

SU People



Kenneth Haag | Team Leader

WHETHER DONNING THE ORANGE-AND-BLUE-STRIPED polo shirt as a member of University 100, SU's elite student ambassador program, the fuzzy round costume of Otto the Orange, or the tassel-draped academic gown of an honors graduate, Kenneth Haag '06 embodies the best of Syracuse University. In May, he graduated summa cum laude from the Martin J. Whitman School of Management with a dual major in supply chain management and marketing and a minor in information management and technology from the School of Information Studies. Haag, a Whitman Scholar, leaves the Hill knowing he threw himself whole-heartedly into every opportunity during his four years at Syracuse. "I have no regrets, only great memories," says Haag, who was accepted into a three-year management training program by his new employer BAE Systems in New Hampshire, an international aerospace and defense company, which will also fund his graduate education. "I don't think my college experience could have worked out better."

The Pennsylvania native says he was able to do everything he wanted in college: compete on intramural club football, basketball, and softball teams; participate in the ski club, and—perhaps his favorite extracurricular activity—become Otto the Orange. He did all this while maintaining a nearly perfect grade point average of 3.9. He credits his success to mastering time management—a skill he expects to use as a supply chain manager. "Globalization has increased the need for supply chain management, because the raw materials might come from China, be packaged in Sri Lanka, warehoused in Northeast America, and shipped out to California," he says.

"As a manager, I need to ensure the process runs efficiently and effectively from beginning to end. That requires forecasting and planning to balance supply and demand."

Haag was part of a six-person team from the Whitman School's Franklin Student Group, an undergraduate organization for students interested in supply chain management, that took third place this spring in a national competition in Denver. Through the club and many of his management class projects, he developed his leadership abilities and management style. "A good leader collaborates with a group, but can also step away and make sure everything is getting done on deadline," he says. "A leader finds a way to motivate team members by finding their unique interests and using their strengths to benefit the project." After completing BAE Systems' management training program, Haag hopes to become a project leader and work his way up the company's management structure. "I enjoy managing people, overseeing tasks, and helping a team reach its goal," he says.

Tied to his interest in team-building, Haag says he will also remain committed to community service—something he grew to love, dressed as Otto, attending charity events and participating on SU's Relay for Life team, which raises funds for the American Cancer Society. One of the factors he considered in accepting the position at BAE Systems was the firm's commitment to giving back to the community. "A company should be about more than the bottom line," he says. "Community service brings together a diverse group of people to rally for the same cause. That is so important and makes a community stronger." —Margaret Costello

Scott Ruff | Cultural Lines

ARCHITECTURE PROFESSOR SCOTT Ruff looks beyond the generic assumptions of a building's fine lines and seeks to recognize cultural influences. "The thing that drives me is the almost complete absence of African American culture in my field," Ruff says. "If you say 'African American and architecture,' I don't know what that is, where that comes from, or where it's going." He's finding those answers in his work and encouraging students in his Identity in Architecture course to do the same with their own heritage. "It's teaching in a cultural mode of thinking, not counter to history, but as a counterpoint," says Ruff, who also teaches undergraduate and graduate design courses.

Ruff's interest in the cultural aesthetics of architecture developed in college, where he discovered his abilities in drawing, math, and science made up only part of the vocation. "I realized architecture, in many ways, is about

ideas and poetry—and that blew my mind," he says. "I was hooked." In 1992, he received a professional bachelor of architecture degree from Cornell University, where he also earned a master's degree in 1995. He then joined Foit-Albert Associates in Buffalo, and taught architecture part time at the University of Buffalo.

In 1997, Ruff accepted a position at Hampton University in Virginia, one of the national Historically Black Colleges and Universities. "I was able to reconcile my intellectual and creative interests, trying to come to terms with African aesthetics," he says. While exploring his ideas, Ruff began teaching students how to look at their own traditions in architecture. A work's craftsmanship, assembly of elements, and colors provide clues as to its cultural origin, he says. "Culture is embedded in the development of architecture."

