

## Jacqueline Collins | Daring Fashion

JACQUELINE COLLINS'S SENIOR DESIGN COLLECTION IS NOT YOUR grandmother's tweed suit. "My theme is zombies and the Civil War," says Collins '07, a fashion design major and College of Visual and Performing Arts Scholar. "I'm totally into the South, moss, mud, earth tones, military buttons, wool, blood, and cheesy zombie movies. I thought, 'What would it look like if I designed for the undead?'" She compiled her ideas on a "mood board"—a collage of inspirational images and colors—to focus her creativity. Collins designed 50 looks, which she whittled down to 25 illustrations and then six prototypes for the college's spring fashion show. "You have to think about what would make a cohesive collection—what one person would wear to a certain event," she says. "I don't know what this event would be—maybe an undead Civil War reunion."

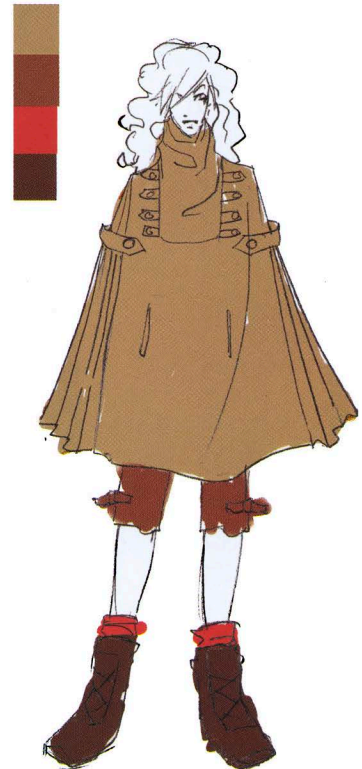
Although her latest collection has yet to hit the runway, some of her fashions have already been recognized nationally. In 2005, Collins placed eighth in the Arts of Fashion national semifinal competition, advancing to the final runway show in San Francisco. She also earned an honorable mention for illustrations in the Council of Fashion Designers of America scholarship competition last year.

Her signature fashion aesthetic is shaped by a mix of personal interests. As a high school student in Madbury, New Hampshire, Collins developed her drawing skills and an interest in Japanese animation, pop culture, and *visual kei*—a genre of gothic, leather-clad Japanese rock bands, which inspired the street wear that propelled her into fashion. "Those designs grabbed me," says Collins, who pieced together clothing from the Salvation Army and local mall to match the style. "The look didn't always quite go together, but it was an interesting process."

In search of a college, Collins met Professor Karen Bakke '67, G'69, chair of the Department of Fashion Design and Technologies, at a portfolio review. "She got me interested in Syracuse," says Collins, who's complementing her fashion design studies with a minor in entrepreneurship and emerging enterprises. During a junior-year semester at the London College of Fashion, she expanded her creativity with draping and corsetry courses and interned at the Chickenshed Theatre Company, where she sewed, cut patterns, and helped fit costumes. Last summer, Collins worked in the costume shop at Seattle's Teatro ZinZanni, a dinner show featuring circus performers, comedians, and cabaret acts.

As a senior, she is focused on the annual SU fashion show in April. "This is the culmination of my whole time here," says Collins, president of Elements of Fashion, a student organization. Adding to the high point, for the second time in three years, Collins had one of her illustrations selected for the fashion show poster. "Her point of view is unique, mature, and daring," says fashion design professor Jennifer Griffin G'89. "She responds to constructive criticism, to invitation, and to opportunity, and she is not afraid to work long, hard hours."

Collins is open to different possibilities for her future. "I would love to work for [British couture designer] Alexander McQueen," she says. "There's a market for well-designed, hand-built clothes, and I'm going for that one day."  
—Kathleen Haley



These sketches represent two of the final six garments that Jacqueline Collins created for the annual spring fashion show at SU.











Suzanne Thorin |  
**Defining the  
 21st-Century Library**

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN AND DEAN of Libraries Suzanne Thorin has guided research libraries through the upheavals of the information revolution since the days when cameras used film, video meant tape, and the only thing to capture on line was fish. During 16 years at the Library of Congress, she emerged as the point person on biblio-hightech, serving as administrator of digital programs, U.S. representative in the electronic library initiative of the G-7 nations, and chief of staff to the Librarian of Congress. Before coming to Syracuse in 2005, she spent a decade at the helm of Indiana University Bloomington Libraries, North America's 12th largest research library system.

