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MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Rev. William A. Lawson (left) helped orchestrate the civil rights movement in Houston, marched with Martin Luther King Jr., and established a church and a nonprofit advocacy group for the poor and powerless.

Houston Civil Rights Leader Speaks to Rice University Students

For almost half a century, Rev. William A. Lawson has been one of the city's most influential community leaders. He helped orchestrate the civil rights movement in Houston, marched with Martin Luther King Jr., and established a church and a nonprofit advocacy group for the poor and powerless.

At 79, the retired pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church is now imparting his experience and knowledge to Rice students. Lawson is the first lecturer to take part in the Houston Enriches Rice Education project, a program designed to advance the university's engagement with Houston.

"I selected Rev. Lawson because he exemplifies one of the goals of the HERE project, which is to bring to Rice significant community leaders, who through

their life experience, professional commitments and community services, have a wealth of information to share with our students," said Anthony Pinn, the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities and professor of religious studies at Rice and the project's creator.

"The goal is to increase Rice's attention to the knowledge base and the rich history and intellectual resources available in Houston and to make that source of information a vital component of the educational process," Pinn said. "In this way, I hope to contribute to the enactment of Rice's Vision for the Second Century."

Lawson is teaching Religion and Social Transformation in Houston as part of the curriculum

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PAGE 3: Connecting math, literacy and the visual arts

Rice Students PAIRing Up to Help Local Refugees

Rice alumna Elaine Chang '07 remembers when, as a volunteer for a Rice refugee group, she asked three ninth-grade students from Burundi how they would spend \$100,000.

She asked them if they would use the money to buy a car, help other refugees from Africa or pay for college. To Chang's surprise, they all answered "for college," and to Chang's satisfaction, she knew that her work had not been in vain.

"These young people face tremendous obstacles to achieving their educational and life goals," Chang explained. "They arrive in Houston with little formal education, minimal English language skills or cultural knowledge, and little support at home for school success."

To help refugee youths assimilate and focus on education, three Rice students — Chang, Christina Lagos '08 and Alex Triantaphyllis '06 — established Partnership for the Advancement and Immersion of Refugees, a nonprofit organization whose ultimate purpose is to help refugees get into college. The trio started the group by talking for hours over several months with refugee families in their southwest Houston apartments.

These conversations formed the basis of PAIR's programs, which, to date, have served more than 150 refugees. After obtaining a seed



CALLED TO CONTRIBUTE: PAIR participants work with a Rice student.

grant from the sociology department's Center on Race, Religion and Urban Life, PAIR won \$10,000 last May as a finalist among nearly 300 applicants in a Social Innovation Competition hosted by the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service.

Twice a month, PAIR brings about 20 refugees to Rice's Language Resource Center for language and computer skills sessions, activities, and presentations that encourage a love for learning.

On alternate Saturdays, PAIR volunteers meet with the refugees at their high schools to work on reading, writing and math and offer college counseling. The latter includes help with SAT preparation, essay writing, soliciting letters of recommendation, finding and applying for financial aid, resume building, and choosing a college.

"PAIR is unique because it combines the benefits of personalized mentoring with the power of a well-connected network," Triantaphyllis said. "By combining these two components, we are able to provide the information that these kids need to maximize their academic potential."

In less than two years of existence, PAIR has made a significant impact on Houston's refugee communities. The group has accu-

mulated more than 2,000 volunteer hours and served children from countries such as Afghanistan, the Congo, Burma, Iraq and Somalia.

With the help of the Houston Independent School District, Houston Community College, guest speakers and refugee resettlement agencies, PAIR has hosted three college orientation day events for more than 120 refugees.

"In addition to providing valuable information, PAIR has created an environment which inspires young refugee students facing challenging cultural and educational adjustments in the United States," Lagos said.

While serving as an important resource for refugees in Houston, PAIR has also given more than 100 Rice students a chance to volunteer and contribute to the community.

"PAIR is a unique organization because it provides volunteers with a chance to be immersed in many different cultures and to get a glimpse of the world through the children we serve," said Rice junior Kathy Vazquez.

For more information on PAIR, visit www.pairhouston.org. ■

—CHRISTINA LAGOS

Co-founder and Board Member
Partnership for the Advancement and
Immersion of Refugees



Girls Can Do Math, Too: Connecting Math, Literacy and the Visual Arts

Paint, gluesticks and pastels in the mathematics classroom? Absolutely.

