

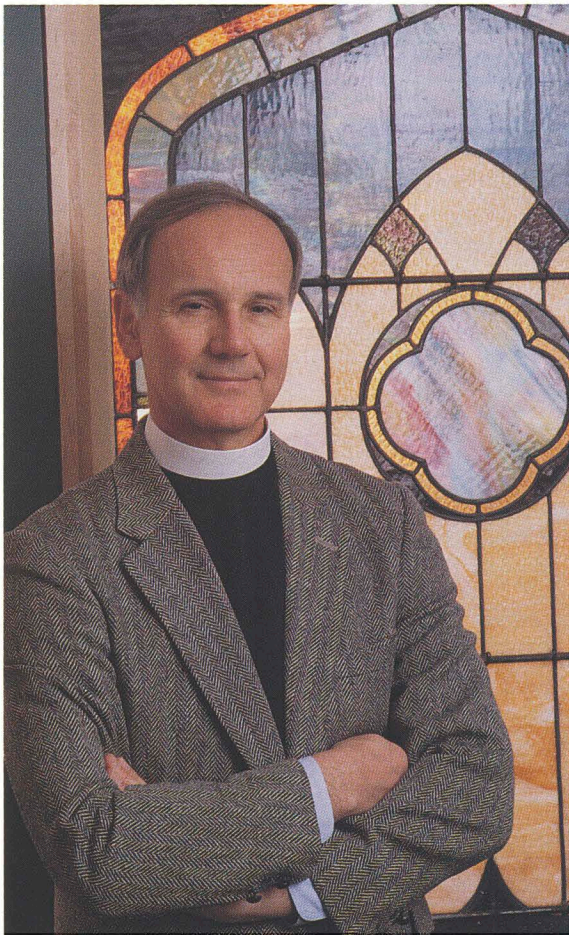


O N O U R S H O R T L I S T

On This Rock

Father Richard Vosko's design expertise enhances houses of worship

LYNN FINLEY PHOTOGRAPHY



Father Richard Vosko G'81, G'84 has devoted the last 17 years of his Roman Catholic priesthood to helping Christians and non-Christians improve the design and function of their houses of worship.

The traditional role of a Roman Catholic priest is to conduct religious services, hear confessions, bestow the sacraments, and otherwise tend to the spiritual needs of parishioners. But Father Richard Vosko of Clifton Park, New York, is unlike most Roman Catholic priests. He has not performed traditional parish work in more than 17 years.

Vosko's vocation instead focuses on the appropriate design and function of "worship environments"—the physical

structures that house religious activities. "The building creates a worship space that reflects the identity of the people who use it," he says. "It should be reminiscent of religious tradition, but also tell today's religious story."

Vosko has worked as a designer and consultant since 1970, offering expert direction to communities building or renovating their places of worship. According to the priest, it is never an easy task. "People get nervous about changing their churches because they are powerful symbols of society. As soon as anyone ponders altering that symbol, people wonder if it also means altering their religion. Congregations have important memories of those spaces—baptisms, marriages, funerals."

Over the years, Vosko has earned a national reputation for excellence in church design. In 1994 he received the Elbert M. Conover Award for his contributions to religious art and architecture, and in 1995 was awarded the National Trust Historic Preservation Honor Award for his work

on St. James Cathedral in Seattle. He received similar awards for his work on the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville, Tennessee; St. Thomas More Church in Braintree, Massachusetts; and Sacred Heart Church in Southbury, Connecticut. He is also space consultant for Synagogue 2000—a national project sponsored by conservative and reform Jews to assess existing synagogue spaces.

Vosko, who earned a master's degree in fine arts from SU in 1981 and doctoral degree in philosophy in 1984, says a key ingredient in church renovation is maintaining the architectural and artistic beauty of the original structure, while making changes to accommodate the current liturgy.

"We can adapt older buildings to current generations," Vosko says. "A beautiful, old building doesn't have to suffer because the rituals of time-honored religions have changed."

