

Meet UAlbany's First Inaugural Scholars

By Carol Olechowski

Photography: Mark Schmidt

One is an aspiring businesswoman. Another wants to teach English and write. The third has already lined up a job in New York City. And the fourth plans a career in medicine. Meet Jessica Gunsch, Sheila Gaddy, Jeffrey Castillo and Zakhar (Zack) Berkovich — the first class of Inaugural Scholars at UAlbany.

Gunsch, a senior business major and Dean's List student who overcame injuries from an automobile accident several years ago, plans to work on Wall Street. Gaddy, a senior majoring in Africana studies, hopes to teach at UAlbany after she completes graduate school. Castillo, also a senior, is a Dean's List student with a 3.99 GPA. The 20-year-old will earn his bachelor's degree in May, then return to his hometown, Manhattan, to work as an analyst at JP Morgan Chase. Berkovich, who came to UAlbany from his native Belarus via Staten Island, is majoring in biology and Judaic studies and volunteering with the Western Turnpike Rescue Squad in preparation for a career as a physician.

University President Kermit L. Hall established the Inaugural



Clockwise, from left: Inaugural Scholars Sheila Gaddy, Zack Berkovich, Jeffrey Castillo and Jessica Gunsch

Scholarship Fund in February 2005 to support undergraduate education and build the University's endowment by at least \$1 million. To date, the fund totals \$1.68 million, including a \$700,000 bequest from Irving Harold Losee, Class of 1938.

Currently, \$1 million has been ear-

marked for The Honors College (See page 3). That amount includes the Losee bequest, which will create the Irving Harold Losee Scholarship Fund to support Honors College students. Another \$500,000 of the fund has been allocated for other student scholarships. ■

UAlbany's Endowment Grows

Since Fall 2005, donors have contributed more than \$200,000 to establish new endowments and add to existing ones at the University. The University's endowment now totals \$17.1 million. Highlights:

- ◆ A \$100,000 contribution from their parents has named the **Brooke David and Peter Julian Rosenbaum Memorial Scholarship**. A 1991 UAlbany graduate, Brooke, 31, was manager of international bond settlements at Cantor Fitzgerald when he died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Peter, his older brother, died in 1998 from pneumonia-related complications at age 31.
- ◆ With leadership gifts from Jeffrey Mishkin, B.A.'69; Lewis Wiener, B.A.'84; and Michael Lampert, B.A.'73, the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy Advisory Board opened two scholarship funds. The **Dean Frank J. Thompson Scholarship**, honoring the former dean's 18 years of leadership and vision, will support a public administration student who shares Thompson's interest in health care, public management or human resources. The **Rockefeller College Fund for Student Excellence** will support outstanding students in political science and in any area of public administration. Board members and other donors have contributed more than \$85,000 to these endowments, which continue to accept gifts from alumni, colleagues and friends.
- ◆ A fellowship fund established in memory of former School of Education Dean Ralph W. Harbison has already attracted three international scholars to the school. Janice Harewood of Barbados is enrolled in the Ph.D. program in counseling psychology; Cambodia native Layheng Ting is a master's student in educational administration and policy studies; and Ancelle Scheker is a doctoral student from the Dominican Republic. Harbison Fellows are selected based on their leadership, service and commitment to education; scholarship; and promise of future achievement in the education field. The **Harbison Fellowship** now totals \$311,000.
- ◆ Twelve years after his death, former New York Commissioner of Health David Axelrod, M.D., continues to impact the health care field through a fellowship endowment set up at UAlbany's School of Public Health. The **David Axelrod Public Health Endowment** provides scholarship aid to top graduate students who embrace the late physician's activist vision and his dedication to public service. To date, 14 UAlbany students have been designated Axelrod Fellows. They include M.P.H. recipients Danice Stone '97, now a research scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta; New York State Department of Health researchers Randi Walker '00 and James Bowers '01; and Michelle Gill '05, a public advocacy specialist in Tanzania. The endowment currently totals more than \$250,000, with \$45,000 of that amount raised from gifts and pledges since December 2004.
- ◆ With a \$25,000 annuity, Peg Pfaff has endowed the **Curtis Pfaff Memorial Scholarship** in memory of her husband, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the State College for Teachers in 1948 and 1950. The couple has supported the University for many years through the UAlbany Fund and more recently through The Greatest Generation Fund for the University Libraries.



Photo: Yoel Hirschfeld

Torah Scroll Finds Home at UAlbany: A sacred relic of the Holocaust now occupies a place of honor at the University's Center for Jewish Studies. Donated by Hedy Bagatelle, B.A.'60, and her husband, Warren, above, Torah Scroll No. 1204 was one of about 2,000 scrolls confiscated from synagogues after the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939.