Welcome to Project GEM (Girls Excelling in Math), a 10-week program designed for girls that integrates mathematics, reading and art. The project is a response to research indicating that females lose interest in mathematics or are discouraged from pursuing mathematics careers.

“Girls’ curiosity and interest in studying mathematics often are not nurtured,” said Anne Papakonstantinou, director of the Rice University School Mathematics Project. “Programs such as Project GEM provide opportunities for girls to explore mathematics and open the door for careers in mathematics and science.”

The program, created by Robin A. Ward, associate director for curriculum integration for the Rice University School Mathematics Project, was recently implemented at West University Methodist School with a cohort of 12 pre-K girls. Once a week, the girls participated in a 90-minute activity, which

brought to life the connection between mathematics and the visual arts and focused on developing students’ confidence and skills in both subjects.

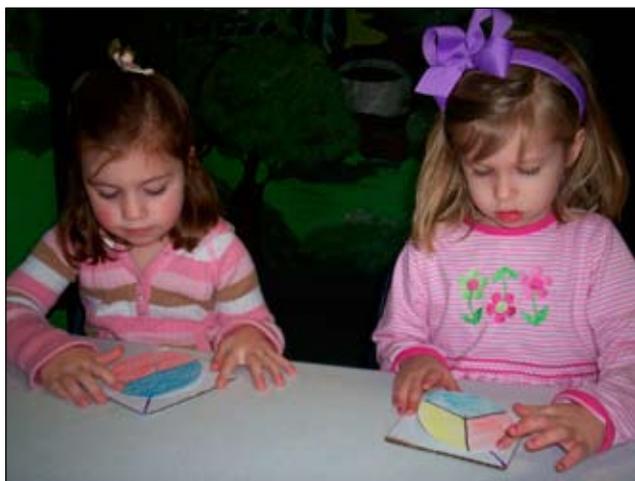
Each week, students learned about the life of a famous artist and viewed several pieces of the artist’s work. Students then created their own masterpieces in the spirit of the artist while exploring the mathematics embedded in the works.

Students were also read pieces of children’s literature relating to the mathematical concepts being explored. Thus, the scholastic concepts were integrated into interactive activities that emphasized discovery, exploration, problem solving and real-world connections. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and RUSMP strongly advocate this teaching paradigm.

One Project GEM activity focused on

geometry concepts by exploring the works of Dutch artist Piet Mondrian. Mondrian’s paintings used intersecting horizontal and vertical lines, which resulted in the creation of square and rectangular regions. Students observed and discussed his work, articulated the differences between horizontal and vertical lines and between squares and rectangles, and then created their own Mondrian-like masterpieces.

Serving as the springboard to this activity were two books: “Two Short, Two Long: A Book about Rectangles” by Christianne Jones and “What Is a Square?” by Rebecca Dotlich, both of which include real-life



DOING THE MATH: Two GEM participants learn about probability and chance.

examples of rectangles and squares.

These activities featured in Project GEM will be shared formally with a cohort of local K–8 teachers enrolled in a spring 2008 RUSMP minicourse, as well as with teachers participating in the 2008 RUSMP Summer Campus Program.

Courses offered by RUSMP are designed to provide an active and engaging approach to teaching mathematics with a focus on motivation, applications, pedagogy and problem solving.

For more information, visit RUSMP’s Web site at rusmp.rice.edu. ■

—ROBIN A. WARD, PH.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Mathematics
Wiess School of Natural Sciences
Associate Director for Curriculum Integration
Rice University School Mathematics Project

Rice Students Showcase at National Leadership Conference

Sixteen students from Rice University’s Black Student Association distinguished themselves at the 20th annual Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference in January at Texas A&M University.

The conference presents a series of creative workshops that include history, leadership and networking skills, and self-improvement techniques. The mission of the SBSLC is to provide a forum for African-American students from around the country to address problems and concerns that affect the black community. With funding provided by the Office of the Associate Provost at Rice, a select number of current and potential student leaders have participated in SBSLC for the past several years.

The only undergraduate workshop presenters at the conference, the Rice students gave two presentations, and Rice was the only university that had participants present more than one workshop at the conference this year.

Alicia Burns-Wright, a Rice senior and president of the Black Student Association, presented “Race Representation in Cartoons: What Are Kids Watching.” Her workshop analyzed several main characters from Saturday morning and primetime cartoon shows to identify racial stereotypes. Her co-presenters were freshmen Valicia Miller and Nicholas Newton.

