Segan Chase completes residency

Times News Report
editor@eldoradotimes.com

Dr. Segan E. Smith Chase completed her residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in the Department of Internal Medicine, where she received the Caring Physician Award upon completion of her program.

She obtained her medical degree at the University of Kansas School of Medicine and completed her last two years at the Wichita campus, where she served as class president and received the Mahlon Delp Student Award in Internal Medicine upon graduation. She is a cum laude and honors program graduate of Kansas State University with a bachelor of arts degree in biology and a minor in music.

Chase, an internal medicine physician originally from Manhattan, recently joined the staff at Candlewood Medical Group. She is an associate member of the American Society of Internal Medicine-American College of Physicians and has received honors in the Kansas and Nebraska Chapter Scientific Meeting poster competitions.

She is a member of the Kansas Medical Society, the American Medi al Association and the Nebraska Medical Association and served on the board of directors for the University Medical Associates Turner Park Clinic during her residency.
He has missed only two roll call votes.

Costlier room and board
coming to campuses

Here's a heads-up on the increases proposed
for room and board at state universities, as dis-
cussed this month before a possible vote next
month by the Kansas Board of Regents:

The average student at Wichita State
University would see room and board rise
about $280, or 5 percent, to $5,860 a year.

At the University of Kansas, room and board
would increase about $330, or 5.4 percent, to
$6,474 a year. At Kansas State, a student could
see room and board increase by $364, or 6 per-
cent, to $6,448. At Fort Hays, Emporia and
Pittsburg, average housing-and-food rates
could go up by 4, 4.9 and 6 percent, respec-
tively, or $241, $276 and $306 more a year.

University officials justifiably point to how
reasonable their schools' fees and tuition are
compared with other Midwestern peer institu-
tions, where room and board average $6,800 a
year. But those who run higher education in
the state need to be as sensitive to price as
their would-be students are.
Bar has too much power in picking state’s justices

By Stephen J. Ware

Kansas is the only state that gives its bar association — the state’s lawyers — majority control over the selection of state Supreme Court justices. As a result, lawyers may have more control over the judiciary in Kansas than in any other state.

Not only do Kansas lawyers have an extreme amount of power over judicial selection, they exercise this power in secret.

I recently published a paper that researched how all 50 states select their Supreme Court justices. Based on this research, I recommend that Kansas move toward the mainstream of states by reducing the power of its bar and increasing the openness and accountability of the process for selecting Kansas Supreme Court justices.

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission is now at the center of this process. When there is a vacancy on the Kansas Supreme Court, the commission assesses applicants and submits its three favorites to the governor. The governor must pick one of the three nominees, and that person is thereby appointed a justice on the state Supreme Court, without any further checks on the power of the commission. Therefore, the commission is the gatekeeper to the state Supreme Court.

The bar has majority control over this gatekeeper. The commission consists of nine members, five selected by the bar and four selected by the governor. None of the other 49 states gives its bar majority control over its Supreme Court Nominating Commission.

Kansas has 2.7 million people and only 7,666 lawyers. Yet those few lawyers have more power in selecting our highest court than all other Kansans combined. The bar’s majority on the commission can prevent the appointment of an outstanding individual to the Supreme Court, even if that individual is the unanimous choice of the governor, the Legislature and every nonlawyer in Kansas.

Further reducing accountability, the commission’s votes are secret. The public can learn the pool of applicants and the three chosen by the commission, but cannot discover which commissioners voted for or against which applicants.

Defenders of this largely secret system claim it selects justices based on merit rather than politics. But 9 of the past 11 people appointed to the Kansas Supreme Court belonged to the same political party as the governor who appointed them. That is a highly partisan outcome from a system advertised as “nonpartisan.”

In short, the system gives one small segment of our state (the bar) tremendous power and allows it to exercise that power in secret. Those who hope to join the Kansas Supreme Court — often lower-court judges — know they must curry favor with the bar because that interest group holds the key to advancement. We should not be surprised if this system, controlled by a narrow few, begins to resemble a “good ol’ boys” club in which members of the club pick those like themselves, rather than being open to diversity and fresh ideas.

Reform of this system should increase its openness and reduce the bar’s power. Options for reform can be found in my paper surveying the 50 states’ methods for selecting Supreme Court justices, which can be found on the Web site www.fed-soc.org/kansaspaper.

