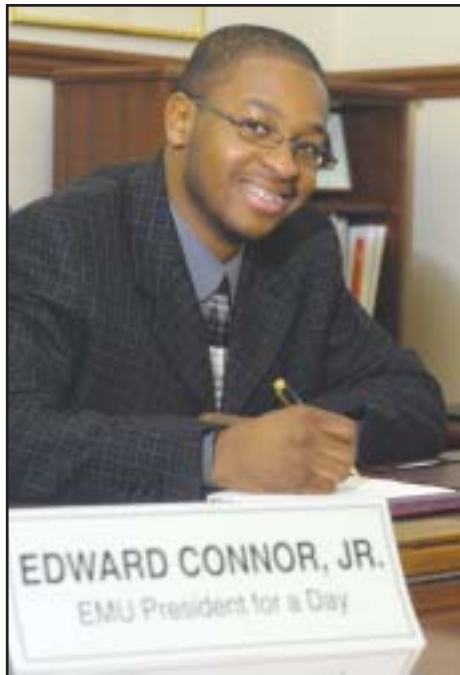


## TRADING PLACES



**NEW ROLES:** (far left) Eddie Connor, a senior history major from Oak Park, makes himself comfortable in the president's office in 202 Welch during "President for a Day" Feb. 12.

(left) EMU President Samuel A. Kirkpatrick sits at the keyboard in Connor's dorm room in Walton Hall. In addition to attending two of Connor's classes and taking notes, Kirkpatrick also assumed Connor's resident adviser duties. Here, he talks to Elliott Gold, a junior management major from Blissfield.

## President, student swap places for day

By Ron Podell

Diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as a high school sophomore, Edward M. Connor, Jr. was fighting for his life, not thinking about school.

So, he couldn't fathom eventually going to Eastern Michigan University, let alone serving as the institution's president, even if for just a day.

But Connor, a senior from Oak Park, did exactly that.

The history major took over the reins from EMU President Samuel A. Kirkpatrick during the Fourth Annual

"President for a Day" event Feb. 12. The event, instituted in 2001 by Kirkpatrick, allows a student, from the top, to get a better perspective of the University. In turn, Kirkpatrick gets an opportunity to better understand the life of an EMU student.

"This was a chance to network with individuals and see behind-the-scenes the intricate details that affect our campus directly and indirectly," Connor said. "It's really been a great experience."

During his stead as the University's top official, Connor received updates on the campus Concept Master Plan and strategic plan,

and learned about the University's plans for American Democracy Week and upgrading classrooms on campus during the next six months. He also attended an alumni/admissions reception with Kirkpatrick in Grand Blanc.

Connor said he found the discussion of the master plan particularly intriguing. The master plan, which projects 20-25 years into the future, examines the best way to optimize use of campus property; identifies the most effective way to provide students with

**SEE PRESIDENT, page 4**

## Spreading a wave of democracy

EMU proposes American Democracy Week as part of national political project

By Ron Podell

In an effort to drum up interest in American politics and voting for college-age students, Eastern Michigan University has proposed that the week before this year's general elections be declared American Democracy Week Oct. 26-Nov. 2.

The idea, proposed by a group coordinated by the Undergraduate Studies program, is a piggyback to the American Democracy Project, a joint venture by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), Campus Compact and *The N.Y. Times*.

"The whole project emerged from a concern of increasing involvement of students," said Ann Blakeslee, director of Undergraduate Studies. "In that age group, we weren't seeing a high participation rate or voter turn-

out. We want to increase awareness of civic and political issues, and increase their participation and involvement in the community and politics."

The American Democracy Project is a multi-campus initiative that seeks to create an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement for undergraduates enrolled at institutions that are members of AASCU. The goal of the project is to produce graduates who understand and are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy. The American Democracy Project currently has 176 higher education institutions, representing nearly 1.7 million students.

The Undergraduate Studies program, which falls under the auspices of the associate provost, recently saw its brainstorm fea-



tured in the American Democracy Project's January 2004 newsletter.