The second workshop was coordinated by Rice senior Sarah Ibrahim and junior Chuck Franklin. “A Professional You: A Holistic Approach” focused on different aspects to help individuals succeed in the business world, including identifying your passions and aligning them with your career, resume writing, interviewing and networking, and business etiquette. Workshop presenters were junior Erika Allen, sophomore Marisol Alvarado, sophomore Elizabeth Leslie and junior Schuyler Woods.

In addition, three Rice students, juniors Jessica Fowler and Christian Holmes and sophomore Austin Emanuel Jonas, participated in the Advanced Leadership Institute also held at the conference. The Advanced

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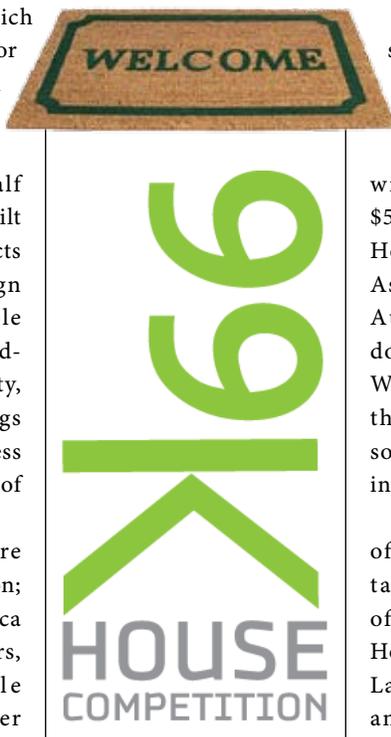
Fifth Ward to Benefit from Affordable Housing Design Competition

The Rice Design Alliance and American Institute of Architects Houston recently announced that five finalists were selected from 182 entrants proposing a sustainable, affordable house that addresses the needs of a low-income family in the Fifth Ward, a historic residential area east of downtown Houston.

The competition, which took place last fall, called for a single-family house with up to 1,400 square feet, including three bedrooms and one-and-a-half to two bathrooms, to be built for \$99,000 or less. Architects were challenged to design a sustainable, affordable house, with special consideration given to affordability, longevity, energy savings benefits and appropriateness for the hot, humid climate of Houston.

The five finalists are Stephanie Eugster, Houston; Paul Stovesand and Rebecca Cox, Chicago; Kirby Mears, Walter Murphy, Kyle Humphries, Jamie Miller and Gina Lyons with Murphy Mears Architects, Houston; Robert Humble, Joel Egan, Ben Spencer, Owen Richards, Tom Mulica and Kate Cudney with Hybrid / ORA, Seattle; and Gail Peter Borden and Brian D. Andrews with Borden Partnership, Los Angeles.

Each finalist will receive \$5,000 and will move forward to Stage II. In Stage II, the finalists will have an opportunity to refine their project and must complete a set of comprehensive construction documents. The jury will review these resubmissions for pricing by a Houston area home-building expert allied with the competition organizers.



In April, the jury will select the winner based on bids and adaptability to reproduction as well as design. The winner will receive an additional \$5,000 stipend. The city of Houston through the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority initiative has donated a site in the Fifth Ward, and once constructed, the winning house will be sold or auctioned to a low-income family.

The jury is composed of experts in design, sustainability, construction of affordable housing and Houston's Fifth Ward. David Lake, a member of the jury and principal at Lake/Flato Architects in San Antonio,

said, "The 99K house is a critical step toward artfully infilling Houston's Fifth Ward neighborhood to both invigorate and strengthen the fabric of the community with inspired housing solutions."

The competition was supported, in part, by generous grants from Houston Endowment Inc. and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, visit the competition Web site at www.the99khouse.com. ■

—LINDA SYLVAN

Executive Director
Rice Design Alliance

Rice Undergraduates Conduct Daylong Seminar for Bellaire Students

Rice University undergraduates enrolled in the fall biosciences course Animal Behavior planned, organized and taught a daylong seminar on campus for more than 80 students from Bellaire High School's Advanced Placement Biology II class.

The seminar gave the Bellaire students an introduction to evolutionary theory and concepts surrounding animal behavior. "It was a great opportunity for Rice students to teach and for the high school students to get a taste of Rice," said course instructor Joan Strassmann, the Harry C. and Olga K. Wiess Professor and chair of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Rice.

