

ERIKSON  
INSTITUTE

A Graduate  
School in Child  
Development

Fall 2005

# Erikson Today



**Jeffrey Herr  
endows  
research center  
for children and  
social policy**

Also in this issue,

**Mildred Ebietomiye, '05:  
babies' best friend**

**James C. Tyree: tireless  
advocate for the young**

**Prism Ball photo highlights**

## Letter from the president

SUDDENLY, EVERYONE IS TALKING about early childhood education.

Barbara Bowman and I were quoted in a lengthy article on the topic of universal preschool that appeared in the *New York Times* on July 31. When I was a guest on U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.'s cable television show this summer, we talked about

Head Start, testing, and other education issues.

I'm delighted that the media, congressmen, and many other important voices are giving sustained, thoughtful consideration to serious issues in education and early childhood development. I'm gratified that Erikson's expertise is called into this national conversation. And I'm absolutely thrilled to

report that a new initiative will give Erikson an even stronger voice in shaping public policy affecting young children.

In this issue, you will read about our new Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy. With generous support from the Herr family and other sources, this center will launch an array of activities intended to share the results of applied research with legislators, advocates, foundation officials, and other researchers. New knowledge and comparative analysis of existing policies concerning children and families in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin will help them understand which policies work best, and why.

You'll be hearing more about the Herr Center in the future. You'll also be hearing more about people like James Tyree and Mildred Ebietomiye—a businessman and a recent Erikson graduate featured in this issue who work to give children a healthy, happy start in life. In their own ways, they are champions for Erikson's cause—and we hope you will be, too.

**Samuel J. Meisels, President**



Kathy Richland

## Investing in children

### New center will influence social policy

Jeffrey Herr believes our nation's best investment is in young children. "This country needs to figure out how to support and teach our infants and young children in the most meaningful ways."

That's one reason why Herr, senior vice president at David A. Noyes & Company, recently made a leadership gift to support the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy. Erikson is establishing this center to inform, support, and encourage effective early childhood policy in the Great Lakes region.

This new center, with its dual focus on research and social policy, takes the place of a research center established at Erikson in 1997 with a gift from the Herr family. The original center supports more than 20 applied research projects related to teaching and learning, assessment, early intervention, and other child development issues. Erikson will expand the reach and impact of such research by actively channeling it into the policy arena. Herr is supporting this new initiative with a second generous investment in Erikson.

"I have always been curious about the influences on human development and how biology and environment interact to make us who we are. Research on brain development is continually revealing the impact of the earliest experiences," says Herr. "Early childhood education is perhaps the most critical factor for the future of this or any

nation. The public ought to be better informed about this."

Erikson faculty and staff are the ideal people to bring this issue before the public and policymakers, he says. "They are the most authentic academics that I have encountered. They do first-rate research and advocacy because they keep their eyes on what's really happening in schools, child care facilities, and hospitals."

The Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy will generate original research and analysis addressing unanswered questions about the optimal organization, funding, assessment, and replication of high-quality early childhood programs and services.

Through an ambitious new array of publications, conferences, policy seminars, and advocacy efforts, the center will share this research with state and local legislators, advocates, foundation officials, and other researchers.

Unique in its regional approach, the center will provide important comparisons of policies across states to determine which work best and why. One of the first research projects the center will launch is a series of five interrelated studies on how to improve mental health services for children aged birth to five and their families in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

"Bringing new knowledge in child development to the community is a crucial part of Erikson's mission," says

## Erikson Today

### Fall 2005

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*Contributing writer:* Toni Shears

*Editors:* Toni Shears, Patricia Nedeau

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president Samuel J. Meisels. “This new center will greatly expand our ability to understand how programs and services affect children and families, and bring that knowledge directly to those in positions to make changes for the better.”

The Herr gift will endow the Frances Stott Chair in Early Childhood Policy Research, to be held by the director of the center. The Herrs chose to name the chair for Stott, vice president and dean of academic affairs and a longtime family friend, because “Fran epitomizes Erikson’s personal approach,” Herr said. “She is extraordinarily warm, nurturing, and genuine in her commitment to improving the lives of young children.”

The Herr family’s connections to Erikson are strong. Herr’s wife, Toby, is a 1982 alumna and a trustee; their daughter, Julie, is a 2000 graduate. Toby is director of Project Match, a nationally recognized welfare-to-work program housed at Erikson. The new policy center is a way of supporting efforts similar to their professional interests, but with a specific focus on early childhood.

