BY GRETCHEN GERDING

Former Department Head Gay Israel died on April 16 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 65. Israel, who served as department head for 18 years, was a transformational leader, building the department into a model that is respected nationally for outstanding research, teaching, and service.

“Gay Israel brought a new vision and a high level of excellence to the Department of Health and Exercise Science,” said Jeff McCubbin, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. “His vision transformed the unit to one that is now highly respected and ranked nationwide. However, Gay’s legacy extends beyond CSU. His professional and service contributions to the American College of Sports Medicine were significant. We feel his loss keenly and he will be greatly missed by all of us at CSU.”

Israel came to CSU in 1996 from East Carolina University. Notably, in 2008, he was recognized as a “Centennial Leader” at East Carolina, a very short list of faculty whose influence on ECU’s first century merited such a distinction.

The same commitment to excellence marked his tenure at CSU. His clear vision for teaching, research, and outreach programs was instrumental to the shift from an emphasis on sports and physical education to health, wellness, and disease prevention. One of his greatest achievements in the research area was building the state-of-the-art Human Performance Clinical/Research Laboratory with a combination of $5 million in private and university funds. The lab, built in three phases, and in current planning for a fourth, is considered one of the jewels of the CSU campus.

In addition, Israel championed a department name change to emphasize health and spearheaded the creation of a Ph.D. program in Human Bioenergetics – one of only a handful in the country. Under his leadership, annual research expenditures climbed from less than $50,000 in 1996 to a peak of more than $2 million annually, with key funders such as the National Institutes of Health and other agencies supporting faculty research. The lab also maintains a prestigious Program of Research and Scholarly Excellence distinction from CSU.

In the outreach area, Israel founded the Heart Disease Prevention Program to assess known risk factors for cardiovascular disease in individuals, including a testing program offered to firefighters and other first responders. The summer Youth Sport Camps,

“Gay combined rigor, attention to detail, and a herculean work ethic, with a servant’s heart. I will miss him dearly.”

– Matt Hickey, HES Professor

Continued on page 3
FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

I considered rewriting this message in light of losing Dr. Gay Israel, former department head and more importantly, treasured friend. But I think the message reflects values that strongly resonated with him. So here it is, minimally edited. After a year and a half, I’m still exuberant about having taken the position as head of Health and Exercise Science. The department is in great shape, with much of that success built on a strong foundation attributable to great faculty and staff and far-sighted leadership of former department head Dr. Gay Israel.

The “message from the department head” would typically be to trumpet our many recent accomplishments, making sure I express the appropriate humility in maintaining that all these great things happened with very little input from me. And it’s true, terrific things are happening: we are teaching almost 1,000 students per week in our new teaching facility; we have completed an exciting restructure of the entire undergraduate curriculum to make it serve the needs of our students for the next 10 years; we have had some big successes in obtaining research grants; our faculty and graduate students are winning awards for teaching, research, and outreach; new faculty and staff hires are enhancing our ability to provide transformative teaching and groundbreaking research. And that success does not directly result from a magical formula I sprinkled into the water coolers (I’m working on that though).

But that’s not what I want to talk about. The lifeblood of this department is not “stuff,” but the core belief that people matter more than programs or curricula or grants or classrooms or awards. Our undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the department are the fibers that bind us together, and the way we treat each other determines our success. Anyone who spends any time here invariably remarks that we seem like a family and that is absolutely true. We celebrate each other’s triumphs, but call each other out when we aren’t pulling our weight. We set very high standards for ourselves and each other but we are the first to offer a helping hand or kind word if that is what’s needed.

At a time when some college campuses are being divided by a failure to communicate and to disagree in a respectful and constructive way, we are not. We are headed relentlessly upward and forward, but frequently looking back to make sure nobody gets left behind.