—HEATHER A. O'CONNOR

Community Spirit

Bernie Wohl '51

Bernie Wohl knows building a community can't be done alone. It requires a sense of caring and values, teamwork that transcends differences, and a commitment to enrich the lives of others regardless of their circumstances. "I like doing this work," says Wohl '51, executive director of the Goddard Riverside Community Center in New York City. "I want to live in a better world."

That, in fact, has been Wohl's passion for five decades. Throughout that time, his work has brought him face to face with the social issues of the day, from AIDS, homelessness, and mental illness to surviving in the slums. The social worker is also an internationally recognized expert on the settlement movement, forerunner to today's community center, and remains active in his own Manhattan neighborhood.

During his nearly 25 years at Goddard Riverside, located on the Upper West Side where he grew up, Wohl has introduced an array of programs and efforts that show social stigmas can be overcome. "Goddard River-



Bernie Wohl '51 (center) is executive director of the Goddard Riverside Community Center in New York City, which serves people of all ages as a comprehensive, multifunctional social services agency providing education, outreach, and counseling, as well as more than 500 units of housing.

side is about weaving together a community across all differences," he says.

The community center reaches out to people of all ages as a comprehensive, multifunctional social services agency that provides education, outreach, and counseling, as well as more than 500 units of housing. Among the multitude of offerings, there are preschool, after-school, and family programs; an AIDS project, which assists people who are HIV-positive, their families, and friends; the Options program, which encourages participants to pursue a college education; a camp for kids; visual and performing arts instruction; and programs and residences for people who are elderly, homeless, mentally ill, or disabled.

The Senate Hotel serves as a prime example of the center initiating action in the community. The dilapidated building had become a crack joint in the neighborhood, Wohl says. However, Goddard Riverside, working with the city and private investors, gutted and rehabilitated the building, which now houses nearly 140 formerly homeless people and is equipped with social services staff, support initiatives, and programs. "It's not a depository for people," Wohl says. "Programs go on in there and people get help in there. Some of them work now who've never worked before. That's what we did."

Turning people's lives around may be the lasting result, but such achievements demand proper vision and guidance. Enter Wohl, who oversees a 150-member staff that serves upward of 15,000 people a year. The executive director

initiates cooperative ventures with government agencies and other organizations, develops programs, raises funds, plans, budgets, recruits, and examines policy issues. Wohl more succinctly describes his role as "making it happen." To him, that means coupling a can-do attitude with a creative and objective approach, and recognizing the richness of diversity. "We can't just solve problems alone. We have to get together with

others," he says. "Unless we cut across people's differences we're not going to come up with solutions."

Wohl's unflappable enthusiasm for getting involved dates back to work as a camp counselor prior to his first year at Syracuse University. "I never got so excited in my life as I did working with these kids," says Wohl, who maintains a fondness for youth programs. "They were tough, but they were manageable, and it made a lasting impression on me."

At Syracuse, he channeled energy into volunteer work with the Huntington Neighborhood Association, switched his major to psychology, and, after earning a master's degree in social work from the University at Buffalo, launched his professional career. Prior to his current post, Wohl worked as a psychiatric social worker in the Army, served as branch director of a Brooklyn community center for several years, and headed the South Side Settlement in Columbus, Ohio, for 11 years.

Along the way, he also developed expertise in the settlement movement, which dates back to work in the London slums in the late 1800s and established

DRUM ROLL

➤ *Peter Lavinger's life work* began at a rock concert in 1980. It was there that he caught the drumstick of The Good Rats drummer Joe Franco, the first of what would one day become a collection of more than 1,100 sticks from the greatest drummers of rock, blues, and jazz.

Lavinger's collection, valued at more than \$1 million, has been exhibited at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland and the Hard Rock Cafe in New York City. Eventually it may find a home in the Smithsonian. "No one can duplicate what I've done," says Lavinger, a 1988 graduate of The College of Arts and Sciences. "I created a niche and filled it."