Some of EMU's ideas for the summer and Oct. 26-Nov. 2 — the week leading up to the national election — include:

- Mock debates for the actual general election.

- Voter registration drives for students.

- Presentations within departments/majors focused on why this election matters to their discipline or field. The idea is to help students and faculty better understand how the election impacts them and the things in which they're invested or interested.

"For example, we could have a presentation in art focusing on the implications of the election for the arts," Blakeslee said. "We could have a presentation on eco-

nomics focused on the national and state economy, one in the sciences focused on the environment, and one in communications focused on the media."

- Numerous presentations occurring across disciplines, with some even being interdisciplinary.

- A summer teaching workshop focused on civic engagement and education.

- A significant keynote event for American Democracy Week. This could include a telecast of a major speaker for all involved campuses. Individual campuses could then invite their own speakers to respond.

- Creation of a colloquium series in a brown bag format, featuring speakers from EMU and off campus.

**SEE DEMOCRACY, page 4**

# Presidential Scholars chase diverse goals

By Summer Wilhelm

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This story features six of the 15 Presidential Scholars. The third part of this story will be published in the March 2 issue of FOCUS EMU.*

The Board of Regents honored Eastern Michigan University's 2003 Presidential Scholarship recipients during its regular meeting Dec. 2, 2003.

The scholarship is a four-year award that pays 30 credit hours (15 per semester) per year of in-state tuition, housing, food allowance and mandatory fees. Students who receive the scholarship must live in the University residence halls the first two years of the award, with at least 15 credit hours per semester and maintain a 3.5 GPA.

Scholarship recipients are selected during EMU's annual Presidential Scholarship Competition. Awards are based on a competitive exam. To compete, high school seniors must have either a 3.7 GPA, or a 3.5 to 3.69 GPA with a minimum 25 ACT or 1,150 SAT. Each scholarship winner also must complete a successful interview.

## Ellen Gutman, (Sylvania, Ohio)

When Ellen Gutman chose her college, she kept it all in the family. Not only did her older brother and sister attend Eastern, but her sister was a Presidential Scholar as well. So, good reviews from her siblings, combined with winning the four-year scholarship, pushed Eastern to the top of the list. And Gutman has no regrets.

"I was surprised when I found out I won the scholarship. "But I was also very happy," she said. "I've made a lot of friends. I like everyone here and I especially enjoy hanging out with the girls on my floor."

Gutman, a political science major, graduated from Sylvania Northview High School with a 4.2 GPA. While there, she was involved in band, the Ottawa Hills Flute Choir, National Honor Society and speech and debate.

"One of the best decisions I made in high school was to join the speech and debate team," she said. "I have learned many valuable skills and am no longer scared when I have to speak. Now, I love to have an audience."

After graduating from EMU, Gutman plans to go to law school.

## Serina Kramer, (Chelsea, Mich.)

Serina Kramer attended Chelsea High School and graduated with a 3.5 GPA. She was in many activities, which included marching band, cross country, track and prom design. But one of her favorite interests was art.

Kramer has earned three underclassmen art awards for outstanding performance. In her junior year of high school, she took a drawing class at Washtenaw Community College to see how deep her interest in the subject went. The class was successful and Kramer hopes to make art her career.

"I'd like to teach it at a high school level," said the art education major. "Teaching seemed like a fun thing to do and since I love art, I mixed the two together."

Kramer, who currently works in food service at

*Presidential Scholars receive a four-year award that pays 30 credit hours (15 per semester) per year of in-state tuition, housing, food allowance and mandatory fees. Students who receive scholarships must live in university residence halls the first two years of the award, complete at least 15 credit hours and maintain a 3.5 GPA.*

Chelsea Community Hospital, hopes to start off her teaching career in a larger city. But after a few years, she plans to settle in an area comparable to her hometown.

For right now, though, her personal goals are to run a half-marathon, learn self-defense, enter art pieces into a show, learn more about broadcasting and set a good example for others.

