

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

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Herman Rapaport

WAKE FOREST WELCOMES NEW REYNOLDS
PROFESSOR GEORGEANNA SMITH '06

Herman Rapaport's mind seems to work in terms of comparisons; even in a casual conversation, he focuses on relationships, pointing out distinctions, and offering criticism and perspective from all sides of a topic. He's known as a deconstructionist scholar, and learning is a passion – for him, and for those around him.

Currently, Rapaport, a Reynolds Professor of English who came to Wake Forest this spring following five years at the University of Southampton, is sitting in his office in Tribble. He's discussing the differences between the United States' and the United Kingdom's educational systems.

Framed by the window of his relatively small office, Rapaport is engaging, thoughtful, and warm. When he is not speaking, there is a feeling that he is still working out something worth waiting for. He explains that the government involvement with British

universities means that there are frequent audits and productivity investigations of each department.

"It's good in the sense that it rewards people who are working, sort of gets rid of dead wood," he says, "but it's bad in the sense that it's very stressful for departments. I can really see both sides, as I can with many things. There's logic to each method."

A glimpse at Rapaport's life suggests where this penchant for comparisons may have begun: Born near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, Rapaport came to the U.S. in the mid-50s. He completed all of his higher education in California and received a Ph.D. from the University of California at Irvine. He has taught in multiple countries and frequently visits family in Germany.

Through the years, he has published six books, most of which deal with comparative literature, mainly German,

French and English. He has been especially influenced by the deconstructionist philosophers, Jacques Derrida and Martin Heidegger.

Rapaport suggests that his most representative publication may be *The Theory Mess*, published in 2001 by the Columbia University Press. In that work, he evaluates the shifting nature of criticism over the past thirty years and proposes possible changes.

"I've been very interested to the extent to which academics are as narrow-minded as the Medieval were in terms of accepting new people, new ideas," Rapaport explains. "We're not burning them anymore, but we do persecute them, we de-legitimize them, we distort their work.

"Academia, at least in the humanities," he continues, (See page 2)

A GENERATION OF MEN AND WOMEN BUILT
FOR OTHERS NAPOLEON SYKES '06

I never watch the daily or nightly news anymore. It's always the same thing, either a murder, robbery, or rape. You have to wait until the sports report comes on to get a positive break. The world news isn't any better, either. We see constant violence and

chaos across the globe. It is a shame, but that is how the world has changed. If you let that get to you, it will just cause you to sink into an endless tunnel of fear and depression, but I personally think that there is hope. I know there has to be a way to

change how our world is moving into the future. There has to be a way to reroute the course of our destiny. As a "Man Built for Others," I know just the solution.

(See page 4)

PUTTING WORDS TO WORK: THE MIKE HORN FORMULA

MCLEAN ROBBINS, '07

From Day One, students enrolled in Mike Horn's Writing for Public Relations and Advertising class knew that it wasn't going to be like any other Communication or Journalism class they'd taken before.

"How did you get here?" asks Horn of each student, many of whom have completed Public Relations or Advertising internships, served as marketing directors for student organizations, or have simply been tenacious (and patient) in their efforts to get into the class. Capped at sixteen per semester, students often sit on wait lists for several semesters before being allowed in.

About half of the weekly three-hour class is lecture and the other hands-on experience, with ample time left for discussion and critique of each student's work.

A partner in a public relations and advertising firm, Horn & Stronach, in Winston-Salem, Horn knows a thing or two about what he's doing. In addition to a term as mayor of Lewisville, NC, Horn has been working in the field for over twenty years and started teaching at Wake Forest six years ago at the urging of friend and peer, Justin Catanoso, who teaches several Journalism classes and edits the *Triad Busi-*

ness Journal.

For many students, mostly seniors, the class is the first practical experience they have in writing for their chosen field of study and focuses on writing for print ads. The final project, a full-scale media pitch to local executives involving market research, a press release, print ad, radio spot, outdoor ad and an interactive ad, combine all aspects of the curriculum and let the class work in small teams to demonstrate what it has learned throughout the semester.

(See page 6)

"WAKE FOREST WELCOMES NEW REYNOLDS PROFESSOR" (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"is as much about faith and belief as religion can be, so people are very stubborn and passionate. We think we're very enlightened, but we actually are not."

Rapaport reports that his next book, yet to be titled, will focus on a fairly different topic: poetry.

"It's an attempt to understand a lot of different poets and movements in relation to one another," he says. "It's a kind of a macro study of the landscape of American poetry, and it has an emphasis on 'language poetry' and the effects of mass communication on language."

This past semester, Rapaport taught one course, a class for Masters students entitled "Historiography in the Art and Humanities." His aim was to deconstruct students' assumptions about how history and historical works should be approached and evaluated.

