

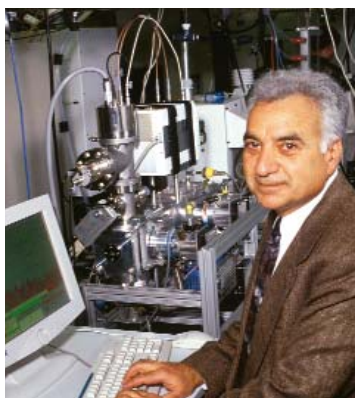
# From the Podium and Beyond

By Carol Olechowski  
Photography: Mark Schmidt

## Block, Demerjian Are UAlbany's First Endowed Faculty



Eric Block:  
Carla Rizzo Delray Distinguished  
Professor of Chemistry



Kenneth Demerjian:  
Ray Falconer Chair in Atmospheric Sciences

One researches plants of the *Allium* family, which include garlic, onions and scallions, as well as areas of nanotechnology and drug research involving sulfur- and selenium-containing compounds. The other is well known for having developed some of the first photochemical mechanisms used in air quality modeling programs. Together, they have amassed nearly half a century of research experience at UAlbany. And last spring, Eric Block and Kenneth Demerjian were named the University's first endowed chairs.

As a boy in Forest Hills, N.Y., Block enjoyed conducting experiments that involved "pyrotechnics and things that went 'bump' in the night." Today, the first-ever Carla Rizzo Delray Distinguished Professor of Chemistry is exploring "some very exciting initiatives in cancer prevention and treatment involving organo-sulfur and-selenium chemistry," and investigating the development of environmentally friendly biocides and pesticides that can be used to "treat crops, or even animals, such as poultry, being raised in situations where they are prone to certain diseases. I'd like to see if we can come up with ways to treat them that don't pollute the environment with toxic substances," says Block, who joined the UAlbany faculty in 1981. The recipient of more than \$5 million in research grants, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two American Chemical Society awards and an international chemistry award, he is a visiting fellow at Wolfson College of Cambridge University in England this fall.

Demerjian, the University's first Ray Falconer Chair in Atmospheric Sciences, has been a UAlbany faculty member since 1986. The Atmospheric Sciences Research Center director and professor of earth and atmospheric science notes: "I never had myself in mind for the chair. I had envisioned the endowment being used to attract an outstanding research scientist who might become the next center director"— an opportunity that still exists as reinvested funds from the endowment expand UAlbany's atmospheric sciences research.

Currently, Demerjian is leading a six-year, \$7 million study funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The study is one of several sites nationwide providing data on chemical and physical composition particulate matter and its associated precursors — information critical to improved understanding of particulate components and their health effects and exposures.

The Falconer Chair memorializes Ray Falconer, who passed away in 2001 at age 88. Falconer, the ASRC's first employee, planned and operated its Whiteface Mountain Field Station and instituted the summer lecture series on natural history. Gertrude Thompson, who regularly attended the lectures, left the University \$1.5 million to establish the endowed chair.

The Delray Distinguished Professorship is named for Carla Delray, B.A.'42, a General Electric retiree whose estate provided \$1.3 million to fund the endowment.

## CSNE, Africana Studies Among Top 10 in the Nation

The College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering is first in the United States for education, facilities and industry outreach, according to a survey in *Small Times* magazine. The publication's May-June issue highlighted the college's ambition to lead in micro- and nanotechnology education, research and development, and its programmatic emphasis on "cross-disciplinary education and research: nanoscience, nanoengineering, nanobioscience and nanoeconomics."

UAlbany's Africana Studies programs also rank among the top 10 in the nation, according to *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* magazine. The M.A. program retained its No. 2 ranking for a second consecutive year, just behind Columbia University, while the B.A. program advanced from 10th to sixth place this year. Other undergraduate-level Africana Studies programs rated included those at Ohio State, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Brown University.

## Tillman is Guggenheim Fellow

Professor of English Lynne Tillman has been awarded a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for her fiction writing. Tillman, who is also writer-in-residence at the University, is the author of five novels, including the forthcoming *American Genius, a Comedy*. She was one of 187 artists, scholars and scientists, out of a field of nearly 3,000 applicants from the U.S. and Canada, recognized as 2006 Guggenheim Fellows.



Lynne Tillman

## Straussman Named Rockefeller College Dean



Jeffrey D. Straussman

Jeffrey D. Straussman is the new dean of UAlbany's Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. He formerly served as chair of public administration at Syracuse University and as associate dean of the university's Maxwell School.

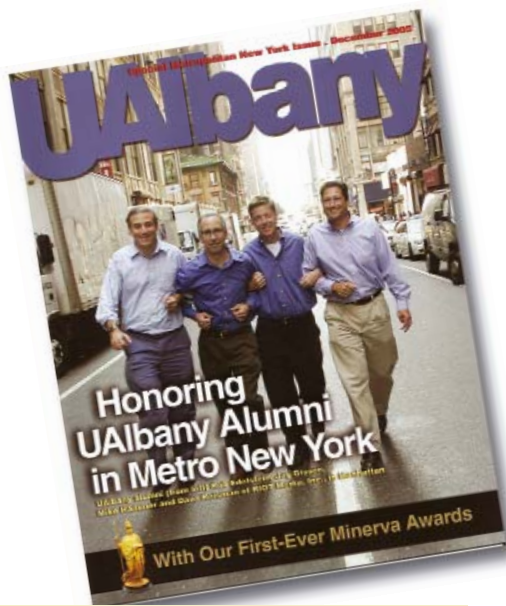
## Frank and Saunders Elected to National Academy of Sciences



Joachim Frank

Professor of Biomedical Sciences Joachim Frank and Professor Emeritus John W. Saunders Jr., who taught in the Department of Biological Sciences

from 1967 to 1985, have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences. They were among 72 new members and 18 foreign associates honored last April 25 by the NAS for their achievements in original research. Frank, a School of Public Health faculty member since the school's inception in 1986, is an investigator for Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the New York State Department of Health's Wadsworth Center. He was also elected to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences last April. Saunders is an expert on developmental biology.