Of course, we can always do better. Lately, I’ve been thinking that strong families have events where they get everyone together in one place at the same time. The idea of something like that in HES started to percolate in my mind and brewed into a plan to bring the department together: something like a hybrid between a family reunion, a town meeting, and a career fair, where we publicly acknowledge our strong shared commitment, values, and the goal of inspiring students to dream big dreams, strive for greatness, and bring others along with them. Naturally there were many challenges to pulling it off, but on April 26, we brought 300+ undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, staff, and faculty together at the “First Annual HES Extravaganza” held at our new HES Teaching Facility. By all accounts, it was a huge success. And we are using what we learned there to continually invent an HES environment best described as “great work in a great place to work!”

Barry Braun, Department Head
Barry.Braun@colostate.edu

CONGRATS!

Congratulations to Tiffany Lipsey, who received the College of Health and Human Sciences Superior Faculty Service Award and Raoul Reiser, honored as the Outstanding Teacher.

2015 HOMECOMING 5K

Last fall marked the 35th anniversary of the annual Homecoming Race benefiting the Heart Disease Prevention Program. Thank you to all of our generous sponsors!

GOLD-LEVEL SPONSORS ($5,000)

GOLD-LEVEL SPONSORS ($5,000)

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CONGRATS!
REMEMBERING GAY ISRAEL

which promote a healthy lifestyle to children, and the annual Homecoming 5K Race experienced rapid growth under his tenure and remain important outreach activities for the university. A hallmark of these programs was Israel’s ability to form relationships with physicians, health care providers, community partners, and donors.

Over the years, the popularity of health and exercise science has grown immensely, with more than 1,400 students in the major. Israel supported an environment of academic rigor at all levels, and hired 15 of the current full-time faculty members and several advisers and instructors.

“I had the privilege of working closely with Gay for 23 years. He has had a profound influence on me, and on many, both at CSU and nationally,” said Matt Hickey, professor in the Department of Health and Exercise Science. “Gay combined rigor, attention to detail, and a herculean work ethic, with a servant’s heart. He never expected more from colleagues than he was willing to deliver himself, and he set a consistent example for excellence right to his last days.

“While there is so much that I appreciate about Gay, it is perhaps his gift for being a ‘door-opener’ for others as department head that I most admire,” Hickey added. “He had an eye for talent and a consistent willingness to recognize excellence in others. I will miss him dearly.”

Israel passed the torch of department leadership to Barry Braun in 2014. But he retained an active, part-time role in raising support for department priorities. Another one of his many achievements was securing funds in 2013 for the construction of a new teaching facility at the Moby complex. He saw the project come to fruition when the new building was completed and then opened in fall 2015. Featuring a classroom and teaching lab, the new building is providing a home to students in one of the most popular undergraduate majors at CSU.

“In his professional career, Dr. Gay Israel achieved all of the benchmarks we value as academicians, but to understand his legacy, it’s necessary to take a more expansive view,” said Braun. “In every aspect of his life, whether it be with colleagues, students, friends, or family, he was relentlessly consistent. If he promised something, he unfailingly delivered. If he started something, he saw it through to the end. If you needed a helping hand or an inspirational story or a kind word that is exactly what you received. And if what you needed was a kick in the pants, well, you get the idea. Gay had an enormous impact on a broad swath of individuals across a variety of contexts.”

In recognition of his scholarly work, which has been cited more than 2,500 times by his peers, Israel was one of only six people nationally to receive a 2015 Citation Award from the American College of Sports Medicine. Israel served ACSM at both regional and national levels for more than 38 years, including tenures as president of the ACSM Foundation, ACSM vice president, and chair of the ACSM Public Information Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and 50th anniversary task force.

In 2015, Israel was presented with the Distinguished Faculty Award from the CSU Alumni Association. In addition, he was selected as an honoree of the College of Health and Human Sciences Legacies Project, which gathers, archives, and shares the personal and professional histories of former faculty and staff.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

The Richard Gay Israel Health and Exercise Science Scholarship was established in Israel’s honor and will support scholarships to health and exercise science students. The Higley Foundation and ELF Foundation will match gifts made to this scholarship by Dec. 31, 2016, up to a total of $15,000.

Memorial gifts may be mailed to Colorado State University Foundation, 410 University Services Center, Fort Collins, CO 80523-9100, with “Richard Gay Israel HES Scholarship Endowment #72705” in the memo line. Memorial gifts may also be made online at giveto.colostate.edu/gayisrael.