Also driven to create, he started Ruff

Works Studios in 2003 as an outlet for his architectural designs. A current project involves a New York State Council on the Arts grant to design four monument sites for the Underground Railroad. The challenge is representing an event that is ephemeral in nature, Ruff says. "To leave no trace of a person traveling the Underground Railroad was a good thing," he says. Ruff was also the design consultant for the new home of SU's Community Folk Art Center and Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company.

While not designing or teaching, Ruff, who is married to Dr. Denise Woodall-Ruff, a pediatrician at SUNY Upstate Medical University, is just as happy creating Lego buildings with his 3-year-old son, Sakiel, and practicing tai chi, an activity he sees as similar to architecture. Both disciplines involve spatial sensibilities and attention to minutiae. "They are about every single movement you make," he says. —Kathleen Haley

John Dowling

Mĩcere M. Gĩthae Mũgo | African Lessons

FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF HER CHILDHOOD HOME on Mount Kenya, Micere M. Githae Mugo saw endless possibilities for her life. The Kenyan countryside stretched before her, its natural beauty and rich culture fertilizing her imagination. Circling the hearth, her family elders would share African orature—proverbs, legends, and songs of her country—creating the happiest moments of her childhood and sparking her interest in storytelling. “There was something very attractive about the words, and I imagined how they could be conjured to say new things effectively,” says Mugo, poet, playwright, professor, and department chair of African American studies.

Literary critics praise Mugo’s ability to incorporate African oral traditions into her written dramas, short stories, and poems. “Orature involves the participation and response of the audience,” she says. “A piece is never complete until it is performed. Although a piece reflects the author’s uniqueness, it is given to the audience so they can contribute to it and

transform it.” Much of her work—including such books as *Daughter of My People, Sing!* and *My Mother’s Poem and Other Songs*—embodies her passion as a social activist. “My goal is to see the emergence of a more humane world—a world that is more sensitive to issues of justice and equity,” she says. “I work toward that every day, every hour of my life.”

In childhood, Mugo distinguished herself as a standout student with a gift for writing. Her experiences as the first African child admitted into the “white only” Limuru Girls School just before Kenya’s independence heightened her awareness of the need for racial integration in Kenyan schools and affirmed the value of her African culture. After earning a bachelor’s degree and postgraduate teaching diploma from the University of East Africa, she obtained a master’s degree and Ph.D. in literature from the University of New Brunswick in Canada. She then returned to Kenya to teach at the University of Nairobi, where she was later elected as the first female dean of the Faculty of Arts.

As an educator and writer, Mugo spoke against the regime of then Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi. “A lot of progressive groups challenged his dictatorial tendencies and pushed for a democratic state,” Mugo says. “I couldn’t sit and be silent under the face of oppression.” Continually arrested for expressing her political views, she was once hospitalized following a brutal police interrogation. Soon after that incident in 1982, friends smuggled Mugo and her two daughters out of the country. She came to the United States and taught at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, for two years, and then left for Zimbabwe, where she was granted honorary citizenship.

Her life took another unexpected turn in 1993 during a yearlong sabbatical at Cornell University, when she fell ill and had to stay in Central New York for medical treatment. In fall 1993, she accepted a professorship at Syracuse University. Since then, Mugo has enriched the curriculum and cultural diversity of SU. She is changing Western perception of Africa as a continent of conflict and suffering to one that acknowledges its rich history, social contributions, and wisdom. She became chair of the Africa Initiative when the African American studies department launched it five years ago. The Africa Initiative brings together SU scholars whose research focuses on Africa to share their work and organize lectures and conferences on issues affecting the continent. “There are so many lessons to be learned from Africa,” she says. “We need to focus on these and on establishing the continent as a site of knowledge.”