The undergraduates structured the seminar around five working groups. Bellaire students rotated every 30 minutes between workshops on evolutionary theory, hypothesis testing, sexual selection and mating systems, kin selection and within-family conflict, and game theory and communication. Each half-hour workshop had an active learning component, and the 28 Rice students handled everything from setting up the necessary technology and planning the lectures to printing flyers and buying the day's food. The structure of each workshop varied, depending on the student instructor's approach.

For example, the hypothesis-testing group filmed its own video at the Houston Zoo. In the workshop, the instructors encouraged the Bellaire students to devise hypotheses for things they had observed in the video, like meerkats' sentinel behavior or orangutans playing, whereas the game theory group used cards and role-playing to engage the Bellaire students.

A highlight of the day was the exercise organized by the sexual selection group. The instructor asked each boy in the class to choose an animal that develops elaborate displays to attract a mate and create and perform his own dance. The girls rated the displays and awarded the winner a box of



BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES: Pictured are renderings of the five 99K house finalists.

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Science Symposium Prepares High School Teachers

More than 160 high school teachers, department heads and school administrators from Texas gathered at Rice in January for the “4x4 Science Symposium: Exploring Fourth-Year Options.”

Administered by the Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies at Rice, this one-day symposium was created in response to the new “4x4” state graduation requirements that compel all high school students (beginning with current freshmen) to earn four credits each of math and science.

The symposium highlighted a variety of science electives that schools may choose to fulfill the fourth-year science requirement. Each participant chose four different science electives to investigate, such as earth science, aquatic science, engineering, and anatomy and physiology. Master teachers and university professors who have previously taught these subjects presided over the presentations and discussions.

Several Rice faculty members partici-

pated in the symposium, including Patricia Reiff from the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Alison Henning from the Department of Earth Science and Rebecca Richards-Kortum from the Department of Bioengineering.

Participants were provided with an overview of the course syllabi, scope and sequence, best practices, and subject-specific teaching resources.

“This new state requirement is an important issue for schools,” said Jennifer Gigliotti-Labay, director of teacher professional development for the Glasscock School. “We will continue working with secondary science teachers to help them figure out which course is most suitable for their students, and we will provide the necessary training so

teachers are prepared to teach the courses.”

Two symposiums are scheduled for 2009: a one-day symposium in January and a multiday symposium in summer 2009. These symposiums will give teachers an opportunity to choose one science elective to examine in depth, and participants will learn hands-on classroom applications and instructional strategies to prepare them for teaching the course.

The 2008 symposium was sponsored in part by the Baker Hughes Foundation. More information on this program can be found at teachers.rice.edu. ■

—KRISTAL SCHEFFLER

Marketing Specialist
Susanne M. Glasscock School
of Continuing Studies

Rice Team Brings Wireless Internet to Houston Community

For residents of Pecan Park in southeast Houston, the digital divide was not just a political buzzword. Many did not own a computer or have access to the Internet.

That changed in 2003, when Ed Knightly, professor of electrical and computer engineering, and Joseph Camp, ECE graduate student, began working with the nonprofit group Technology For All. The Rice-TFA wireless network is a collaborative project designed and built by Knightly and his students.

The purpose is to bring free wireless Internet to the residents of Pecan Park and to research and test-drive the next generation of wireless technology. The project is also TFA’s strategy to use technology as a tool to empower low-income communities. As of November 2007, the network serves more than 4,000 users.

The project works by providing low-cost deployment of the Internet. It uses a “wireless mesh,” which replaces the land-based cable infrastructure with much less expensive wireless transmission.

Special care was taken to place antennas in positions that would provide an unobstructed path to neighborhood residents and businesses while taking into account variables like weather, the season and even traffic.

Some of the antennas were placed at organizations such as Houston Community

» **IN ON THE INTERNET:** A student installs an antenna in a southeast Houston neighborhood as part of the Technology for All project

College, Melcher Library, Misión Milby Community Development Corporation and the YMCA. Other antennas are located on rooftops of neighborhood houses.

Even with the wireless network in place, the project faces challenges to ensure residents are digitally enabled: providing Internet-capable computers at home and educating the community on the network’s availability and capability.