Stephen J. Ware is a professor of law at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.
WICHITA NATIVE'S DOCUMENTARY TO AIR ON SHOWTIME

Film tells inside story of Phelps' church

BY BOB CURTRIGHT
Eagle correspondent

A new documentary that offers a portrait of Fred Phelps and his followers at Westboro Baptist Church — best known for protesting the funerals of fallen American soldiers — is far from flattering, the filmmaker admits.

But the most vocal members of the Phelps family nonetheless said they liked "Fall From Grace," said its creator, University of Kansas and Wichita Southeast High graduate K. Ryan Jones.

The documentary will premiere at 9 p.m. Tuesday on digital cable channel Showtime, and will be rerun several times.

Jones said he showed the completed film to a group of Phelps followers and that they had positive reactions to it — particularly Shirley Phelps-Roper, daughter and frequent public spokeswoman for the group.

"To them, I was just a tool in helping them get their message out," Jones said.

Please see PHELPS, Page 6A

Fred Phelps and members of his Westboro Baptist Church regularly picket funerals of fallen soldiers. A Wichita native's documentary about Phelps will air on Showtime this week.

Jaime Oppenheimer/File photo
in a telephone interview from his home in New York City.

“They said they weren’t treated fairly before because they didn’t have time to express themselves. Shirley even told me that she didn’t care if it was all negative as long as one of their signs was in the film,” Jones said.

Phelps-Roper, contacted by The Eagle on Friday, said that about 25 people, including church and family members, screened the film about a year ago.

It accurately portrays Westboro Baptist Church and the Phelps family members who live in Topeka, she said.

“It is one more mechanism that the Lord our God has given us to preach to the whole world,” she said. “I love it.”

Jones’ film began as a KU film class project.

“I hadn’t intended to make a documentary. My passion is narrative films,” Jones said. “But growing up in Kansas, I was very well aware of Fred Phelps. I wanted to see what he was like first-hand, and Topeka was only 30 minutes away (from KU).”

After satisfying the assignment, he went back to Topeka to shoot some more footage, added about 15 minutes and re-edited it before shopping it around to distributors.

Showtime snapped it up.

“It has really opened doors for me,” said Jones, who moved to New York this past week to be close to film opportunities. “I’m done with classes for now. I want to jump right into it. I’m hoping to do a narrative film next.”

Jones spent 10 months filming Phelps and his followers. It took him two years to complete the 70-minute piece.

The film comes right on the heels of a first-ever verdict against the Westboro Baptist Church, in which a jury awarded $11 million for violation of privacy and intentional emotional distress to a Baltimore family. The father sued after the church picketed the funeral of his son, who died in Iraq.

An unrepentant Phelps, whose church claims to have led an estimated 22,000 pickets during the past 15 years, vows to appeal on First Amendment free speech issues.

Jones’ film is an in-depth look at Phelps, his family and his followers. It offers equal time to his many detractors: Topeka officials like Mayor Bill Bunten and former Police Chief Ed Klumpp, who say in the film that they are weary of the constant political drama in their backyard; Kansas attorney Pedro Irigonegaray, who in the film objects to Phelps’ interpretation of the First Amendment; and pastors including Wichita’s Jeff Gannon, who takes issue with the image Phelps is giving to Christianity.

One unprecedented moment comes as filmmaker Jones gets access to the youngest of the Phelps grandchildren and asks them about the “God Hates Fags” picket signs they are carrying.

“The children clearly don’t understand the full meaning and import of the words. “It’s very sad,” Jones said of the scene. “They are very committed because they want to please their parents even though they don’t quite understand. Some of the teenage granddaughters who are closer to my age seemed to just be going through the motions. It feels a little forced from them.”

Jones said he had easy access to everyone in the Phelps family except Fred Phelps himself, who has not yet seen the documentary, according to Phelps-Roper.

“It took a couple of weeks of nagging to get him on camera,” Jones said. “He’s not gun-shy, but he is getting older, and he’s not as active as he was. I think
they were trying to save his energy for other things, but they finally agreed. It was one of the last interviews I did.”

**Contributing:** Lori O'Toole Buselt of The Eagle
Community college classes in Lawrence

Johnson County Community College soon will offer limited classes in Lawrence, with blessings from the University of Kansas.