"At EMU, I want to be involved and improve not only myself, but push others to improve," Kramer said. "If you can't win a race, make the person ahead of you break the record."

## Rachel Lebron, (Belleville, Mich.)

Rachel Lebron graduated from Belleville High School with a 4.0 GPA. She was a member of the art club, Spanish Club and the National Honor Society. She also won awards in the school art show and the congressional art show.

"I've always liked art," Lebron said. "But before high school, I never really had any art classes. Then I finally took some and realized I could do it and that it was fun. That's when I decided to make art my major."

Lebron said that even though the scholarship money reinforced her choice of school, Eastern was previously a consideration. Her father, an art teacher, is an EMU alumnus. And so far, Lebron agrees with her choice of school.

"I really like it here," she said. "I have really good instructors and classes, and I get along great with my roommate."

When Lebron isn't in class or studying, she likes to go to the movies and recently took a swing dancing lesson. She also is involved in the First-Year Mentor Program and the Intermedia Gallery Group, where they discuss art and host shows.

## Christopher Lewis, (Westland, Mich.)

Christopher Lewis had more than one reason for attending Eastern; in fact, he had three. Winning the Presidential Scholarship was one of the most influential factors, but the University's excellent teaching program and encouragement from his sister sealed the deal.

Lewis hopes to teach history and political science to middle school or high school students in Michigan.

"I like explaining things to people," he said. "And I have great interest in history, geography and political science. I'd like to make those subjects my life's work."

When Lewis heard he had won the Presidential Schol-

arship, he said he was surprised but very pleased.

"I had never once in my life seriously thought that I would be receiving a full ride scholarship at the school of my choice," he said. "After that success, I knew I was capable of almost anything."

Lewis graduated from Franklin High School with a 3.9 GPA. He was active in Student Congress, 2003 Senior Class Council and the symphonic band. He also volunteered at an after-school tutoring program at Emerson Middle School.

## Daniel Mathis, (Ida, Mich.)

Daniel Mathis graduated from Ida High School with a 3.7 GPA. Throughout his high school career, he was in many leadership positions. He was president of the Student Council; vice president of his class; and president and vice president of the Junior Livestock Association Board.

Mathis also has participated in a number of volunteer events, including Agricultural Awareness Day, Kindergarten Tractor Safety Education, Monroe County Soil and Water Tree Sale, Special Olympics Bowling, Ida High School Bluestreak Buddy Program, a canned food drive, Give A Kid A Christmas and GAKAC present wrapping.

"Volunteer work and community service have been a large part of my life," Mathis said. "The experiences have been extremely rewarding."

On the weekends when he's not in classes, Mathis goes home to work on his family's farm. And despite his busy college life, he still finds time to show cattle and get involved in 4-H projects.

While he hasn't yet chosen his major, Mathis is leaning toward health administration. After graduation, he plans to stick close to home and commute to a hospital in the area.

## Michelle McCourt, (Grafton, Ohio)

Michelle McCourt graduated at the top of her Midview High School class with a 4.05 GPA and an academic ambition realized.

"It took hours of studying to reach this goal," McCourt said. "It reflects my determination to do everything to the best of my ability."

In high school, she was team captain of varsity softball and soccer; was recognized by "Who's Who Among American High School Students;" and was in the United States Academy National Awards Program.

McCourt, a biology major, plans to attend medical school after graduation and eventually work at a hospital in Ohio.

Aside from her career, McCourt has other goals, one of which includes more community service.

"A personal goal that I want to accomplish is to complete more community service in the future," she said. "During high school, I was very busy with the combination of sports and academics and couldn't participate in as much community service as I wanted."

McCourt said she hopes to become active in projects such as Habitat for Humanity and tutoring or mentoring children.