Misión Milby provides introductory classes for adults and runs a program in which high school and middle school students earn computers by completing community service and training. Groups at TFA and the University of Houston are partnering with Rice to help residents make use of the new technology and to study how the Internet affects the lives of Pecan Park residents. ■

—MARILYN S. HOWARD

Communications Director
Department of Electrical and
Computer Engineering



Program Revitalizes the Metropolitan Association for Teachers of Science

Two years ago, the Metropolitan Association for Teachers of Science, a professional development organization serving K–12 teachers in greater Houston, was having difficulty maintaining itself. But thanks to its new university sponsor, Rice’s School Science and Technology Program, the organization, which has been promoting science education for more than 30 years, is once again thriving.

This February, the annual MATS conference was held at the University of Houston, and more than 260 people attended — a sign that MATS is back in force.

“The conference provides an opportunity for kindergarten through 12th grade science teachers to make a presentation at a professional meeting, often for the first time,” said Wallace Dominey, executive director of School Science and Technology for Rice’s Center for Education and president of MATS.

Neal Lane, the Malcolm Gillis University Professor and professor of physics and astronomy at Rice, gave the keynote speech, “The Future of U.S. Science — to Lead or to Follow?” “This thought-provoking talk motivated teachers to consider the important role they play in society,” Dominey said.

Participants spent most of the day in workshops for classroom teachers, where they were able to share ideas and techniques to improve the quality of science education in public schools.

Topics ranged from tackling standardized tests, to teaching Spanish-speaking students effectively, to using technology in the classroom. Conference sponsors included BP America, CenterPoint Energy, LyondellBassell Industries, CPO Scientific, Delta Education, University of Houston’s College of Education and Rice’s Center for Education.

“The importance of a professional conference such as the MATS conference goes beyond the practical knowledge teachers gain,” said Dominey. “The event also is a way for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, talk with other professionals and



LEARNING TO EDUCATE: Chante Robinson from Pasadena ISD explores sound vibrations using balloons and straws during a MATS session.

become empowered by presenting to a group of peers,” he added.

“Sponsoring MATS and organizing the MATS annual conference is in keeping with President David W. Leebron’s theme of engaging the Houston communities,” Dominey said.

—COLLEEN LABORDE

Program Coordinator
Center for Education

Lawson *Continued from Page 1*

in Rice’s Department of Religious Studies. The course examines the role of religion as a vehicle for social change by studying the history of the civil rights movement and its effects in Houston.

“We study how one’s faith can have a direct impact on the improvement of society,” Lawson explained. His course, Lawson said, offers a series of lectures, guest speakers and visits to four nonprofit social agencies. “I have a strong feeling that education is served better through experience than just lectures and books. Students must feel the experience,” he said.

His guest speakers include Rabbi Emeritus Samuel E. Karff of Congregation Beth Israel; retired Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza; Robert Muhammad, minister of Mosque No. 45 in Houston; and Rev. James Dixon. “They are religious leaders who teach people to have an impact on society,” Lawson said.

Students are required to visit SEARCH, an organization that serves the homeless; S.H.A.P.E. Community Center; the William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity, an advocacy group that helps the poor, minorities and women; and Families Under Urban and Social Attack, a social-service organization.

Since he was 12 years old, Lawson said he felt impelled to seek the religious life. He received his bachelor’s degree in sociology from Tennessee A&I State College in Nashville and continued his studies at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan., where he received a master’s in theology and a bachelor’s in divinity.

Lawson came to Houston in 1960 to be director of the Baptist Student Union and professor of bible at Texas Southern University. He was propelled into the civil rights movement when 14 TSU students conducted a sit-in to protest segregation at a Weingarten’s lunch counter. He and his wife

took it upon themselves to raise money and bail the students out of jail.

In 1962, with only 13 members, Lawson established the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, whose congregation has grown to more than 2,500 members. In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. visited Houston, and according to Lawson, none of the black churches would welcome the civil rights leader because FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had accused King of being a communist.

“He (King) was not very popular, but we invited him to our church,” Lawson said.

Lawson went on to become one of the most important African-American ministers in Houston, and even today, after his retirement, Lawson continues fighting for the downtrodden. He continues to lecture at local universities, and he directs the William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity. ■

—DAVID D. MEDINA

Director
Multicultural Community Relations

Rice Opens a Window to Transitional Workers

Not too long ago, James Bouten was unemployed and homeless. He spent many nights at the Salvation Army and at a local church.

Today, Bouten is a Rice groundskeeper, thanks to the joint efforts of St. Joseph House and Rice's Human Resources and Department of Facilities, Engineering and Planning.