The community college is expanding its College Close to Home program to the Lawrence Virtual School starting this spring. The focus is on technical/vocational education and work force training that does not duplicate what KU offers, according to Bill Osborn, dean of community outreach and media resources.

Offerings will include several mathematics courses, introduction to writing, job-search skills, career life planning, industrial safety, workplace skills, and certified nurse aide and certified medication aide laboratories.

The Lawrence outreach was initiated by the Douglas County Career and Technical Education Consortium.

| The Star |
Regents cut fund request for fiscal ’08

The Kansas board reduces a supplemental proposal designed to meet future work-force needs.

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
The Kansas City Star

The Kansas Board of Regents this week sharply pared a supplemental funding request to the state Legislature aimed at meeting the state’s future work-force needs.

The regents, meeting in Topeka, reduced a $253 million request from the state’s universities, community colleges and technical schools to $201 million for the fiscal year beginning July 2008.

The additional funds would pay for programs and expanded facilities to help meet the need for workers in a variety of fields, including construction, engineering, teaching, pharmacy, health care and the biosciences.

Two weeks ago, leaders of the state’s two- and four-year schools presented proposals outlining how each would spend its share of an additional $127 million if the Board of Regents decided to request that amount over the next five years.

The regents slashed that amount to slightly more than $33 million.

“The $127 million was only a planning target for the state’s institutions,” said Diane Duffy, the regents’ vice president of finance and administration. “It really was only something to have the presidents respond to. I don’t know that we ever would have submitted a $127 million request.”

Kansas Board of Regents Chairwoman Christine Downey-Schmidt said regents voted to approve funding proposals based on several criteria, including the quality of the proposal and the number of workers the proposal would generate.

“Those that were approved will be part of our legislative investment package, and we will strongly advocate for them in the upcoming session,” Downey-Schmidt said.

She said regents made their decisions on funding proposals after talking with business and civic leaders to assess the state’s needs.

“We have heard on the campuses, in the communities and from businesses about the need for high-quality professionals,” she said.

“... The Kansas Workforce Study, presented to the board in October, echoed what we were hearing. Many of the proposals that were approved will address those specific shortages.”

The priority list includes only a small fraction of the program proposals submitted by the universities earlier this month.

University of Kansas: KU originally requested about $38 million over five years. Regents cut that to $10.5 million over five years. Only $6.5 million will be requested for fiscal year 2009.

Most of that — $5 million — will go to expand the KU School of Pharmacy. Another $1 million will be spent to address work-force shortages in the health-care, business, engineering and technology fields. The rest will go toward an undergraduate teaching certificate program to put more math and science teachers in Kansas classrooms.

“It would be great to get all the areas we want to invest in funded by the state, but we know that is not realistic,” said Lynn Bretz, KU spokeswoman.

“But that doesn’t mean we will give up.”

Kansas State University: KSU proposed spending about $26 million over five years. Regents cut that to $4.1 million over five years.

Only $2.06 million is being requested in fiscal 2009, to boost key research areas such as veterinary medicine, food safety, water sustainability and agriculture.

“We essentially got (funding for) our No. 1 program,” said Sue Peterson, director of government relations at K-State.

Peterson said the state funding would help K-State hire about 45 midcareer faculty members to further research in specific areas.

Wichita State University: WSU’s $13 million request was reduced to $8 million over five years. The first year, regents will ask for $1.95 million to address work-force needs in math, science, health care and teaching.

Emporia State University: Regents endorsed ESU’s request for $1.3 million in fiscal year 2009 to increase the supply of math and science teachers.

Fort Hays State University: Regents endorsed the school's
request for $1.14 million over five years.
For fiscal year 2009, $330,000 is being requested to create a science master's degree program.
- Pittsburg State University: Regents endorsed the school's request for $1.4 million in fiscal 2009 to open a school of construction.
- Technical schools: Regents will ask legislators for $1 million for new equipment, more space and expanded course offerings in rural areas.
- Community colleges: Regents will ask legislators for $5.6 million for career advancement training programs, equipment, more space and faculty, and to expand distance learning capabilities.