Her international reputation as consultant and lecturer on post-digital librarianship notwithstanding, Thorin is no smug pixelcrat. She readily admits to "crawling around in the stacks" when necessary, as

happened last year when preparing a talk on Melville Dewey (as in decimal system). "The Google failed me, but I found everything I needed in three dusty old books," she says. Decades of witness to a non-stop parade of information management "innovations" have given Thorin a healthy capacity for measured responses to flavor-of-the-week research revolutions. "How can we even talk about 're-thinking the library' until we know what people are likely to be using it for?" she asks.

Convinced there is no reliable post-Internet model of how information is pursued, either generally or within academic disciplines, Thorin has made researching the researchers a pre-condition to funding any "library-of-the-future" projects. This fall, she assembled a team of librarians—including an anthropologist—to conduct a pilot program at the Newhouse School. "We sent them there to study the intellectual work habits of the place," she says.

As efforts to define the library's role in the digital research environment continue, Thorin plans to renovate Bird Library to create a more hospitable environment for the social component of intellectual development. "The University's emphasis on collaborative projects and interdisciplinary education is not served by students working in isolation online at home," she says. Thorin wants to transform Bird's first two floors into a "learning commons," a student educational activity center with computer clusters, high-speed printers, a coffee shop, and comfortable furniture. New lecture, seminar, and performance spaces are also planned. Librarians with specialized capabilities in a variety of fields will be available for consultation. "SHUSH-ing" is not in the job description.

"Over time, I'd like to use digital capabilities to bring pieces of this library into every school and college," Thorin says. "If there are databases needed by business scholars, let's make access available at the Whitman School's online environment; we bring the library to you. At the same time, the physical library will be more valuable than ever as the place to meet people, encounter rare artifacts, and develop new ideas." —David Marc





## Clarence Cross III | Personal Development

EVERY NIGHT BEFORE BED, CLARENCE Cross III '07 reviews the Martin Luther King Jr. quotation on the poster above his bed: "Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" For Cross, King's wisdom serves as a touchstone—a reminder of who he wants to be, a standard to measure himself against, and a basis on which to make choices. "It helps keep things in perspective to understand what other people struggle with, and to try to do something to help," says Cross, a broadcast journalism major with a minor in marketing. "And, ultimately, doing something for others makes me a better person."

Cross discovered his passion for people and desire to relate their stories as a seventh-grader in Washington, D.C., hosting his school's morning TV show. In high school, he worked at the public school system's TV station as a co-host

and producer, and helped create the show *Student Voices*. He also hosted a radio talk show, discussing news and issues of interest to teens. "I fell in love with journalism and telling people's stories," Cross says. "I love media and I love news. I also like the management side of the business, overseeing the development of projects and people."

That combination of interests and talents has helped Cross thrive in leadership positions at SU, including president of University Union, the largest student organization on campus. He is also a member of the University 100, the NCAA Athletic Compliance Committee, and served on the search committee for the new vice chancellor and provost. As a resident advisor for the Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (CIE) learning community, Cross embraced the challenge of facilitating the community's development. "I learned so much about myself, about leadership, and about other people," he says. Last year, five of his CIE residents collaborated with

SU Food Services to create Quench, a water cooler delivery service for campus residents. "The learning community is about risk taking—coming up with good ideas and turning them into a business," he says. "It is not only about thinking outside the box, but about getting rid of the box altogether."

For the past two years, Cross has volunteered at the Southwest Community Center in Syracuse, where he co-founded a student-produced newsletter. "I think the kids really enjoy it because it is an outlet for them—a way to express themselves without having to deal with the struggles of everyday life," he says. Cross believes this kind of community involvement is an important aspect of citizenship, and he is committed to making it an enduring part of his personal and professional life. "I want to be constantly aware of other people, and do whatever I can to help them improve," he says. "We are all just people. We are all human beings. And there is an art to being human."

—Amy Speech Shires





## Linda Littlejohn | Vital Partner

TO HELP WELCOME CHANCELLOR Nancy Cantor to the University in 2004, Linda Littlejohn '80, G'82 organized a lunch with a dozen "grassroots folks" representing the Onondaga Nation and Syracuse's African American and Latino communities. Over collard greens and cornbread ("I ran it, so we ate what I like!"), Littlejohn sparked a lively conversation by posing questions about the City of Syracuse, community revitalization, and SU's role in such efforts. "It was kind of like 'the good, the bad, and the ugly' of Syracuse," says Littlejohn, a former College of Human Services and Health Professions administrator who is now associate vice president of engagement initiatives. That dialogue launched an ongoing search for meaningful ways to engage the community. It also led to Littlejohn shepherding the Syracuse South Side Initiative, a community-University partnership devoted to neighborhood revitalization.