St. Joseph House is designed to help people who have special challenges by providing housing, education, employment and access to social services. It follows the "clubhouse model" that has received international recognition for its innovative approach to rehabilitation and reintegration.

"Our goal is to help restore self-esteem and self-confidence so our members can re-enter the job market and live independently," said Grant Kennedy, St. Joseph House director. "We provide an environment for psychosocial rehabilitation."

At the clubhouse, located in Midtown, members learn to improve their ability to function in a work setting. They are taught core competencies for office work, household management, horticulture and hospitality, including the importance of punctuality, respect for others and reliability.

Once members are prepared to enter the working world, St. Joseph House seeks opportunities for transitional employment for them. Staff members train them for the specific job and work side by side with them for the first few weeks.

"Transitional and temporary employment is an important step in rehabilitation," Kennedy said. "In addition to building their self-esteem, we want that temporary job to help them get their next job, which we hope is a permanent one."

At Rice, Bouten is one of two temporary staff members employed by FE&P. He hopes to do more landscaping work in the future and expand in his role as groundskeeper. "I can't sing or dance or paint or draw. But I can make this world a little more beautiful by working in the garden."

Ed Galindo, grounds supervisor, said that Bouten's enthusiasm for the job comes through in the quality of his work. "James is a perfectionist who loves to work," Galindo said. "He accepts challenges and takes pride in what he does."

Bouten's success has Eusebio Franco, director of

custodial and grounds, hoping that the relationship with Rice and the St. Joseph House transitional program will continue to grow.

"Now that we've taken part in this, I see that it is a real win-win situation. This is a way to reach out to the Houston community," Franco said. ■

—JESSICA STARK

Rice News Staff

"OUR GOAL IS TO HELP RESTORE SELF ESTEEM AND SELF CONFIDENCE SO OUR MEMBERS CAN RE ENTER THE JOB MARKET AND LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

GRANT KENNEDY

Leadership *Continued from Page 3*

Leadership Institute provides opportunities for a select number of exemplary student leaders to engage in an in-depth experience preparing them to be transformational leaders on campus and in their respective communities. Once again, Rice was the only institution with multiple participants.

To learn more about diversity-focused programs at Rice, please visit www.rice.edu/diversity. ■

—SHARON L. BUSH

Associate Director
Office of the Associate Provost

Bellaire *Continued from Page 4*

chocolates.

The Bellaire students enjoyed their experience at Rice. "The information was presented in such a fun and casual way," one student said in the evaluation. "It was super fun to be taught by students with a passion for their studies, too." ■

—RICE NEWS STAFF REPORTS

News and Media Relations

Second Annual Asian Film Festival Held at Rice

Rice University hosted its second annual Asian Film Festival, showcasing five highly acclaimed films and two guest speakers — a director and a writer — Feb. 8–10.

The festival, which was part of the university's celebration of Chinese Lunar New Year, featured movies from China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan and East Asia. The film festival began with a screening of "Lust, Caution" directed by Ang Lee. Based on a short story by Eileen Chang, the movie follows the life of a young student, Tang Wei, who becomes embroiled in patriotic politics when Japan occupies China during World War II. Fiction writer Lihua Yu presented the film and facilitated a postscreening discussion about Chang's life and writings.

The festival also featured "Daughter from Danang," a documentary about a biracial daughter of an American serviceman and a Vietnamese woman. After 22 years of living in America with an adopted family, the daughter decides

CINEMATIC CELEBRATION: Rice's second annual Asian Film Festival showcased five highly acclaimed films and two guest speakers



to reunite with her mother and returns to Vietnam. Mother and daughter find themselves caught in a confusing clash of cultures and conflicting emotions. Director Gail Dolgin introduced the film and answered questions after the movie.

Also included in the festival were a Korean film, "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring"; a Japanese animated film, "My Neighbor Totoro"; and "Earth," an East Asian film.

The film festival was held at the Rice Media Center, which features Houston's only silver screen. The event was co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost, the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's Transnational China Project, the Chao Center for Asian Studies, the Office of Multicultural Community Relations, the Rice Media Center, Apartment Wiz and Rice alumnus Harry Gee '60. ■

—STACY CERVANTES

Department Coordinator
Multicultural Community Relations



AT LARGE



INSIDE THIS EDITION: Rice students PAIRing up to help local refugees. See Page 2.

David D. Medina, Director, Multicultural Community Relations, Office of Public Affairs



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