2015-16 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

HES scholarship recipients for 2015-16 were recognized at the College of Health and Human Sciences Scholarship Breakfast last winter. Scholarship donors are also invited to attend and meet their recipients, who express their gratitude for the outstanding support.

Congratulations to our recipients, and thank you to all who support HES by donating to scholarships. Financial support allows our students to achieve their dreams and make a difference in the world.
The new teaching building for HES opened this fall giving students in one of the most popular undergraduate majors at CSU a home.

The facility’s space is devoted primarily to a classroom and a teaching lab, but it also has a host of features that make it uniquely suited to the personality and objectives of the department that is home to the Human Performance Clinical/Research Lab, Adult Fitness Program, Heart Disease Prevention Program, and Youth Sport Camps. It also contains uncommon craftsmanship and attention to detail.

“We spent a lot of time talking about what they do and how we could support the department’s mission,” architect Art Hoy said, citing active lifestyles, openness, and community outreach among the themes reflected in the structure. “The building has no back door. That was intentional — it has multiple fronts. A lot of times academic buildings are inwardly focused, and we decided to make it outwardly focused.”

The hallmark piece of art is in the building’s central lobby. On the floor is an intricate terrazzo image of Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man. The seven-color concrete composite contains chips of rocks, broken bottles, and seashells separated by thin bands of zinc.

The lobby’s ceiling is made with sustainably harvested bamboo. The 120-person classroom’s tables and chairs are on wheels, and four large computer screens on the side and back walls allow the space to be reconfigured for group work in pods. The teaching lab features large windows, and glass-paneled garage doors on the south side that can be opened.

On the plaza are inscribed the words “Mobilitas aequat valetudinem,” which is Latin for “Movement equals health.” A band of colored concrete measuring exactly 50 meters stretches across the length of the plaza, interrupted only once by a zig-zag pattern that implies a heartbeat on a cardiogram.

“Working with Art was a pleasure,” said HES Department Head Barry Braun. “He spent a lot of time with us, trying to understand what we do, and I think that’s reflected in the building in terms of movement, health, and openness. He somehow managed to architecturally capture what we’re about.”

Hoy credits former Department Head Gay Israel, who passed away in April of 2016, with securing the funding needed to include the building’s various artistic touches. “Gay’s commitment was to do this thing right and do it with quality and care,” he said. “That is seen in a lot of the details.”

Braun agrees. “This is really Gay’s vision, and a testament to his drive and entrepreneurial attitude,” he said. Israel, who led HES for 18 years before stepping down in 2014, noted the department had no place to teach the lab sections in kinesiology, biomechanics, and neurophysiology that other universities offer.

“It’s not just to keep up with other universities, but to get ahead, give our students a leg up,” Israel explained. “It was the next natural thing we needed to do.”

Braun echoes those sentiments. “We’re overhauling the curriculum, making it more forward-looking,” he said. “This facility helps us meet that goal.”

The lion’s share of the project was funded with student fees from the University Facility Fee Advisory Board, which provided $1.2 million of the total $2 million price tag. The provost’s office contributed $250,000, the College of Health and Human Sciences gave $195,000, and the HES department covered the remaining $443,000, as well as an estimated $250,000 to furnish and equip the classroom and lab. A second floor could be added to the building, and there are still naming opportunities for prospective donors.

“There’s a cohesiveness now,” Braun said. “It brings the teaching, research and advising missions together in one place. When you have a family, it’s nice to have a home.”

Gene and Carol Vaughan (middle) with the late Dr. Gay Israel (left) and HES Department Head Barry Braun (right).
The HES department has an exciting new outreach program. Muscles Alive! is a traveling experiential neuroscience education program for kids of all ages. The sobering thought that one in five people will be afflicted with a neurological disorder is part of what drove Brian Tracy and his Neuromuscular Function Lab to create this novel program.

“We extend the research we do in my lab outside the walls of the university and positively impact the community. It’s basically an outgrowth of the neuromuscular research we do in HES which involves measuring muscle electrical activity. We take that lab expertise and apply it in a different way, through neuroscience education outreach,” said Tracy.