Littlejohn, who holds degrees from the

School of Social Work and the Maxwell School, has spent 24 years in higher education and human services administration. She feels well-matched to her role of addressing community needs through partnerships with the University. "I love using my skills and talents in combination with other people's to make something happen that will be to the advantage of everyone," she says.

Current South Side initiatives include developing a technology center, publishing a community newspaper, and staging an annual music and arts festival. Plans are also under way to establish an urban arts education program for children and a neighborhood food cooperative (see related story, page 28). In addition, an interdisciplinary partnership that addresses urban design and business plan development is being explored. "When you can find or create win-win situations like this, where people in the academy work with other people—not to study them, but to study situations

involving them and to partner with them to improve conditions—it's divine," Littlejohn says. "You can be true and honest. You can maintain your integrity and your ethics. And everyone benefits."

Such values were passed on to Littlejohn by members of her large, close-knit family. She speaks with pride and love of family members, crediting her father for having a tremendous impact on her and the women in her life for an unusual blend of characteristics ranging from southern belle refinement to Manhattan garment district "pizzazz" and independence. A New York City native, Littlejohn is married to Syracuse City Court Judge Langston C. McKinney G'71, and has a 23-year-old son, Jeffrey, and two stepsons, Evan and Brian. "My dad taught me that you should never treat people based on their title or what they can do to you or what they can bring to you," she says. "The true test of one's character is how you treat people who can't do a damn thing for you, or to you."  
—Amy Speech Shires



Biao Chen |

## A Sense of the Wireless

IMAGINE YOU LIVE IN A HOUSE THAT CAN detect anyone who enters and distinguish among household members, tracking them through the rooms, adjusting temperature and lighting to programmed preferences. This kind of real estate may not be as far away as you think, according to electrical engineering professor Biao Chen, a specialist in the development of wireless sensor systems. "One of the fascinating applications of such systems is the so-called 'smart living environment,'" says Chen, whose research in this area is co-sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the U.S. Air Force. "By creating a network of wireless sensors supplying data to a control computer or to each other, we can maximize the efficiency, safety, and comfort of our homes." Smart houses can recognize intruders and call the police, remind you to take your medication, and even keep the dog fed.

Chen, who serves as director of the Communication Laboratory at the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science, was a 2006 recipient of NSF's Faculty Early Career Development Award. Perhaps the nation's most prestigious honor for junior faculty in science and engineering, the award is also among the most lucrative, carrying \$400,000 in research support. He is using the well-earned windfall to accelerate his efforts in wireless system design, hoping to create an "overlay transmission system" that allows many wireless telephone and Internet users to talk and move information on the same frequency simultaneously, without loss of quality. If successful, Chen could make bandwidth scarcity a thing of the past.

Born in China, Chen earned degrees in electrical engineering at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He took a job with AT&T (China) in 1995, a time when international telephone companies were vying for shares of the emerging Chinese market, and savvy young *telecomistas* were much in demand. "I was hired, trained, and put in the field right away, installing base stations for wired telephone exchanges," says Chen, noting it was once common in China for a single landline telephone to serve an entire apartment house or village. "The job paid well, but the work was repetitive, and I didn't enjoy it very much. So I decided to go to graduate school in the U.S." Admitted to the University of Connecticut, he earned a master's degree in statistics and a doctorate in electrical engi-

neering. After a post-doctoral research year at Cornell, he joined the Syracuse faculty in 2000, and now the award-winning professor is mentoring award-winning students. They include Sean O'Hara G'06, named Technologist of the Year in 2005 by the Technology Alliance of Central New York, and Bin Liu, whose paper on signal processing for communications won a prestigious student paper contest at an international conference.

A self-described soccer dad, Chen sees practical advantages to the "smart environment" project that may have escaped him at an earlier stage of life. "The great thing about wireless sensors is that you don't have to remember to do all that button-pushing," says Chen, who lives just outside of town with his wife, Tianyun, and their three sons. "You can spend your time thinking about something interesting." —David Marc