Including the supplemental request, the regents are seeking $150 million in state higher education funding for fiscal 2009. That figure includes operating expenses and maintenance for campuses as well as the budget for the Board of Regents' office.

To reach Mará Rose Williams, call 816-234-4419 or send e-mail to mdwilliams@kcstar.com.
Supreme Court selection process faulted

"The selection process is so insular. It's a very small world that looks to me like a good old boys club."

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS LAW PROFESSOR STEPHEN WARE, ON THE STATE'S SYSTEM OF CHOOSING ITS SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Professor says lawyers have too much power in how the state of Kansas selects top justices.

BY DAVID KLEPPER
The Star's Topeka correspondent

TOPEKA | A University of Kansas law professor is taking aim at the way Kansas selects its Supreme Court justices.

Professor Stephen Ware looked at the ways all 50 states choose their top judges and, in a paper released Thursday, concluded that in Kansas, lawyers have too much influence.

In Kansas, a nominating commission made up of attorneys and laypeople selects nominees for empty Supreme Court seats and recommends three candidates to the governor. The governor then makes the final decision. Sitting justices must regularly have a retention election.

The system, copied after a similar one used in Missouri, was designed to ensure ability trumps politics in the selection of new justices.

But Ware said the nominating commission system gives too much power to attorneys, who vote to appoint five of the nine members. And he noted that the judges tapped to serve on the court often belong to the political party of the governor who selects them — in nine of the last 11 Supreme Court appointments, the sitting governors selected a justice from their own party.

"The selection process is so insular," Ware said. "It's a very small world that looks to me like a good old boys club. That's the problem: a closed, insular, self-protected system."

Ware released his paper alongside a poll published by the Federalist Society, a conservative-libertarian legal think tank, that suggests many Kansans have concerns about how judges are selected.

Supreme Court justices and leaders of the Kansas Bar Association support the current system, saying it places qualifications and ability over politics.

Kansas legislators have debated judicial selection in recent years after controversial Supreme Court rulings on school finance and the death penalty. Some have argued for Senate confirmation hearings to give lawmakers the power to reject nominees. Others favor direct elections of judges. So far, all proposed changes have fallen flat.

Judges are elected at the district level in about half of Kansas' counties, including Wyandotte and Sedgwick counties. Johnson County voters will face a ballot question next year asking whether the county should elect its judges or keep the current nominating commission system.

Tom Wright, president-elect of the state bar, served on the nominating commission for eight years and noted that states use a variety of systems to select justices. In some states, they are elected by voters; in at least one case, a state legislature picks the judges. In others, the judge is tapped by the governor but must be approved by the legislature.

He said the Kansas system does a good job of selecting candidates based on their qualifications and ability. He said elections and other types of selection systems could make the decision more political.

"I don't hear many complaints (about the current system)," he said.

To reach David Klepper, call 785-354-1388 or send e-mail to dklepper@kcstar.com.
LAWRENCE | KU lands teacher grant

The University of Kansas has received a $2.4 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative to double the number of math and science teachers in the state. Through a training and certification program called UKanTeach, KU hopes eventually to graduate about 50 potential math and science teachers a year.

UKanTeach offers undergraduate students studying math or science training so they can graduate with teaching certificates in addition to their degrees in math or science.

| Marla Rose Williams, mdwilliams@kcstar.com
Acts chosen for KU’s Rock Chalk Revue variety show

Rock Chalk Revue, the variety show produced by University of Kansas students to benefit Douglas County United Way, has selected five skits for its 59th show scheduled March 6-8 at the Lied Center.

The Rock Chalk Revue advisory board announced the winners Nov. 19 at a ceremony at Liberty Hall in Lawrence. Winning groups and their skit titles are:

— “Snowed Inn,” Alpha Gamma Delta sorority and Pi Kappa Phi fraternity
— “Tune Town,” Chi Omega sorority and Beta Theta Pi fraternity
— “Singin’ in the City,” Pi Beta Phi sorority and Delta Upsilon fraternity
— “Flight of the Starquest,” Delta Delta Delta sorority and Theta Chi fraternity
— “A Write to Love,” Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Phi Kappa Psi fraternity

The revue is nationally recognized as one of the largest student-run philanthropies in the United States. Earlier this fall, Douglas County United Way officials recognized Rock Chalk Revue as a 2007 Campaign Star and a Pacesetter for its nearly 10 percent increase over 2006 in contributed funds and volunteer hours. Revue representatives formally presented a $33,000 check to United Way representatives Sept. 22 during the KU-Florida International University football game at Memorial Stadium.