Gutman



Lebron



Mathis



McCourt



Kramer

# Leguizamo relays stories from the acting trenches

By Summer Wilhelm

When two youths commandeered the conductor's booth of a New York subway train and proclaimed themselves the subway deejays, passengers were probably more than a little surprised. Years later, that surprise likely turned to astonishment when they realized that one of those kids was John Leguizamo, actor, producer and writer.

Leguizamo, who came to Eastern Michigan University's Pease Auditorium Feb. 7, treated the crowd to anecdotes from his humble subway beginnings to his latest movie-watcher favorites.

"I'm not here to be an example," he said at the beginning of his lecture. "But a horrible warning."

When he realized that acting was something he wanted to do, Leguizamo saved up \$300 of his Kentucky Fried Chicken money and went to Sylvia Leigh's Showcase Theatre. After that, he attended New York University to major in drama studies but left after a year. He also studied at the Strasberg Theater Institute and the H.B. Studio. Despite all that practice, Leguizamo said his moment of glory came when he and his girlfriend were performing at a club. Their skits would often involve arguments and fake physical violence. One evening, some men came up to Leguizamo and took him into the alley out back to harass him for "hitting" a woman.

"It was then that I knew I'd really made it," he said. "I knew



Photo by Myah Benjamin

**THE ACTOR'S STUDIO: Actor, producer and comedian John Leguizamo tells one of his many stories about his career in the acting profession during his performance in Pease Auditorium Feb. 7.**

**The well-known Latino actor entertained the large crowd with personal anecdotes about his work and those he's worked with.**

that I had developed my skills and that acting was something I could do with my life."

Leguizamo's first role was on "Miami Vice" where he played a guest villain. According to Leguizamo, that was one of the few roles Latin actors were recruited for back then.

"Producers only wanted Latin people for thugs and janitors," he said. "I was told to change my name, stay out of the sun, eat light food. No one thought we were in style."

The part did get Leguizamo his first agent. From there he went on to parts in "Casualties of War," "Revenge" and "Die Hard 2," with Bruce Willis,

where he was essentially cut out of the movie.

"I auditioned for terrorist number one, but was demoted to terrorist number eight," he said.

*"I auditioned for 'terrorist number one,' but was demoted to 'terrorist number eight.' I was supposed to have a great death scene at the end. But, instead, they put a mask on me and killed me in the middle of the movie."*

**John Leguizamo discussing his less-than-fulfilling experience on the movie "Die Hard 2."**

"I was supposed to have a great death scene at the end. But, instead, they put a mask on me and killed me in the middle of the movie."

After that bleak experience, Leguizamo produced his own show, "Mambo Mouth" and starred in a slew of movies, including "Regarding Henry," "Super Mario Brothers," "Carlito's Way," "Whispers in the Dark," and "Too Wong Foo."

During those movies, he got the opportunity to work with some of Hollywood's well-known stars, including Kurt Russell, Penelope Ann Miller, Steven Seagal, Patrick Swayze and Sean Penn. And if he never had to work with any of them again, he said it would be too soon.

Between a shoving match with Russell, a near fistfight with Swayze and a rude brush-off by Miller, Leguizamo was a little repelled by the A-crowd.

The worst of them all was Seagal, Leguizamo said. The action star's date to die on "Executive Decision" was marked in red on Leguizamo's calendar.

"I arrived extra early on the day of his death scene," he said.

"But he wouldn't come out of his trailer because he didn't want to die the way he was supposed to. I was like 'yes you do, yes you do.'"

He listed Arnold Schwarzenegger, Robert DeNiro and Nicole Kidman as actors he enjoyed working with.

Leguizamo then changed venues to produce "House of Buggin," a TV series for the FOX network. While it was a tough job, he was paid well and enjoyed his work until FOX made the decision to fire his cast, which upset him greatly.

"I told them they would have to fire me first," he said. "So they did. But they kept the same writers and changed the name to 'Mad TV.'"

After a brief dry spell, Leguizamo landed a part in "Executive Decision." Roles followed shortly thereafter by "The Fan" and "Romeo and Juliet."