Herr built a successful career in finance as a value investor, seeking out stocks in underrecognized, undervalued companies. In some ways, his support for Erikson flows from that same investment philosophy. Like those enterprises, “Erikson’s true value is underrecognized,” he says. That value stems from Erikson’s people, its small size, its focus, and its integrity. “My gift can do a lot more at Erikson than at a larger institution. As an investor, that makes me feel very good.”

## Mission incredible

### Spirit of Erikson Award recipient James C. Tyree champions health, education

The chairman and CEO of Mesirow Financial is on a mission: to improve the lives of children and young adults through better education and health care.

For 25 years, James C. Tyree has generously given time, expertise, and financial support to organizations that promote learning and health. He has served on the

boards of more than 40 corporate, civic, and nonprofit organizations in the Chicago area, including those of four colleges, three major research hospitals, and a South Side high school.

A tireless crusader against diabetes, he currently leads the campaign to raise \$1 billion for Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International.

“We’re at \$340 million and counting, on the way to a \$1 billion by 2009—maybe 2008,” he says confidently.

For all this and much more, Tyree received the Spirit of Erikson Institute Award at the 2005 Prism Ball. Accepting the award, he told the audience that he pictures his life with four corners. “The first is family and friends; the second is business, the third is health care, and the fourth is education.”

Personal experience motivates him to make health and education top priorities that consume a large part of his life. “I grew up a poor young South Sider who made it by scraping and striving, with a helping hand from others that allowed me to get a good education,” he explains. “When I was older and became a diabetic, I realized I didn’t know much about health—and how important it was.”

Bachelor’s and M.B.A. degrees from Illinois State



University gave him the start that led him to the top of Mesirow Financial, a diversified financial services firm with 1,000 employees, 28 offices, and more than \$300 million in revenues. To give others better educational opportunities, Tyree created the Kevin Shannon Foundation in memory of his best friend. The foundation provides student scholarships and grants to local public and private schools.

His diagnosis inspired him to work hard for better diabetes education, treatment, and someday, a cure. For his efforts, the JDRF Illinois Chapter named Tyree, who is an executive committee member and life member of its board, as its 2004 Person of the Year. For JDRF International, he not only chairs the major donor and campaign committees but is also on the research portfolio committee: “I stay very focused on how we invest the money we raise,” he notes.

It was his appointment as chairman of the board at City of Colleges that introduced Tyree to Erikson Institute. “Many of the faculty there are Erikson alumni, and that led us into fruitful partnerships with Erikson on several projects,” he says. One recent example: in 2004–05, Erikson developed a course of monthly lectures for faculty in the colleges’ Child Development Studies initiative; the course continues this fall.

Tyree magnifies his already-impressive impact on the community by inspiring others to follow his example. At his firm, he has created a culture of service and philanthropy that encourages employees to give blood, repair homes for Christmas in April, and more.

“We support each and every one of our employees with dollars if they commit time,” he says. “Our Community Affairs Committee coordinates employee participation and recruits an army of volunteers for service projects. We’ll support clients’ charitable projects, too. If they give time, we provide capital and human resources. We’ll be right there beside them.”

With Tyree leading the way, his army of donors, volunteers, and advocates are achieving a vital mission—improving the lives of countless young people.

# Baby's best friend

## With time and trust, Mildred Ebietomiye, '05, gives infants a great start

Mildred Ebietomiye believes in having close personal relationships with babies. She snuggles them, babbles to them, and watches intently for clues to see how she can help them learn and grow.

“As you spend time with babies and look into their eyes, they begin to show you their personalities,” she says. “You begin to understand who this child is and how to meet its needs.”

That takes time, attention, affection, and trust—all essential elements of the relationship-based philosophy of childcare that Ebietomiye implements for infants at the Ounce of Prevention Fund's Educare Center in Chicago.

Continuity is a key feature of the program, which primarily serves the infants of adolescent parents in the Grand Boulevard community on the South Side. Ebietomiye leads a team of three teachers who provide intensely nurturing, individualized care to a group of eight, from infancy until the children are about three years old. As the infants grow, they “graduate” to another room at Educare properly equipped for their developmental level, but they don't outgrow their caregivers; the teachers move to the next room with them.