After years of sneaking backstage or waiting in the crowd to meet yet another drummer, Lavinger has developed enough of a reputation in the music world that now his drumstick acquisitions arrive as personal gifts of big-name performers. He counts among his friends Ringo Starr and members from bands like Pink Floyd and R.E.M.

But in the end, it is the drumstick collection that Lavinger prizes most. "It will stand as testament to the artists and the music they've created," he says.—*Elaine Cipriano*

its foothold in the United States with a settlement on New York's Lower East Side in 1886. "Masses of immigrants came to this country in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They didn't speak the language, didn't have housing or jobs," says Wohl, noting Goddard Riverside was founded in the 1890s. "These places were beacons for immigrants, helping them come to a new world and adjust to a different country."

Since then the times may have changed, but problems certainly haven't vanished. And Bernie Wohl knows that one way to tackle social dilemmas is to pull people together, instill a sense of community, and involve them in decisions that affect their lives. "If you make dents in people's lives, they find out that things are possible that they didn't think were possible," Wohl says. "You open horizons for people and it makes a big difference in their lives. And that's what we try to do."

—JAY COX

Driving Force

Deborah L. Parker '65, G'67

If you've been involved in a car accident in the past year or so, don't blame Deborah L. Parker.

Until recently the 1965 graduate of The College of Arts and Sciences was director of the Office of Crash Avoidance Standards (OCAS) at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in Washington, D.C. She held that position for about a year before moving to the agency's Policy Planning Office. The NHTSA is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Parker directed OCAS's Crash Avoidance Implementation Program, the purpose of which is to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce health care expenses by reducing the frequency and severity of traffic collisions.

"The agency has two primary thrusts,"

she says. "One is to change behavior, with a big emphasis on 'Don't drink and drive' and 'Use your safety belts.' The other side emphasizes the vehicle. It regulates vehicle manufacturing for safe performance and has a program that rates the relative performance of vehicles in certain kinds of crashes."

The Office of Crash Avoidance regulates braking, lighting, vehicle stability and control, and also vehicle modifications for drivers with disabilities. Parker says vehicle safety equipment can protect occupants in a crash or help a driver avoid a crash. "An airbag is only useful if you're in a crash; if you don't crash you don't need the airbag," she says. "Brakes and lights that work properly are things that keep you out of a crash."

Parker didn't plan on a career in transportation. After earning a master's degree in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in 1967, she was recruited by the federal government's Management Intern Program. "They came courting, and I was recruited by the mass transit, bus, and subway program," she says. "I went there primarily because it was a group of young, bright, innovative people, and because it was a program starting from scratch."

Parker spent 10 years with the mass transit program, trying to help failing bus systems around the country stay in business and supporting development of subway systems in Atlanta and San Francisco. In 1977 she took a job at the NHTSA, heading a small unit that handled general management and troubleshooting for the agency. "It struck my fancy," she says. "I'm not an engineer, but I was always interested in automotive things. I decided it was something I'd like to do."

She later directed a program that addressed the safety of alternative fuel vehicles powered by electricity, compressed natural gas, propane, hydrogen, or alcohol fuels. Under her direction, the program put federal safety standards for vehicle fuel tanks on the books for the first time.