No longer in exile, Mugo returns to Kenya frequently to visit family and maintain connections with the place so deeply rooted in her life’s work. A 2004-07 Meredith Professor for Teaching Excellence, Mugo is developing a course on interventionist debating, a technique that encourages thoughtful and structured discussion of such provocative issues as freedom of speech and gender and racial equality. “If my knowledge doesn’t lead to the betterment of society, then it really ends up being no good,” she says.

—Margaret Costello



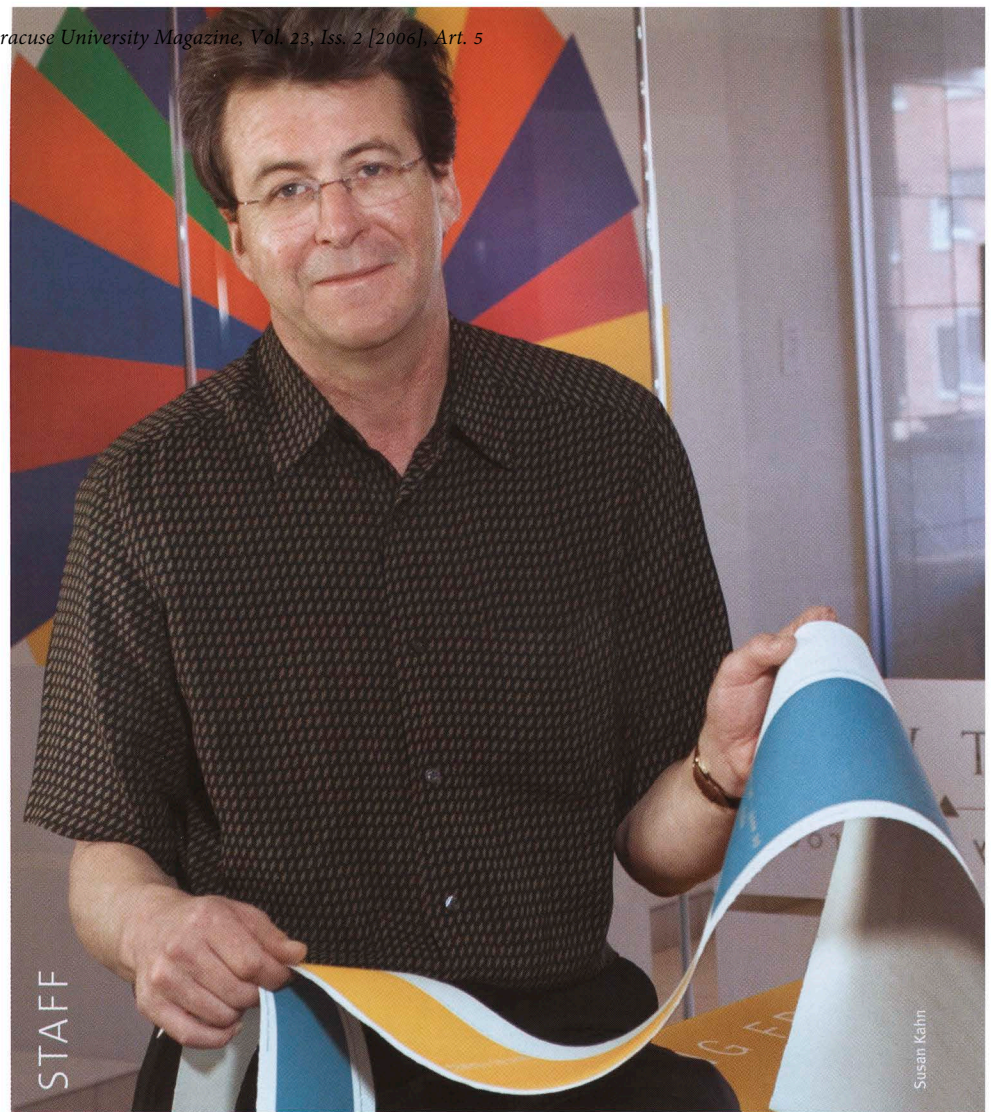
John Dowling

FACULTY

Jeffrey Hoone | Nurturing Art

ARTIST JEFFREY HOONE BELIEVES the poetry of language sometimes gets lost because we are not paying attention. He explores the intersection of visual language and written language in his most recent body of work—*Hook, Line, and Sinker*, a series of 40 strikingly simple black and white photographs of objects with names that describe each item's form, function, or use. "Just about every tool fits that description," says Hoone, longtime director of Light Work/Community Darkrooms and newly appointed executive director of the Coalition of Museum and Art Centers (CMAC), whose mission is to celebrate and explore the visual and electronic arts at the University, in the Central New York community, and beyond. "The name of, say, a clamp, describes what it does. Others are more elusive and poetic, like 'slip' or 'tights.'" Through his work as an arts administrator, as well as in his own creative process, Hoone addresses two challenges common to all artists: how to translate an idea into a visual reality, and how to find the right balance between "something you can do that will support you, and something you can do to support your work," he says.

Hoone began his SU career at Light Work/Community Darkrooms in 1980, working with the organization's founding directors before being appointed director in 1982. Under his leadership, the facility established an international reputation for quality programs and commitment to diversity in support of the photographic arts. "Working with artists—creative people who are engaged in the world of ideas and techniques—is a very rewarding thing to do," Hoone says. "To be in a position to facilitate what they do best—which is to make work—is very satisfying." In 2001, the organization dedicated a state-of-the-art facility in the Robert B. Menschel Media Center on campus, a project for which Hoone led all aspects of initial planning, fund raising, and



construction. "We haven't grown in leaps and bounds, but steadily, and based on the needs of the people who use the facility," he says. "And we have always been very clear about our mission of supporting artists—often those who are emerging or whose work is outside of the mainstream—and bringing their work to the public."