Other movies Leguizamo addressed in his speech include "The Pest," "Moulin Rouge," "Collateral Damage" and "The Freak," a love/hate letter to his father that became an Emmy winner.

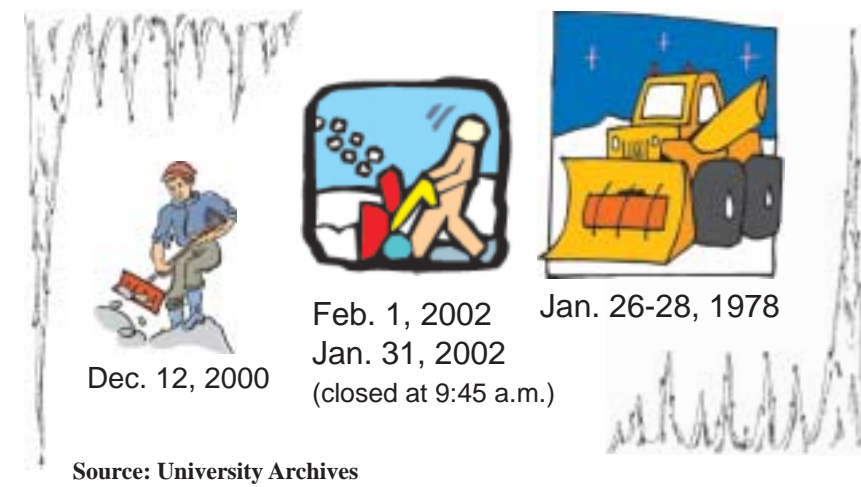
"I wanted to do something that rocked my world, so I wrote 'Freak,'" he said. "My family was mad at me, but they have a price tag. I always buy them back at Christmas."

Despite his jokes, Leguizamo ended his lecture on an encouraging note for those looking to break into the acting business.

"Just remember," he said. "No matter how hard or impossible things may seem, there is hope. You can make it."

## EMU BY THE NUMBERS

Michigan winters can be brutal and, over the years, Eastern Michigan University has had to close its doors due to heavy snow and/or ice on more than a few occasions. Most recently, the University closed Jan. 27, 2004, when a heavy mixture of snow and ice, starting a few hours before sunrise, pummeled the area. Below are some other dates when EMU closed due to the weather, as provided by University Archives.



Source: University Archives

## Harris lands position at Ferris

Michael Harris, associate provost and professor of political science, has been named vice president for academic affairs at Ferris State University. Harris, selected from among five finalists, will begin his new job July 1.

Harris replaces Todd Oldfield, who has been serving as the interim vice president. Oldfield will return to his post as associate vice president for academic affairs.

"I am delighted and honored to have been chosen as Ferris' chief academic affairs officer," Harris said in a release provided by Ferris State. "During my campus visit, I was most impressed by the warmth expressed by the entire campus community; the faculty's energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to student success; the quality of academic programs; the students' passion for the university; and commitment, dedication and professionalism of the administration."

Harris came to EMU in 1994 as an assistant professor of political science. As a faculty member, he received the University's Distinguished Teaching Award, the Alumni Office Teaching Excellence Award, and recognition for Excellence in teaching from the American Political Science Association.

As an academic administrator, Harris has been instrumental in a number of student-focused initiatives that have led to better first-year student success, stronger student advising, a more diversified student body, development of the first student handbook, new methods for students to track their progress toward graduation and improved retention. Harris also played a role in developing a five-year strategic plan, expanding off-campus centers, and creating and implementing a comprehensive program review process.

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Vacancy information may also be obtained by calling our 24-hour Jobs Line at 487-0016. Compensation/Employment Services office hours are Monday - Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

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CSBF0412 CS05 \$26,118 Collection Specialist, Student Accounting.

### FOOD SERVICE/MAINTENANCE

(Hiring Rate)

FMBF0425 FM06 \$10.73 Custodian, Pray Harrold/Physical Plant, 11 p.m.-7:30 a.m., Sunday-Thursday.

