

## FACES IN EDUCATION

**Name:** Tom Owens  
**Current Teaching Field:** Secondary Placement Coordinator and adjunct professor for School of Education



Tom Owens

**What Experience Has Taught Me:** Don't carry excess baggage. Learn from the past, but let it stay in the past. Always focus on new and exciting goals.

**Favorite Saying:** "I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend, to the death, your right to say it." — Voltaire

**Hobbies:** Gardening, cooking, travel, reading, movies, exercise



**Name:** Rick Geisel  
**Current Teaching Field at GVSU:** Educational Leadership

**Best Lesson Ever Learned:** Life isn't about my wants. It's about what God wants to accomplish in me and through me.

**What Experience Has Taught Me:** Listen more, speak less.

**Favorite Saying:** "Minds are like parachutes; they only function when open."

**Special Interests:** In addition to teaching full time, I am a licensed attorney. I enjoy practicing in the area of Estate Planning on a part-time basis. I also enjoy the advantage that being a practicing attorney gives me as I teach school law courses for the university.

**Family:** Married to Diane with two children: Gideon and Grace.

**Name:** Erin Stark  
**Current Position at GVSU:** Office Coordinator for the Dean



Erin Stark

**Special Interests:** Biology, I recently received my B.S. in General Biology with an emphasis on Cell Molecular and Genetics.

**What Experience Has Taught Me:** Patience. The grass on the other side of the fence is not always greener.

**Words To Live By:** Dare to Dream

**Hobbies:** Outdoor activities such as biking, hiking, and rock climbing.

## NEW FACULTY BOLSTER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The School of Education's Graduate Teacher Certification program continued to grow during the 2002-2003 academic year.

Joining the program as visiting or affiliated instructors were Rosemary Cleveland, Sally Hipp and Dennis Schultz.

The School of Education also benefitted with the addition of Jay Cooper, Judy Donovan, Roger Finlan, Rick Geisel, Dori Helder, Phil Helzer, Priscilla Hill Gregels and Bill O'Neill.

## Konecki Receives Niemeyer Award

Loretta Konecki's 40th year as an educator was culminated with a memorable milestone when she was named Grand Valley State University's second recipient of the Glenn A. Niemeyer Outstanding Faculty Award for Service.

Konecki has served the School of Education in a variety of ways since her arrival in 1986.

"Loretta Konecki exemplifies the quintessential educator who makes a difference in the lives of others and the profession of which she is part," School of Education Interim Dean Dr. Anne Mulder noted in her endorsement.

Konecki was instrumental in helping the School of Education achieve its initial National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and has served in many roles at the university since that time, including developing Study Abroad programs for graduate students, making numerous presentations at conferences and seminars, writing grants, working with teachers and education leaders across the campus and community and serving on various committees.

"It brings together the ways you can contribute to a university through leadership positions, getting grants, serving schools and serving on committees," Konecki said. "It's about making a difference in what you believe in."

The Glenn A. Niemeyer Outstanding Faculty Award was established during the 2000-2001 academic year to honor faculty and students who strive for excellence in all aspects of a well-rounded academic experience. Named in



Loretta Konecki serves the School of Education in a variety of roles.

honor of Glenn A. Niemeyer, who served as a professor and Grand Valley's first provost during his 38 years of dedicated service, the awards are among the most prestigious academic honor presented by the university.

"It is a real honor to be selected across the university for an award like that," Konecki said. "To me, it embodies the whole life of what you do as a professor. I'm proud to receive an award in his name and in his honor."

## Professors Return From South Africa

Two School of Education professors recently made separate trips to South Africa in an effort to gather information and strengthen ties between GVSU and schools and universities there.

David Bair, Ph.D., visited the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, while professor Steven Worst recently returned from Guguletu, a township outside of Capetown.

Bair, who is unit chairperson for Foundations & Technology in the School of Education, was one of five representatives from the United States visiting the University of Cape Coast (UCC) in Ghana, West Africa.

Working through a United States State Department grant to establish partnerships with the UCC, Bair visited UCC from Feb. 27 to March 3, 2003.

The faculty at UCC hope to become the preeminent teacher education institution in Western Africa, according to Bair. Plans are in the works — with the help of GVSU faculty — to develop a regional education conference in Ghana for the spring of 2004.

"One of the goals of the Ghana grant is to establish working, collaborative relationships between our two schools," Bair said.

Worst's fact-finding trip explored educational reforms that were implemented after the 1994 elections. He met with local officials and a member of Parliament overseeing those reforms.



Tom Woodruff gives an overhead presentation.

## Illustrator Visits Jefferson School

Children's literature illustrator Tom Woodruff paid a visit to Jefferson Elementary School in Grand Rapids this spring as part of the School of Education's Celebrate Literacy program.

The Woodruff visit was awarded to the children at Jefferson after the staff attended last fall's Celebrate Literacy Conference for a professional development day.

More than 300 in-service and pre-service teachers attended the two-day event.

The 2003 Celebrate Literacy Conference is scheduled for Oct. 24-25. Information may be obtained on the Celebrate Literacy website ([www4.gvsu.edu/soe/clc/index/htm](http://www4.gvsu.edu/soe/clc/index/htm)).