“The kids we interact with flex their muscles and we record their muscle electrical activity, known as the electromyogram. They hear it from a speaker and see it vividly on an iPad screen at the same time, which allows them to experience their own brain’s command to the muscles in real time. Because everything a human being does involves activating a muscle, we let kids measure all sorts of muscles, even the chewing muscles so they can compare gummy bears with marshmallows, a sure-fire kid pleaser. We also do interactive demonstrations of proprioception and reflexes. It really gets their attention. Our learning philosophy is that there’s nothing wrong with having fun,” explained Tracy.

“The overall goal is for kids to be able to actually see the neuroscience of how their brain and muscles work, and thus learn about their own body’s physiology. That’s a lot more fun than reading a book. At the very least, Muscles Alive! educates students about how their body works and improves neuroscience awareness in the general population – and that’s a good thing. But the further hope is that we produce a spark of interest in a young child who ends up being a great neuroscientist who contributes to a cure for neurological disease,” said Tracy.

Previously the technology required to make such recordings was confined to expensive, lab-based research equipment. The program sprung from collaboration between Tracy and the team from Backyard Brains, Inc. A novel, inexpensive, portable bioamplifier was produced that promotes “neuroscience for everyone.” The electrodes are made from Popsicle sticks and all of the equipment is DIY, battery powered, non-threatening, and kid-friendly.

The Muscles Alive! Program has made an impact over the last two and a half years, interacting with 3,200-plus kids and adults in more than 45 events of all types – science classes, science fairs, museum events, science camps, adult public science events, and university/community events. And fifty-year-old kids love it as much as the sixth graders do. More than 20 undergraduate HES students and a few graduate students have served as volunteers in the program, applying their classroom neuromuscular physiology learning in an educational setting. The program has even served as a launching point for new hands-on laboratory exercises in HES undergraduate courses such as Neuromuscular Aspects of Human Movement and Anatomical Kinesiology.

But Muscles Alive! doesn’t want to stay confined to the Poudre School District and Northern Colorado. Toward that goal, they have indeed gathered notice and positive attention from regional neuroscience and exercise science conference presentations and nationally at the Society for Neuroscience and American Society of Biomechanics conferences. Muscles Alive! is looking for sponsors to help launch the larger scale endeavor.

If interested, contact Tracy: Brian.Tracy@colostate.edu.
HES STUDENT MOTIVATES PARTICIPANTS IN ADULT FITNESS PROGRAM

BY GRETCHEN GERDING

CSU’s Adult Fitness Program has an enthusiastic group of students and staff from HES who work with community members to help them meet their goals. The program is similar to a health club membership and includes a weight room, pool, running track, exercise equipment, lockers, and fitness classes such as yoga and Zumba.

But the program is much more than just a health club. CSU students staff each session as part of a class for their major, taking blood pressure, doing fitness assessments, working as trainers with the members, and leading warmups and fitness classes. Interacting with participants provides real-world experience as they prepare for employment as wellness experts, personal trainers, and cardiac rehabilitation professionals, among others.

Terri Pecora, a member since 2010, works as an IT supervisor for the CSU Registrar’s Office. “The program has really helped me find my motivation,” said Pecora, who works out three mornings per week. “Knowing that a student is there to meet me keeps me coming and doesn’t allow me to make excuses for not exercising.” Pecora has lost about 50 pounds over the years and has seen her cholesterol levels drop. She even completed a sprint distance triathlon.

Pecora is training with Brandon Malone, a senior in HES. “This experience has challenged me to take what I’ve done in the classroom and put that information into practice,” said Malone. “It is great to work with a variety of people, at different ages and fitness levels.” Malone plans a career as a fitness trainer, possibly working with breast cancer survivors.

“What I like about the program is meeting someone like Terri, hearing her stories and learning her goals and having her goals turn into my goals because I don’t want to let her down. Learning about the lifelong process of fitness shows me changes I can make for myself and others,” said Malone.

