

# THE CENTERPIECE

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- Former UIS chancellor and member of the Center's advisory board, **Naomi Lynn** has been named as one of seven people who will receive Illinois' highest honor, the Order of Lincoln, at a ceremony on April 21st at the State Capitol.
- The Downstate Illinois Innocence Project achieved its fourth exoneration on March 6th. Jonathan Moore was released from Menard Prison after spending 12 years in custody for a crime he did not commit. The case, overseen by **John Hanlon**, the Project's legal director, received national attention because of the cooperation of the police and state's attorney in helping gain Moore's release.
- With the help of a new federal grant, the Innocence Project has hired a second attorney, **Erica Nichols Cook**, to handle cases not involving DNA evidence. Cook, a former UIS legal studies student and Project volunteer, earned her law degree at Drake University and until joining the Project, was on the staff of the Cook County Public Defender's office.
- Two of the staff of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln have just published books. Assistant director/associate editor **Stacy Pratt McDermott**'s book, *The Jury in Lincoln's America*, demonstrates how central the law was for people who lived in the United States during Lincoln's time. The influence of music on both blacks and whites, and North and South, during the years surrounding the Civil War is the topic of *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War*, by **Christian M. McWhirter**, an assistant editor of The Papers.
- March 30th will be the end of an era at *WUIS*. Long-time classical music host **Karl Scroggin** will hang up the headphones after nearly three decades at the public radio station. His farewell broadcast will be from 9 am to 1 pm on the 30th. A public reception to honor Karl's contribution to the culture of central Illinois will be from 4 to 7 pm at *WUIS* on March 29th.
- Public administration professor **Beverly Bunch** has an article in the Spring 2012 issue of *Public Budgeting and Finance* on "Preserving the public interest in highway public-private partnerships: A case study of Texas." The paper addresses the challenges of protecting the public interest in public-private partnerships, as when a state leases a public toll road to a private company to operate.

- At the recent annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, UIS assistant professor of political science **Michael Miller**, along with co-author Seth Masket of Denver University, presented a paper that examines legislative polarization in publicly funded state elections.
- UIS associate professor **John Transue**'s paper on stereotype threat and the 2008 US presidential election has been accepted for presentation at the June annual conference of the International Society for Political Psychology.
- Using new data from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis on gross domestic product at the metropolitan level, **Patricia Byrnes**, associate professor of economics at UIS, will be presenting a paper on local economic growth in June at the national Industry Studies Conference.
- With a grant from the Center, **Suzanne Borland**, a UIS assistant professor of legal studies, and professor emerita **Barbara Hayler** are studying the characteristics and opinions of Illinois circuit court and appellate judges. With help from the Survey Research Office, they are updating research conducted thirty years ago by the then Sangamon State University's Center for Legal Studies.
- Associate professor of public health **Sharron LaFollette** has been appointed as the technical advisor on risk assessment for the National Environmental Health Association.
- The Survey Research Office's **Dick Schuldt**, along with faculty members **Beverly Bunch** and **Patricia Byrnes**, is currently conducting the biannual survey of Sangamon County employers about their outlook over the next 12 months. These periodic surveys are a joint project between UIS and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. Results of the current survey will be released at the Center's annual breakfast convocation on March 29th.
- With funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies and the Survey Research Office are just getting underway with a survey of sex offender treatment providers on the practices and methods they use in treating sex offenders. The study builds on sex offender management training conferences that the Institute has convened, in cooperation with the Illinois Sex Offender Management Board.
- Fifty-nine college graduates from Illinois and other states have applied this year for a 2012-2013 Illinois Legislative Staff Internship, a program the Institute administers on behalf of the Illinois General Assembly's Legislative Research Unit. Meanwhile, UIS' Graduate Public Service Internship program has completed reviewing the eligibility of more than 129 college graduates who have applied to date for internships with state and local agencies in the coming year.
- Starting in April, Institute staff **Dave Gruenenfelder** and **Peter Weitzel** will begin collecting data as part of a five-year evaluation of Springfield's MOSAIC project. Headed by the Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois and funded by the Illinois

Children’s Healthcare Foundation, MOSAIC seeks to help children with social and emotional difficulties gain access to better care and support.

- The April edition of *Illinois Issues* finds scores of former state lawmakers who turned to lobbying their former colleagues once they left office. Kurt Erickson, Statehouse bureau chief for Lee Enterprises newspapers, reports that as many as 35 other states, including most of Illinois’ neighbors, have waiting periods before legislators can become lobbyists, but not the Land of Lincoln. April’s magazine also takes a look at the more than 700 special accounts in the state budget and how they are being “swept” during difficult financial times to help pay expenses other than for what they were originally designated.
- *WUIS* was recognized at the recent annual Associated Press awards competition. Public affairs reporting intern **Rachel Otwell** won the award for Best Light Feature with the story “Searching for Proof of Ghosts.” The Halloween story followed local ghost hunters.
- The **Office of Electronic Media** has just received a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council to assist with the production of *Witness to History*, a 55- minute high definition video that chronicles the historical significance of Illinois’ Old State Capitol.
- The Institute has submitted a proposal to the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Division of Traffic Safety to continue a series of annual training events for prosecutors, police, and probation officers who deal with drunk driving. The proposal also asks for funding to prepare DUI guidebooks for prosecutors and law enforcement, produce training videos, and conduct a statewide survey of local variations in DUI management practices.

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