UAlbany: Trailblazing
The Study of Criminal Justice

Distinguished Professor Hans Toch was an established faculty member at Michigan State University when he was lured to the University at Albany to help found its School of Criminal Justice in the late 1960s. It was supposed to be a one-year assignment, but when it came time to return to East Lansing, Toch couldn’t bring himself to leave. In fact, he’s still here.

“When we had put together was so interesting that I wanted to see what would happen,” explained Toch, one of four original “superstar” faculty members who invented the curriculum and then stayed to nurture it. “When you design (an entirely new field of study), you have a sense of ownership. The School was our baby.”

Not many universities these days can claim that they are the birthplace of a whole new field of study. Because of its pre-eminent faculty and novel interdisciplinary approach, the School of Criminal Justice achieved almost instantaneous recognition and quickly began attracting exceptional students. Those students, now our proud alumni, are building similar programs on other campuses and serving as leaders in police agencies and criminal justice policy roles around the world. Beginning on Page 3, you’ll find our package of stories about the School’s trailblazing history and its plans for the future.

Is there anything more important than tradition to a 160-year-old university like UAlbany? I doubt it. When it comes to traditions, I’ve always thought the University has some of the most unique, from Rivalry to Torch Night to Moving Up Day. Now, we have some new ones, including the Clash of the Quadats, a new mascot, Li’L Dane, who works the crowd at our athletic events; and a feisty new pep band. It’s all part of our campus-wide effort to strengthen school spirit, and the evidence that it’s working is everywhere. Our photo story about this begins on Page 20. Go Great Danes!

By CHRISTINE HANSON MCKNIGHT

The germ of the idea behind what is now UAlbany’s School of Criminal Justice came from a single, determined individual. Elliot H. Lombard, a special assistant to then-Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, was charged with modernizing law enforcement in New York State in the early 1960s. A former assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, Lombard found a troubling lack of coordination among the police, prosecutors, courts, and the prison and parole systems, as well as an urgent need to better understand the roots of crime and its consequences for society.

“It was clear to me we didn’t have the right education or research,” said Lombard, now retired and living in Hollis, N.H. “The best (available approach at the time) was criminology, which was an offshoot of sociology. It was usually one individual professor working alone, without much funding, and in isolation from the other disciplines. I felt we needed an inter-
disciplined group of scholars from several related fields: law, public administration, psychology, sociology, and allied areas. If we created a new kind of school with this kind of concept that looked not just at the offender, but at the system of criminal justice as well, then perhaps the system didn’t always work together,” he explained.

Lumbard said that Rockefeller immediately embraced the idea, calling for establishment of the new school in a special message to the legislature in 1962. The proposal became reality with the creation in 1968 of the University at Albany’s School of Criminal Justice. It became the first Ph.D.-granting criminal justice program in the nation, and its interdisciplinary “Albany Model” curriculum has been emulated by many of the doctoral programs founded since then.

“Now there’s a whole field (of study in this area), but Albany is the seed from which they all sprang,” said Lumbard, who has stayed in touch with the leadership of the School of Criminal Justice and has proudly watched it continue to blaze new trails.

Today, the School sets the standards in the field through internationally recognized faculty research and a graduate program consistently rated among the top five in the U.S. Its alumni have helped build similar programs at such institutions as Rutgers, Michigan State University, the University of Maryland and Indiana University, where they are producing a new generation of scholars and practitioners. They also serve as administrators or researchers in government and private criminal justice agencies. In all, the School boasts 2,200 graduates, including 196 doctoral recipients.

Dean Julie Horney’s View
Dean Julie Horney is the president-elect of the American Society of Criminology. Her latest research focuses on situational aspects of crime and the role that life circumstances play in determining whether people become involved in violence. She has a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California at San Diego.

Q: What makes UAlbany’s program distinct from others?
A: We were the first Ph.D. program in criminal justice in the country. Our curriculum was established back in the late 1960s and has served as the model for most other programs in the country today. It is called “the Albany Model,” and it emphasizes interdisciplinary study, high-quality research, and a commitment to graduate education, especially doctoral study. Our alumni — some 2,200 strong — are really leading and reshaping the field of criminal justice, both as academics and in the world of policy and practice.

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Q: What’s new at the School of Criminal Justice?
A: We have implemented a new graduate concentration in information technology that emphasizes geographic information systems, spatial analysis and database construction. We think this will give our students cutting-edge skills important in both the academic and practice side of criminal justice. Another initiative that is currently in the planning stages is an annual “Albany Symposium on Crime and Justice,” scheduled for the fall of 2004. We have also just received approval for an undergraduate internship program.