HES STUDENT RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR CARDIOVASCULAR PHYSIOLOGY RESEARCH

BY MARISSA ISGREEN

Matt Racine, a Ph.D. candidate, recently received the Fleur L. Strand Professional Opportunity Award from the Women in Physiology committee of the Society of Experimental Biology. Out of 119 applicants, Racine’s application was ranked number one.

The award recognizes a young physiologist and enables the recipient to attend the annual American Physiological Society meeting.

“Receiving this prestigious award is a testament to the exceptional quality of Matt’s work and also reflects the fantastic training he is receiving from Dr. Frank Dinenno and the super team of collaborators he works with in the Cardiovascular Physiology Lab,” said Barry Braun, department head.

“In addition to CSU being a great school and Fort Collins being a wonderful place to live, the biggest deciding factor for me to pursue my Ph.D. at CSU was the great research environment that Dr. Dinenno has established in his lab,” Racine said. “I got the impression that he would make an excellent mentor.”

For his dissertation, Racine is studying how impaired red blood cell function in older adults affects the regulation of blood flow to the skeletal muscle.

In a healthy young adult, red blood cells unload the oxygen they are carrying when they reach an area of the body where oxygen demand is high—think bicep curls. This releases a molecule called ATP which causes the blood vessels to dilate to bring more oxygen to the area that needs it.

However, in the case of healthy older adults, the ability of their red blood cells to release ATP is significantly impaired, and researchers don’t yet know why.

“My goal is to identify and treat the causes of impaired ATP release from red blood cells of older adults, and see if improving this red blood cell function also improves the impaired blood flow responses to things like exercise and hypoxia that we see in older adults,” Racine said.

To learn more about the Human Cardiovascular Physiology Lab, visit www.cvlab.colostate.edu
IN MEMORIAM

DR. PAUL GILBERT

May 2015 (Retired faculty member)

Paul Gilbert was born on December 11, 1925, in Castlewood, S.D. Prior to attending college he entered the Marine Corps and was Company Bugler and Honor Man of his platoon. He was selected for the Marine V-12 Officer Training Program and sent to Purdue University for training. There he played first string end for Purdue and served until 1946. He later returned to South Dakota State where he received his B.S. with Honors, while also playing football and basketball. He later received his master’s degree from Purdue University and in 1967, he received his doctorate in physical education from Springfield College in Massachusetts.

Gilbert joined the faculty in HES in 1969. He climbed the ranks to full professor and fulfilled the role of acting department head during his tenure. He taught many classes, mentored graduate students, and coached the golf team. He volunteered at the municipal golf courses religiously for many years, a great joy to him, as were his four holes-in-one. Gilbert’s community service included membership in the Rotary Club, Boy Scout merit badge counselor, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, helping found the “EyeOpeners Kiwanis Club,” and helping start Oktoberfest in Fort Collins. Gilbert is survived by his wife of 67 years, Delores (Dee).

DR. NANCY OYSER

January 2015 (Retired faculty member)

Nancy Oyster was born March 13, 1936, in Wausau, Wis., attended elementary and secondary school in Green Bay, Wis. She received an A.B. degree from Ripon College, Ripon, Wis., an M.S. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and subsequently a Ph.D. from Oregon State University. Her teaching career included a number of academic institutions: Ohio State University, University of Colorado, and Colorado State University. She was an avid skier, badminton player, and swimming coach for many years and an extremely talented wood carver. Oyster had an extensive commitment to providing volunteer support for seniors in Larimer County. She is survived by her brother, Tom, of Markesan, Wis.

RETIEMENT

CHUCK PURDY

Chuck Purdy retired in May 2015 with more than 24 years of continuous service to HES. He was a key contributor to the daily functioning of the Faculty/Staff Noon Hour Fitness Program with folding towels, putting out equipment, and filling in when others were not around. With his cheery disposition, engaging smile, and warm welcome he greeted all. He is definitely part of the Health and Exercise Science family and is very much missed.