KU students write and produce the annual satirical musical revue as well as fill leadership and fundraising roles and select a theme. The Rock Chalk Revue advisory board chose “Better Left Unsaid” as the 2008 show’s theme. Groups interested in performing in Rock Chalk Revue create scripts to interpret that theme, then submit synopsis notebooks and perform a five-to-seven-minute preview to a panel of judges. Judges selected five shows from 11 entries by fraternity and sorority organizations. More information about Rock Chalk Revue is online at groups.ku.edu/~rcr/

The Rock Chalk Revue advisory board is comprised of 21 students and three advisers. Ann Eversole, assistant vice provost for Student Success, is staff adviser. Ruth Stoner, Student Success budget and personnel administrator, is business adviser. Rueben Perez, director of the Student Involvement and Leadership Center, is community service adviser.

Student advisory board members included Lindsay Abbott of Silver Lake, senior in psychology and Spanish, daughter of Scott and Patty Abbott, community service co-coordinator.
Part-time parent becomes full-time father for kids in need

By JAN BILES

RILEY — In the late 1980s, University of Kansas student Stuart Griffiths volunteered to coach a youth wrestling team. One of the wrestlers changed his life forever.

The boy originally came to practice with a team member. When Griffiths asked if he also wanted to join the team, the youngster answered that he would have to ask the staff at the group home where he lived.

“I had no clue what a group home was,” Griffiths said. “I started picking him up (for practice) and taking him home, and I began to understand what a group home was and that there were a variety of reasons the kids couldn’t live at home.”

Before long, Griffiths was working at the residential home and serving as a part-time parent for the young wrestler.

“I thought I could do more for kids if I was to move home and become a foster parent,” he said.

So, in 1991, Griffiths did just that. He initially opened his home to a boy from a state youth center. Then he got a call from the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services’s office in Salina saying two brothers needed a home.

Since then, Griffiths has been a foster parent to 32 adolescent and teenage boys.

“I wasn’t married and I didn’t have my own kids, and I thought these kids deserved a chance,” he said. “Without a place to launch from, they can’t launch.”

But Griffiths didn’t stop there. He also has adopted four boys — Joseph, Joshua, Trevor and Jewel — and is in the process of adopting a fifth, Rayshaw.

“Some kids are waiting six to eight years for a chance at adoption,” he said.

The decision to adopt a child was different for Griffiths than fostering a child, because of its permanency.

“I didn’t want anything to go wrong,” he said.

Joseph, 19, was adopted at age 10. He now takes classes at Cloud County Community College in Junction City.

Joshua, 16, who came to Griffiths’ home as a 9-year-old foster child and was adopted at age 13, is a sophomore at Riley County High School. Trevor, 16, was adopted at age 11 and is a junior at Riley County, while Jewel, a 14-year-old freshman at Riley County, was adopted at age 13. Rayshaw, 15, is a freshman at Riley County.

In early October, Griffiths was honored by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute as a 2007 Angel in Adoption during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

In a news release announcing the award, Rep. Nancy Boyda, D-Kan., said, “For over a decade now, Stuart has been opening his home and his heart to children in need. His efforts are moving and truly inspiring. Of course, no award can repay the efforts of caring men and women like Stuart, but I hope the recognition helps to express our nation’s gratitude for their efforts.”

Griffiths, who moved his family to Riley a couple of years ago, was nominated for the award by Sunflower CASA in Manhattan, where he serves as a speaker during adoptive and foster parenting training.

CASA trains community volunteers to serve as court-appointed special advocates for abused and neglected children in court.

“He’s an incredible person,” said Sunflower CASA executive director Jayme Morris-Hardeman, who has known Griffiths for about 10 years. “He takes on kids that are very difficult and not easy to parent. He doesn’t turn away from that.”

Griffiths, who works in the customer service division of SRS in Manhattan, said he doesn’t think he will adopt another child.

“I think five is enough,” he said.

But what about opening his home to more foster children? He tries to hide a smile.

“I might consider more foster kids in the future,” he said.

—AP