"I'm trying to convey to students that the ways in which we're taught to do history are really quite out-dated and not workable, and that really we're in a profession that does this kind of simplistic historicism as if there were no other way of doing it.

"The contemporaries of a piece of art are really the last to understand it; it really takes centuries for people to understand," he continues. "People don't know what they're looking at when they're seeing something new, but traditional historicism doesn't assume that; traditional historicism assumes that the meaning of the work is known at the moment of its birth and that we then have to go back to understand it, but that really isn't the fact; that's really been disproven."

Rapaport is also preparing courses on Milton and Renaissance Literature, Art, and Music for the upcoming academic year.

When asked where he would like his final academic home to be, Rapaport pauses, then smiles: "You know, I think I'll stay here. I like it. I like Winston-Salem; I think this is going to be okay.

"This is kind of an ideal university to be in," he adds, "because I like the undergrad emphasis rather than the Ph.D. emphasis. With the Ph.D.s you're really leading people into a world of no hiring and I think there's something amoral about that.

"I think it's fine if you're teaching intensely and people go off and do other things in English," he continues.

"As long as they've learned something along the way, I think you're doing alright."





A LETTER FROM DR. ERIC WILSON

Greetings! I hope that all of you are enjoying a happy spring. I'm glad to report that this spring we welcomed our first Reynolds Professor, Herman Rapaport. Herman is the author of many distinguished books and articles in subjects ranging from Renaissance literature to critical theory to Continental philosophy. He really enhances the intellectual life of this department. We are very lucky to have him among our ranks.

I'm also happy to announce that two of our faculty members, Jeff Holdridge and John McNally, recently received tenure and were promoted to associate professor. Both Jeff and John are thoroughly deserving of this promotion, and we look forward to their being valuable members of this department for a long time to come.

As always, I see this newsletter as an invitation to you to let us know what you've been up to. We're always happy to hear about the special achievements of our current and former majors, as well as of our old and new friends. So, please do let us know what significant events have taken place in your life. We'd love to spread the news.

-Eric Wilson, Chair and Professor of English

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. WILSON

In early April, Dr. Eric Wilson was named a Thomas H. Pritchard Professor. Wilson is a professor and Chairperson of the Department of English and the first faculty member at Wake to receive a prestigious fellowship from the National Humanities Center.

Wilson first came to Wake Forest in 1996 as a visiting professor and returned in 1998 following an assistant professorship at St. John's University.

He has published seven books that have garnered both national and international recognition. Wilson's most recent works are *The Melancholy Android: On the Psychology of Sacred Machines*, *The Cave and the Light: Gnostic Cinema and the Conspiracies of Culture*, and *Romantic Sleepwalkers: On Spirit and Matter in the Age of Animal Magnetism*.

Wilson's writings and courses at Wake Forest cover American, British and Continental Romanticism, Science and Literature and Film Studies.

“A GENERATION OF MEN AND WOMEN BUILT FOR OTHERS” (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

It can be found through the similar teachings I learned from my parents, my older sisters, and from Joe Ehrmann and Biff Poggi, my high school football coaches.

If you haven't yet gotten a chance to read Jeffery Marx's book, *Season of Life*, I urge you to do so as soon as possible. I never tell people I'm in the book, because I don't want them to think that is the only reason I want them to read it. Whether I were a character in the book or not, I would recommend this book to anyone and everyone who can read at all. The main idea behind the coaches' teachings is the "alternate idea of masculinity." It teaches you how to be a "real man," which is a very different definition than the typical "macho man" image portrayed in our media and by media across the world. The most interesting part about the book is that it is set around a sport, football, which is all about "machismo."

"There's no crying in football. There's no empathy in football. Men don't tell other men that they love them." That's what we learn from television, movies, and magazines. Men are supposed to be stern, strong, and rugged. We are supposed to be like Batman or Superman. We use terms like "sissy," "fairy," and "fag" so loosely in our society to describe men who don't fit that mold, but in reality none of the above sums up what it means to be a "real man."

A "real man" takes care of his family and will do anything for them to be comfortable. He treats every woman he comes across like he would want his sister to be treated. He is a great father, a great husband, protects the sick and needy, and supports the causes of

the forgotten and lost. He is someone who is giving and selfless, and, believe it or not, that is what we learned at football practice at my high school. We topped all that off with a ton of wins and a great record over the years, but our claim to fame was the guys on the team and what kind of people they were.