“Throughout his many years of work, Chuck was a consistent source of support to the department equipment room and Noon Hour Fitness Program. It was evident that he enjoyed interacting with people and he is well liked by faculty and staff. Chuck is well-known across the CSU campus as he would visit daily with people in many program areas, making him a delightful ambassador for the department,” said Associate Dean Dale DeVoe. We wish Chuck well in retirement.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY

HEATHER LEACH

Dr. Heather Leach received her Ph.D. in kinesiology from the University of Houston, in Houston, Texas. There she received the Tony Jackson Research Excellence Award, as well as a Student Research Development Award from the Texas Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine. After completing her Ph.D., Leach began a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Calgary in the Health and Wellness Lab under the direction of Dr. Nicole Culos-Reed, studying physical activity for cancer survivors. During her fellowship, Leach received a grant from the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation to partner with the YMCA and expand a community exercise program for breast cancer patients undergoing treatment. She has published work in journals such as Health Psychology, Supportive Care in Cancer, and the American Journal of Health Promotion, among others.

Leach plans to continue pursuing research interests in behavioral medicine and physical activity interventions for clinical and underserved populations. Her research goals at CSU include developing effective and practical physical activity interventions for cancer survivors and other chronic disease populations, and ultimately translating intervention research into standard health care practice and sustainable community programming.

KAIGANG LI

Dr. Kaigang Li received his Ph.D. in health behavior from Indiana University School of Public Health at Bloomington in 2010, completed his post-doctoral work at the University at Albany in 2011, and has worked as a research fellow in the Health Behavior Branch at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH from 2011 to 2015.

Throughout his career, Li has demonstrated commitment to health behavior research in two main research lines: physical activity and teenage risky driving. In each line, Li has conducted a number of research projects funded by both NIH extramural and intramural programs. His interested research questions include dose-response association between obesity and leisure-time physical activity, community-based childhood obesity intervention in low income families, trajectories and determinants of cardiovascular health and modifiable behaviors among adolescents and emerging adults, and naturalistic and simulated experimental risky driving and alcohol/drug impaired driving among teenage drivers.

Before coming to the U.S., Li worked at the China Institute of Sport Science as an associate professor and as the associate director of the Exercise Biology Research Center. During this time, he received a number of national grants and prestigious awards. To date, he has published more than 50 peer-reviewed research articles (35 in English and 15 in Chinese) and presented his research findings at more than 30 national and international conferences. He was the winner of the Judy K. Black Early Career Research Award in 2014 from the American Academy of Health Behavior.

The goal of Li’s extensive research is to translate behavioral research findings into practice to promote active living styles, prevent obesity and chronic diseases, and reduce teenage risk behaviors.
Chrissy Chard and Kellie Walters first met at CSU while earning their graduate degrees in HES. Both women were intimately involved in the fitness world and decided to start their own health coaching company by women, for women, with the mission of using research-proven techniques to empower others to create healthy lifestyles, both in body and mind.

Chard and Walters originally started Smart Fit Chicks as a health coaching company for adult females. It is a web-based service focused on motivational interviewing, goal-setting, and behavior implementation. Clients from all over the U.S. work with coaches to set their own health goals, and the coaches provide clients with support, education, and accountability in achieving those goals and guiding them toward sustained behavior changes.

“Our approach is a very client-centered way of promoting behavior change,” said Chard, now a faculty member in HES and the Colorado School of Public Health. “What we know is that individuals are the experts in their own lives. They know what they want to achieve. We simply provide guidance and support them in their journeys toward healthier lives.”

After working with adult females, Chard and Walters began to realize that challenges with self-esteem and body image start much younger, and so Smart Fit Girls was born in spring 2014. Smart Fit Girls is a 10-week after-school program that empowers middle school girls to feel mentally and physically strong. Coaches meet with the girls twice a week to practice strength and resistance training and talk about issues such as bullying, confidence, positive body image, and self-efficacy.

Research conducted by Walters for her dissertation on Smart Fit Girls has shown a 12 percent improvement in body image for the 76 girls who have completed the program and significant improvements in self-esteem.

“I think the reason we’ve been so successful is that we’ve been really open,” said Walters, former director of adult fitness at CSU. “The more we talk about our organization and get other people talking about it, the more we are able to build. We truly appreciate all of the support we’ve been given these past three years.”

Learn more at smartfitchicks.com.