Hoone, whose parents are SU graduates, grew up in Syracuse and studied photography at Ithaca College and the San Francisco Art Institute. A nationally recognized expert in contemporary photography, he has served on peer review panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, among others. He is an accomplished artist who has exhibited his photography internationally and whose work is included in the permanent collections of the International Center of Photography, New York; the Houston Museum of Fine Arts; and the Bibliotheque National, Paris. This past year, Hoone was appointed Professor

of Practice at SU, working in collaboration with the transmedia department in the College of Visual and Performing Arts to enhance cultural experiences for students and the University community. He has been married for 10 years to Syracuse-based artist Carrie Mae Weems.

In his role as executive director of CMAC, Hoone leads the newly created coalition whose members include Light Work/Community Darkrooms, the Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, SU Art Collection, Community Folk Art Center, Special Collections Research Center at E.S. Bird Library, and artist projects at The Warehouse and the Louise and Bernard Palitz Gallery at Lubin House in New York City. "This new coalition is a great opportunity not just for me, but for all the organizations involved in it, and for the community of Syracuse and beyond," Hoone says. "We are looking to elevate the visibility of the arts on campus and locally, nationally, and internationally." —Amy Shires



STAFF

Susan Kahn

Peggy Austin | Full Slate

DESPITE THE EVIDENCE, PEGGY AUSTIN CLAIMS THERE are only 24 hours in her day. As associate director for budget and administration at SU's Center for Policy and Research (CPR), an interdisciplinary institute located at the Maxwell School, Austin is responsible for day-to-day operations, including oversight of the center's \$4.8 million budget. Her duties include ensuring that grant research proposals adhere to funding agency guidelines and deadlines, hiring and supervising non-faculty personnel, and managing publication of the center's steady stream of technical reports, promotional material, and newsletters. An inveterate volunteer, she also serves on numerous University committees.

The end of the work day does not necessarily mean the end of work for Austin. On Thursday evenings, she volunteers at the Skaneateles Ecumenical Food Pantry. Having completed a term as president of the Skaneateles Parent-Teacher Committee last year, she now serves as treasurer. Austin has also taught religion at her church, St. Mary's of the Lake; chaired programming and ticket sales for Skaneateles Figure Skating; and volunteered for Lakeview softball. She is the mother of two teenage daughters, Cassandra '08 and Michelle, and helps her husband, Phil, a glassblower, run Snake Oil Glassworks, the family business. "It's important to make lists," she says.