Parker describes her current position, head of the Policy Planning Office, as "leading the planning effort as to what the important priorities are, where we should be putting our resources, where

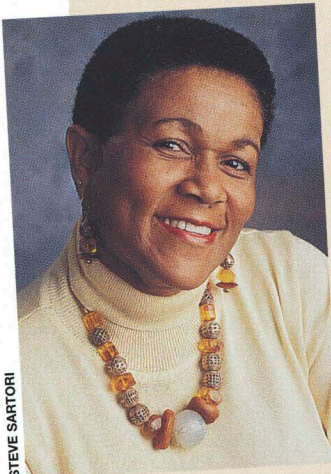
BEAD DAZZLED

➤ *Karen Patton's fascination with ethnic jewelry was first sparked in a bead-stringing class that linked beads to their geographical origins. "In archaeological digs, they would dig up these beads, these pieces of jewelry, and be able to tell something about the culture and the people," she says. "I like to read about those kinds of things. Jewelry really makes a statement about the person wearing it."*

Today, Patton G'80 researches, designs, and creates her own necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and anklets with beads of countless colors, textures, and cultural histories. As an administrator of instructional facilitation for the Syracuse City School District, however, she finds herself hard-pressed to find the time to explore her art. Curriculum writing, textbook selection, and classroom assessment fill her days, so at night Patton relaxes by escaping into ethnic jewelry design. "It's an outlet and a release," she says.

Patton, whose creations have been exhibited at the Everson Museum of Art of Syracuse and Onondaga County, sells her jewelry mainly through word-of-mouth, and may make it a full-time project when she retires. "A colleague of mine buys a lot of my jewelry," Patton says. "Sometimes she'll wear a piece I haven't seen in a while and I'm surprised that it's one of mine. It's nice to see someone wearing something you've created."

—Tara Gelsomino



STEVE SARTORI

we should be putting our attention for the future, where the biggest payoff is in terms of saving lives and reducing injuries, and looking at the long-range future to see where we should be putting our efforts."

Parker's long-range planning includes theorizing the impact of technological advancements, some of which will require drivers with more advanced skills. Within 10 years, for example, she expects new sensor systems and electronics will make possible a "smart" cruise control system that senses distance between vehicles and slows down if they get too close.

At the same time, she says, there will be greater numbers of immigrants from countries with less sophisticated automotive technology.

"If you get something that is fairly sophisticated, and then you get populations that really are not comfortable with more sophisticated technologies, there may be some real problems," she says. "We may need to do some thinking at the federal level about how to address an issue like that." —GARY PALLASSINO

Love Thy Neighborhood

Gerald McFadden '70

After graduating from Syracuse University in 1970 with a degree in sociology, Gerald McFadden returned to his Washington, D.C., home to discover a community he no longer recognized. "Many of my peers either had their lives affected by drugs, were incarcerated, or dead," he says.

McFadden knew immediately that he had to do something to help struggling inner-city communities better themselves. So in 1971 he accepted a post with People Coordinated Services of Los Angeles, where he spent the next 11 years spearheading a substance-abuse program.



One of the perks Deborah Parker enjoys as an employee of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is test driving new cars like this \$300,000 Lamborghini Diablo.

After focusing his energies on drug prevention and education, McFadden became division director for Volunteers of America of Los Angeles in 1982. This position offered a chance to expand his human services work in the areas of housing, education, and correctional programs. Over the next decade McFadden moved up the ranks, eventually assuming the challenging post of vice president of programs and director of marketing.

Since 1992, McFadden has served as head of Volunteers of America's Oregon division, based in Portland. "Now I am in a position of opportunity and influence," he says. "I work with a skilled management team that embraces business concepts and incorporates them into the not-for-profit arena."

McFadden deals with media, local officials, and community leaders to ensure effective positioning of Volunteers of America in the Portland area. "Not-for-profit services work to create and maintain healthy societies," he says. "As a result of our work, people go forward independently and take charge of their lives."

McFadden's contributions are not limited to his work with Volunteers of America. From his seat on the African American Legislative Roundtable, which deals with public policies affecting people of color, to mentoring busi-

ness students interested in human services, McFadden is dedicated to his community and, by example, encourages others to take responsibility for their own.

"Through my work, and my life, I try to show that reinvesting in the community is not an option," he says. "It's an obligation." —NATALIE A. VALENTINE



Since 1992, Gerald McFadden '70 has served as head of Volunteers of America's Oregon division.