“The beauty of this model is that there is time for children to develop true attachments with caregivers; the caregivers are able to come to understand

who these children are, to know what their developmental agendas are, and support them along that path,” she explains.

After two or three months in this environment, she says, the infants “begin to feel trust. They are learning that when they signal their needs, we will be there to respond.” After several months, the trust level has built to a point where her team can achieve amazing feats, like getting all eight infants to relax and nap at the same time.

Ebietomiye's remarkable results were recognized in 2004 when she was named one of five winners of the Kohl/McCormick Early Childhood Teaching Awards. Winners are selected for demonstrating dedication, innovation, leadership, respect for children and families, and commitment to professional growth.

Ebietomiye left a 16-year career with an accounting firm to follow her nurturing instincts and open a home-based childcare program. She immediately realized caring for infants was her niche. “I was fascinated with the way babies explore. It gives me such a rush to watch them discover, learn, and grow—and to support and ‘scaffold’ them in their development.”

Soon she found that she wanted more formal theory in child development. She enrolled at Erikson and earned a certifi-

John Booz/Ounce of Prevention



cate in infant studies. Meanwhile, she went to work at Educare in 2002 as a substitute early childhood teacher—a post that quickly became permanent—while pursuing her master's degree at Erikson with a specialization in administration.

Convinced the caregiver relationship was essential to healthy emotional and cognitive development, she used her new skills to develop a childcare program where that bond would flourish. By the time she completed her degree in August 2005, she was promoted to master

teacher at Educare. “Now my family of children grows to include the whole zero-to-three program, and a staff of 21 teachers,” she says with wonder and pride.

The “curriculum” in her classroom involves a lot of cuddling and playing, but Ebietomiye and her staff continually assess each child's developmental progress and look for teachable moments. “We definitely follow their interests. We're constantly observing so we can create an environment that is supportive and stimulating. The children lead us to activities appropriate for them.”

The goal is to help children build social and emotional as well as cognitive skills, and it seems to be working.

“When a child turns three, we are hoping the child will be able to cope in given situations, be attentive, express a range of emotions, and eventually be able to put them into words,” she says. When her first “family group” of eight transitioned to preschool last fall, she recalls with a proud smile, “They had those abilities. They looked *good!*”

## News from Erikson

### Chen's world tour of education continues

Peru was the latest stop on associate professor Jie-Qi Chen's travels as a Fulbright senior specialist. The Catholic



Catholic University of Peru

**Keynote in Lima:** Associate professor Jie-Qi Chen addressed a national congress called *Multiple Intelligences in the Education of Young Children in Peru in March*.

To maximize access to her expertise, the university organized a national congress on multiple intelligences and asked her to give opening and closing remarks.

This was Chen's third trip through the Fulbright senior specialist program, which provides cultural exchange and professional development opportunities abroad for leading U.S. academics. She traveled, taught, and lectured in Taiwan in 2002, and in China and Hong Kong in 2004.

The congress in Lima drew an audience of 2,000 teachers and school administrators—four times the expected attendance. Half the participants were public school teachers, who paid the \$10 conference fee out of their own meager salaries (about \$200 per month). The government funds only salaries at public schools, providing no money for textbooks, classroom materials, furniture, teacher training, or even school

University of Peru invited her to give lectures and workshops on multiple intelligences theory in March.

To maximize access to her expertise, the university organized a national congress on multiple intelligences and asked her to give opening and closing remarks.

buildings. "I was impressed and touched by the enthusiasm of the teachers—their eagerness to gain new knowledge and to develop as teachers, despite their low pay and poor working conditions," Chen says.

Chen learned a great deal about Peru's educational system through visits to several public and private schools. "I was told by many Peruvians before the congress that public education in Peru was 'no good,' 'hopeless,' or 'in crisis.' I told the congress participants, 'Hope is here; it is in you, in your steadfast belief in public education and efforts to make it better,' which yielded strong applause."

During her 17-day stay, Chen took time to tour the marvels of Incan ruins and view the achievements of pre-Incan civilizations in museums.

"Visiting a culture and society so drastically different from my background stimulates my thinking, forcing me to observe and reflect from both American and Chinese viewpoints," says Chen.