## UAlbany Magazine Is Best in SUNY

UAlbany magazine has won a “Best in Category” award from SUNYCUAD, the Council for University Advancement, which represents more than 700 professionals in institutional advancement across the 64-campus State University of New York system.

The award recognized the special Metropolitan New York issue of UAlbany magazine published in October 2005, with the judges praising its fast pace and focus on New York City alumni. It was announced in June at SUNYCUAD’s annual educational conference in Kerhonkson, N.Y.

## Fulbright Honors Accorded To Svare, Valverde

With support from a Fulbright Scholar Grant, Professor of Psychology **Bruce Svare** is spending the 2006–07 academic year teaching behavioral neuroscience to doctoral students at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Svare, who joined the UAlbany faculty in 1978, is also helping to develop curriculum for the Thai higher education system.

**Gilbert Valverde** of the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies has been named a Fulbright Senior Scholar. Hosted by Catholic University of Uruguay, Valverde is sharing his work and supporting the university in developing research agendas and degree programs in educational policy and evaluation.

## Fredriksen is Goldwater Scholar



Laura Fredriksen

**Laura Fredriksen**, a sophomore chemistry major from Long Island, has been awarded a Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for 2006–07. The prestigious award, which encourages outstanding students to pursue careers in mathematics, science and engineering, provides \$7,500 annually for undergraduate study. Fredriksen plans a career in biochemistry.

## Medallion of the University Presented to Gilligan

Acclaimed scholar, author and psychologist **Carol Gilligan** received the Medallion of the University, UAlbany’s highest honor, in May. Gilligan, a member of the Harvard University faculty for more than three decades and a visiting professor at the University of Cambridge, is the author of such groundbreaking works as *In A Different Voice*. The event, held at The Riverview in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., commemorated the beginning of the Jewish Education Initiative, a collaboration between the University’s School of Education and the Center for Jewish Studies.



Carol Gilligan

# Honors

## Shekhtman, Research Team Awarded \$800,000 for Study of Type II Diabetes Proteins

A team of researchers led by UAlbany's Alex Shekhtman has developed a novel technique to observe protein interactions in living cells using NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) spectroscopy. In a paper published in a recent issue of *Nature Methods*, the team describes an innovative general approach to study how biological molecules interact with each other inside the cells. Information about protein-protein interactions is vital to understanding the organisms in health and disease, such as diabetes.

"Interactions between protein molecules determine how cells behave in the human body," said Shekhtman, who leads the University's laboratory of NMR structural biology. "When pro-

tein interactions go awry, the cells function improperly, resulting in a number of common diseases, including cancer and diabetes, thus underscoring the importance of understanding how proteins interact." Shekhtman said his team developed an approach which allows them to get atomic resolution information about relevant biological interactions under native cellular conditions. His laboratory has received an \$800,000 award from the American Diabetes Association to study protein-protein interactions involved in the development of Type II diabetes.

## UAlbany Adds Journalism Major

Students aspiring to media careers can now major in journalism at UAlbany. SUNY System Administration and the New York State Department of Education gave final approval last spring for a 36-credit B.A. in journalism beginning this fall. The program fea-

tures workshops, lectures, internships, independent study and an honors program in four concentrations: Public Affairs Journalism; Science, Technology and Society; Visual and Digital Media; and General Journalism.

## School of Business Now Admitting Freshman Majors

High school students planning to major in business no longer have to wait until their junior year for admission to the School of Business. The direct admit program, which began in September, allows students with exceptional grades and SAT scores to enroll as freshmen, with the school providing advisement and special sections of lecture courses, as well as opportunities to attend educational and social functions, join business and accounting fraternities, and receive mentoring from the Dean's Leadership Council.

## PAC Hosts *Spill Out!*



Architecture and modern dance may seem to have little in common. But under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences, the two creative fields merged at the University at Albany's Performing Arts Center with *Spill Out!*, a residency by the renowned Albany-based Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company.

Choreographer Ellen Sinopoli; architectural designers Frances Bronet of the University of Oregon and Sid Fleisher of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; composer William Harper of the Art Institute of Chicago; videographer Ralph Pascucci of Myriad Productions; and lighting designer David Yergan of Skidmore College and the Lake George Opera collaborated on the large-scale multimedia performance work. Students in the architecture programs at the University of Oregon and Rensselaer designed an architectural infrastructure that dancers "spilled" over, under, through and around, creating a unique installation.

The weeklong residency included rehearsals, a lecture by Sinopoli and Bronet and a public performance of the program.

For more information about events at UAlbany's Performing Arts Center visit the PAC Web site at [www.albany.edu/pac/](http://www.albany.edu/pac/).