For information about ways you can help support the School of Criminal Justice, please contact:
Campaign for the University at Albany
1400 Washington Avenue
UB-224, Albany, NY 12222
Phone: (518) 437-9000

BOLD VISION.

The Campaign for the University at Albany

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The Campaign for the University at Albany
Returning Home

By CAROL OLECHOWSKI

James J. Fyfe, M.A. ’72, Ph.D. ’78, had been a distinguished professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice for exactly one day when he returned home to find a message from New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly. His old friend was asking him to join the police department as deputy commissioner of training. “After 9/11, I really couldn’t say no. This is the place that shaped me, and there was so much to be done here,” he recalled.

In effect, Fyfe was returning home. He had joined the NYPD as a patrolman in 1963, working his way up to the rank of lieutenant and earning seven citations before retiring in 1979. During his years as a police officer, he received his bachelor’s degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York. When the department offered him a fellowship to study at either Fordham Law School or UAlbany’s School of Criminal Justice, he chose UAlbany.

After retiring from the NYPD, Fyfe then embarked on a second career — in academe. He was a faculty member at American and Temple universities, and a senior fellow of the Police Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based “think tank.” In 2000, he served as a visiting professor at Australia’s Charles Sturt University.

Fyfe also built a reputation as an expert on police practices, taking on consulting work with law enforcement agencies and with civil and human rights organizations around the United States and in Canada. He offered expert testimony in such high-profile cases as the Amadou Diallo case, tried in Albany in 2000; the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles; and the Jeffrey Dahmer serial murders. He has also testified before the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

“If you’re an expert in police practice and you have credibility,” he said, “you will be called upon as an expert witness.”

Fyfe has also served as a consultant to the United Nations and to governments in Europe, Australia, and Canada. He offered expert testimony in such high-profile cases as the Amadou Diallo case, tried in Albany in 2000; the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles, and the Jeffrey Dahmer serial murders. He has also testified before the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

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James J. Fyfe, M.A. ’72, Ph.D. ’78, Deputy Commissioner of Training, New York City Police Department

He feels that one of his most important contributions was to persuade the Supreme Court to strike down as unconstitutional the “fleeing felon” rule, which authorized police to shoot all fleeing felony suspects. The suspect in question in that case, Tennessee v. Garner, was a teenager accused of stealing $10. For this type of work, “Albany was a credential,” acknowledged Fyfe, who received the American Society of Criminology’s August Vollmer Award in 2002. Since assuming the deputy commissioner’s post in May 2002, Fyfe has been in charge of training for the 37,000 officers and 14,000 civilians who staff the NYPD. He recently rewrote the entire curriculum, which had seen revisions, but no major overhaul, for three decades. He oversees the 900 New York City Police Academy staff, who train recruits; provide refresher courses for sergeants, lieutenants, and captains; and offer executive development programs for captains and higher-ranking officers.

“The big drive right now has to do with terrorism,” noted Fyfe, adding that the NYPD has received a federal grant to train 10,000 officers by the end of June 2004 to respond to biological and chemical attacks. Another priority is preparing for the Republican National Convention, which will take place in New York in September.

If Fyfe is devoted to the NYPD, he is also loyal to, and proud of, his alma mater. For the Brooklyn native, who had spent eight years in part-time study earning his undergraduate degree, the opportunity to participate in “a really intense full-time academic experience” at UAlbany represented “a life-changing experience.” The author or co-author of numerous articles and several books, including Above the Law: Police and the Excessive Use of Force (1994) and Police Practice in the ’90s: Key Management Issues, Fyfe credits the School with “honing my writing skills.”

His professors, Fyfe added, “helped me to think about criminal justice in a global fashion.” The School also gave him an appreciation for quantitative analysis. That type of analysis, he pointed out, is vital to making policy decisions. It has also impacted “just about everything I have done here,” Fyfe recalled during an interview in his office at police headquarters in lower Manhattan last January. The skills he acquired at UAlbany enable him to analyze “data sets on recruits, on changes in staffing and training, on changes in test policy and hiring.”