### Graduation 2005

**Sixty-six students—the largest Erikson class ever—received their diplomas in a happy, heartfelt ceremony May 21. Wanda Y. Newell, senior associate at the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C., gave the graduation address. Her message to graduates: Your past offers lessons that help you succeed in the future. Photos by Amy Rothblatt.**



Honorary doctorates were conferred upon Richard A. Behrenhausen, former president and chief executive officer of the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, and Chicago's first lady Margaret Corbett Daley. Both were recognized for civic activities that help children reach their full potential.

### Rosalind Suzette Burrell, 1953–2005

The Erikson family suffered a deep loss with the death of Rosalind Burrell, '79, on March 24 at age 51. She died of complications following surgery.

Burrell was recording secretary for the Alumni of Erikson Institute. The recipient of numerous teaching awards, she taught preprimary children at Dawes School in Evanston. She also taught evening classes at Roosevelt University and DePaul University.

Emails among alumni spread the news of Burrell's passing. Peg Callaghan, '73, wrote, "I am shocked and saddened—the first thing I thought of was her smile, positive attitude and the beautiful cake she brought" to an alumni gathering.

"As a teacher, she exemplified the best of Erikson," recalls Victory Kadish, '83, who taught and consulted on projects with Burrell for more than 25 years. "She truly understood the value of taking care of our children as



Wheelock College

**Bowman honored Erikson founder Barbara Bowman received an honorary doctorate from Wheelock College in May, honoring her many years of leadership in early education.**

well as their entire families and gave everything she had to her work. She was such a talented, accomplished, genuine, and solid person. I'll always be grateful for the gift of her friendship in my life."

Burrell is survived by her brother, Curtis R. Burrell; an aunt, Dr. Rosa B. Cooper; and several cousins.

**Right: Tia Broussard celebrates her new master's degree with family and friends.**



**Left: After adding a Ph.D. to her Erikson master's degree, Jennifer Rosinia celebrates with her dissertation committee chair, Professor Gillian McNamee (left), and Dean Frances Stott.**

## News from Erikson (continued)

### Erikson gets 10-year stamp of approval

It's now official: the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools has renewed Erikson Institute's accreditation as an institution of higher education for a ten-year term—the maximum time possible between team visits.

NCA's Higher Learning Commission accredits colleges and universities in the 19-state North Central region. Erikson sought and received this stamp of approval for the first time in 2000.

The NCA reviewing team gave Erikson its latest—and ultimate—vote of confidence after a site visit in January. The recommendation is the result of a rigorous two-and-one-half-year process that involved extensive self-study and documentation of nearly every aspect of the school.

The visiting team commended the school as a whole and identified many strengths, including the quality of faculty, the administrative team, and staff; an educational model that integrates theory and practice; the relationship-based focus on education; articulate students; and alumni who are excellent ambassadors and part of the Erikson family.

"This site visit was a validation of all that we are and do," says Frances Stott, vice president and dean of academic affairs. "If Erikson is great, it is because of our students, faculty, staff, and trustees, and because of our alumni who go out into the world and make a difference in the lives of children and families. For this we thank you."

### 2005 Prism Ball

Nearly 500 friends of Erikson turned out on May 20 to make merry while making a difference for children and families. The Prism Ball raised more than \$700,000 to support Erikson.

Photos by Amy Rothblatt.



Key members of the Prism Ball planning team—gala chair Barbara T. Bowman, board chair Susan Wislow, and past board chair Virginia Bobins, '90—were ready to relax and enjoy the party.



Longtime Erikson supporters Lois and Harrison Steans take a break in the evening's mingling. Harrison Steans was the 2004 Spirit of Erikson Institute Award recipient.



Spirit of Erikson Institute Award recipient James C. Tyree and his wife, Eve, got into the spirit of the evening's "Picture yourself" theme.



Left: Trustee Sheri B. Zuckerman and her husband Sherwin can picture themselves at the heart of Erikson's efforts.



Below: Dr. James E. Bowman spent a lovely evening framed by his daughter, Valerie Bowman Jarrett (left), and his granddaughter, Laura. Valerie Jarrett graciously underwrote the Prism Ball reception.

# Erikson

Erikson Institute  
420 North Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611-5627  
Tel: (312) 755-2250  
Fax: (312) 755-0928  
Email: [info@erikson.edu](mailto:info@erikson.edu)  
[www.erikson.edu](http://www.erikson.edu)

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