FMBF0426 FM06 \$10.73 Custodian, Floater/Physical Plant, 5 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

## PRESIDENT, from page 1

an exceptional learning environment; and predicts how to achieve a unified campus.

"This is a serious concept to institute. This is for all of the students," he said. "As a student, being in this position, I think I had to take an approach from the student's perspective."

The day-long reversal of roles had Kirkpatrick attending Connor's classes, including "Teaching Reading in Secondary School." Students discussed how, as teachers, it is important

to present information in such a way that you can reach diverse audiences or alter that presentation for a specific audience.

Kirkpatrick, who turned in some homework for Connor, was impressed with the class's mix of elements, including the small group interaction, student presentations, use of photographs and some lecture time.

"It was interesting. Multicultural and diversity preparation is very important for teachers," Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick also tried his hand at learning the first steps in creating a Web page in Connor's "Education of Media and Technology," course. With some assistance from nearby students, Kirkpatrick was able to create a basic headline and table, but placing his digital image gave him some trouble early on.

"My picture disappeared," Kirkpatrick blurted out while constructing his page.

Lecturer Katherine Brandon, who taught the course, helped Kirkpatrick retrieve his photo.

In addition, Kirkpatrick met with housing staff in Connor's resident adviser capacity; talked with Walton Hall residents about classes, activities and their interests; and participated in a computer lab.

"He went to my residence hall to gain some perspective as an RA," Connor said. "I'm sure the residents were really pleased to see him over there. I think they'll be on pretty good behavior."

Connor handed over his dorm room keys to Kirkpatrick and joked he hoped they wouldn't be lost. But Connor admitted to some last-minute tidying of his room to make it presentable for Kirkpatrick.

"This helps me better understand what students at EMU experience," Kirkpatrick said. "Each time I do this, I learn about student perspectives and about the University in general."

## DEMOCRACY, from page 1

■ Workshops focused on topics, such as working on election campaigns or examining the electoral college.

■ Reading of a common book, which could be discussed.

"I think it's an idea that will be pushed nationally," Blakeslee said of other colleges and universities participating in an American Democracy Week.

For more information, call Blakeslee at 487-5624 or e-mail her at [ann.blakeslee@emich.edu](mailto:ann.blakeslee@emich.edu).

For more information about The American Democracy Project, go to [www.ascu.org/programs/adp/default.htm](http://www.ascu.org/programs/adp/default.htm).

## FOCUS EMU takes winter break

FOCUS EMU will not be published Feb. 24 due to the winter break, but will return to its regular print publishing schedule Tuesday, March 2.



*"I stay at Eastern because our commitment to young people is exemplary. We continually provide new opportunities for civic engagement and entrepreneurship."*

**Barbara Jones**  
Corporate Relations Manager  
Career Services Center

## Why I work at Eastern Michigan University

Since coming to EMU in 1977, I have had various job titles and responsibilities, yet my favorite roles remain the same: working with employers and helping EMU students prepare for the world of work.

One of my first administrative jobs here was to hire a group of highly motivated students who visited and "cold called" employers explaining why they should hire EMU students. We also started a job fair in a major shopping mall which, in the 1970s, was considered daring.

I love the creativity and entrepreneurship of special events. EMU's teacher job fair has been scheduled for the past 20 years and is the largest teacher fair in Michigan. Recently, I helped start a Congressional Breakfast where former legislators talked with EMU and high school students about careers in government.

Whether offering specialty workshops such as busi-

ness dining etiquette, designing special events with employers or serving as a staff adviser for Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) fraternity, I find my days are fast-paced and packed.

Today's students are America's future business executives, community leaders, teachers and role models. We teach, inspire, guide, motivate and help them become productive citizens.

I stay at Eastern because our commitment to young people is exemplary. We continually provide new opportunities for civic engagement and entrepreneurship. I also enjoy renewing friendships with former students I mentored over the years who are now company owners with graying hair!