From his desk, he pulled a chart illustrating that, between 1971 and 2002, fatal shootings by NYPD officers declined from 93 to 13. “In large measure, that’s a result of policy changes that I analyzed in my dissertation (Shots Fired: An Examination of New York City Police Firearms Discharges). When I was here the first time, ‘draw fast and shoot straight’ was the rule. What we have focused on since then is training officers to structure their confrontations with potentially dangerous people so that nobody gets hurt,” explained Fyfe, who received the School’s Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1985.
CRIME STORIES

John Laub and Robert Sampson: Understanding the Lives of Troubled Boys

By CAROL OLECHOWSKI

In the 1970s, John Laub, M.A.'76, Ph.D.'80, and Robert Sampson, M.A.'79, Ph.D.'83, each made one of the best decisions of his life: enrolling at the University at Albany's School of Criminal Justice. They have since teamed up to produce cutting-edge research about juvenile delinquency.

As a criminal justice major at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Laub aspired to a career as a Chicago police officer. Now a University of Maryland criminology and criminal justice professor, Laub recalls that Dennis Sullivan, one of his professors and a School alum, encouraged him to go to grad school at UAlbany instead. He took Sullivan’s advice and discovered that what he tells his graduate students was true: “Graduate school is the best time of your life.”

Sampson, now Harvard University’s Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences, also found that to be the case. While majoring in sociology at the University at Buffalo, he began thinking about going to grad school. His other college choice was Cornell, but a visit to UAlbany’s campus revealed “a thriving atmosphere” and “an intense emphasis on research.” The department was electric, with graduate students passionately involved in studying and asking questions about many different aspects of crime. You could say I caught the research bug at UAlbany.”

Sampson went on to teach at the University of Illinois, then spent a dozen years at the University of Chicago before joining the Harvard faculty in 2003. Three UAlbany School of Criminal Justice professors still influence him: the late Michael Hindelang, for whom he worked at the research center; Travis Hirschi, his chair; and Michael Gottfredson. “In retrospect, I did not know how lucky I was to be trained by the absolute leaders in the field,” Sampson says.

Laub, immediate past president of the American Society of Criminology, likewise cites Hindelang, Hirschi, Gottfredson, and Leslie Wilkins as role models. “I cannot say enough about how much I learned from my UAlbany professors and from my fellow students, especially Jim Garofalo, Tim Flanagan, Ed Brown, Mike Buckman, Joan McDermott, Tom Bernard, and Rob Sampson. UAlbany was what one hoped for in a graduate school — serious, intense, and full of intellectual excitement.”

After teaching at Northeastern University’s College of Criminal Justice for 18 years, Laub moved in 1998 to the University of Maryland, where his classes focus on such topics as juvenile delinquency and crime and the life course. He is also affiliated with the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study’s Murray Research Center at Harvard University. There, he and Sampson continue the work Harvard Law School criminologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck undertook in 1950. Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency followed, to ages 25 and 32, 500 delinquents born during the Great Depression and remanded to reform school in the 1940s, and 500 non-delinquents. “From 1986 to 1993, Rob and I reconstructed the Gluecks’ data for our book Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life. In 1994, we launched our own follow-up study of the original delinquents as they approached age 70, about half had died.” Crime in the Making (Harvard University Press) earned outstanding book honors from several organizations, including the American Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.

Sampson and Laub’s most recent collaboration, Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70 (Harvard University Press), “updates the subjects’ lives at the close of the 20th century and connects adult life experiences back to childhood.” The book, Laub says, “attempts to understand and explain the lives of troubled boys as they progress from childhood and adolescence to adulthood and old age.”

Sampson remains busy with another study, the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, for which he spent much of the 1990s on site. That project has led to a number of influential publications, including a 1997 article in Science on the importance of neighborhoods “collective efficacy” in determining levels of crime and violence.

Through contacts with School faculty and students, he senses that “the core identity of the place has not changed, which is a good thing.” With regard to its future, “the key to any graduate program is the quality of its faculty, so UAlbany’s continued leadership in promoting and attracting visionary scholars is by far the most important agenda, in my opinion,” observes Sampson.

“My impression,” Laub says, “is that UAlbany is still one of the best places to study criminology and criminal justice in the country, if not in the world. It holds a premier place in the discipline.”

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By CAROL OLECHOWSKI

Col. Deborah Campbell, M.A.’87: deputy superintendent for employee relations, New York State Police.


Bruce Davis, B.S.’73, M.A.’75: chairman of the board and CEO, Digimarc Corp., a leading supplier of digital watermarking and secure personal identification technologies.


Kathleen Heide, M.A.’78, Ph.D.’82: founder and executive director of the nonprofit Center for Law and Justice in Albany.

Alice Green, M.A.’79, Ph.D.’83: professor and director of digital watermarking and secure personal identification technologies.

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