will help write conservation plans that determine wind turbine placement in relation to bird and bat safety.

Matt Bain (B.S.'00, M.S.'02), manager of the Smoky Valley Ranch in Logan County, was featured in the October 30th issue of the Hays Daily News. The article discusses The Nature Conservancy's recent purchase of "Little Jerusalem", the largest Niobrara chalk formation in the state: http://www.hdnews.net/news/local/little-jerusalem-a-big-draw/article_8be71fc1-2b5c-5ce8-84ec-64e016640801.html



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY'S
**KANSAS WETLANDS
EDUCATION CENTER**

Kansas Wetlands Education Center and KWEC manager **Curtis Wolf** (B.S. '02, M.S. '05) were featured on Eagle Community Television's "Community Connection" in September.



<http://www.hayspost.com/2016/09/19/community-connection-curtis-wolf/>

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