The Baldwinsville native became a purchasing coordinator for the chemistry department in 1983, transferring to CPR in 1988. She is proud of the center's work in education finance, public finance, child welfare, aging, income security, and other areas of social science research. Austin also finds special satisfaction as a coordinator of SU's blood drives, and is quick to credit Maxwell co-workers Karen Cimilluca and Ann Wicks for the success of the blood drives. Each year, SU holds six drives, supplying the American Red Cross with some 300 pints, enough to help about 1,000 people. "Sometimes it's a struggle and I wish we could do more," she says. "But I will never forget the blood drive on September 12, 2001. Thousands showed up, and people were crying because we couldn't accommodate them." Austin was honored with the American Red Cross Real Heroes Blood Donor Award in 2005. In 2003, she received the Chancellor's Citation for Distinguished Service.

When elections are held, Austin can be found working as an elections inspector. Asked how she managed to add this task to her ponderous to-do list, Austin says, "I'm a Democrat, and because there aren't a lot of us in Skaneateles, the board of elections needed one. It seemed like a good way to pay back the community."

Twenty-four hours in Peggy Austin's day? You do the math.

—David Marc

Ileana Ungureanu | Heart for Healing

ILEANA UNGUREANU TRAVELED ACROSS CONTINENTS TO discover herself in Syracuse. A family medicine physician from Romania who is now in her second year of working toward a master's degree in marriage and family therapy at the College of Human Services and Health Professions, she feels completely at home in the program she describes as "very intense and very intimate." "The emphasis the program puts on the 'self of the therapist' is exactly what I was looking for," she says. "I have learned much about how to work with people and how to address their problems, and I have learned much about myself." A Fulbright Scholar who intends to continue in the program toward a Ph.D., Ungureanu was among the first Romanians to train in family therapy. She explains that fields like social work and psychology were prohibited by the communist regime in her country. "After the anti-communist revolution, we started to have people from Western countries come and train us in the field of psychotherapy," says Ungureanu, who intends to return to Romania to teach. "I would like to find a way to combine the medical and therapy fields."

A member of the Greek Orthodox church, Ungureanu draws on her faith as a source of inspiration and motivation. She says her spiritual beliefs help her understand the human being as a whole person, expanding the biological perspective she learned during her medical training. "For me, the essence of Christianity is love, and I think this is essential for people in the helping professions," she says. "If I can respect and love my patients and clients, then I will be a better therapist and doctor."

As part of her master's degree work, Ungureanu is completing an internship in the child oncology department at University Hospital, counseling children with cancer and their families. "This has always been interesting to me," says Ungureanu, who did similar work in Romania. Her work in the marriage and family therapy program helps her understand more about herself, particularly the ways she has been affected by loss. "I come from a family where, for four generations, we lost small children. Also, my maternal grandparents died of cancer," she says. Such personal experiences helped deepen her sensitivity to other people's pain. "I am very aware of how the situation of having a child that is very ill can interfere with and disturb family life," she says.

Although Ungureanu misses her home and her family, she is flourishing in her new environment, and is grateful for the opportunity to study in the United States. "This has been a very rich experience for me," she says. "In my country, the educational system is much more hierarchical. So I was very surprised by how supported I felt by the faculty here. They helped me with whatever I needed." Ungureanu also values relationships with her fellow students. "I say we have the perfect class," she says. "They are very supportive, too. And I have made good friends."

That level of appreciation is mutual. "Ileana is a gift to our program," says Professor Jonathan Sandberg, chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Therapy. "Her rare blend of intellect and heart, strengthened by her strong sense of things spiritual, make her a great contributor to any setting."

—Amy Shires