The most interesting part about all of this is that some people still don't believe that was how it really was. People always come up to me, even after reading the book or seeing the Real Sports special on HBO, and ask me, "Was it really like that?" And I always have the same answer: "Yes!" That is what our coaches cared about more than anything. We started out every summer camp with a list of goals. It was to win the league and beat McDonough, which was our cross-town rival, but our coaches' goals were to have a bunch of guys be sent from Gilman out into the world with nothing on their minds other than change.

Yes, I said "sent." Our coaches always stressed that we graduated from the football program and from the school only to be sent out into the world. We didn't leave, because when you leave, you don't come back. When you are sent by someone, you are supposed to come back. And that is what they wanted from all of us. They wanted us to go out into the world and change it, and then come back and tell our story and spread what we learned. We've all been sent.

Ambrose Wooden and Victor Abiamiri are both starting for the storybook Notre Dame defense, and whenever they have time, they are giving back to the community. Tilghman Morton, a Wake Forest student, will be starting a job in New York City this upcoming fall for Bank of

America, and his main goal is to anonymously send inner city children to Catholic and private schools. Ryan Boyle, a professional lacrosse player, can always be found helping out young children around downtown Philadelphia. Mike Dowling, a psychology major at Duke University, hopes to return to Baltimore this fall to coach football at Gilman and continue the legacy by returning as an example of how successful these teachings really are. The list goes on and on, and it will continue to grow. No one is perfect, and we all have our speed bumps in life that cause us to lose track of our roots, but when you have guys like Tilghman, Ambrose, Ryan, and Mike around you, always supporting you, it is hard to not remember.

This past semester I was privileged to speak at various schools in the Winston-Salem area, and it was just so moving to see how many young people had already read the book. They had so many questions about my experiences, how I have been able to keep grounded, and how hard it was to go to college and practice what I learned in high school. I came away from those talks with a lot of hope.

There is a whole new generation of "Men and Women Built for Others" out there, and I can't wait for them to break out and change the world. Get your children this book, and if you don't have children, read it yourself. It applies to everyone, the young, the old, men and women. And after you have read the book, I challenge you all to send yourselves out into the world to tell this story and do a little changing of your own.

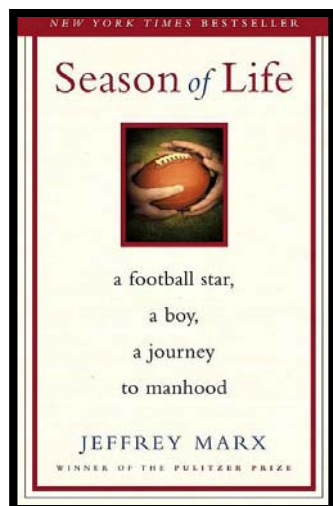


Napoleon Sykes

"It teaches you to be a 'real man,' which is a very different definition than the typical 'macho man.'"

-Sykes

NAPOLEON SYKES' BIO



Napoleon Sykes, class of 2006, is an English major, Journalism minor and Wake Forest football linebacker. He lettered in football, track, and lacrosse at the Gilman School, where he primarily played defensive back. Gilman's football team was the subject of the popular *Season of Life*, and Napoleon's contributions were featured in one of its chapters.

As a high school senior, Napoleon had 22 receptions for 313 yards and four touchdowns as a receiver and also led the team in kickoff and punt returns. He was a two-time, all-state honoree, named to the 2001 Tom Lemming/ESPN All-Atlantic Coast team, chosen for the All-Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association team for two years and chosen to play in the "Super 44" all-star game.

During his time at Wake Forest, Napoleon has been involved in community service and coached seventh and eighth grade lacrosse. He will return to Baltimore following graduation to work with Biff Poggi at Samuel James LTD and coach at the Gilman School. He is also writing a novel entitled *Say a Prayer for My Daughter*.

NEWS IN THE DEPARTMENT:

MCNALLY RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS HONOR

Creative writing professor, Dr. John McNally, was tapped this April to receive the Ollen R. Nalley Professorship, which covers a term of three years. McNally is the author of *The Book of Ralph*, published in 2004. His previous collection, *Troublemakers*, won the John Simmons Short Fiction Award and the Nebraska Book Award. This year he has published another novel, *America's Report Card*.

McNally's fiction has appeared in over thirty journals and magazines. He's held Michener (U. of Iowa), Djerassi (U. of Wisconsin), and Jenny McKean Moore (George Washington University) fellowships, all for fiction writing. He's also the recipient of a Chesterfield Writer's Film Project fellowship, sponsored by Paramount Pictures, for screenwriting.

He has edited four anthologies: *Bottom of the Ninth: 24 Great Short Stories about Baseball*; *Humor Me: An Anthology of Humor by Writers of Color*; *The Student Body: Short Stories about College Students and Professors*; and *High Infidelity: 24 Great Short Stories about Adultery*.

This summer, McNally will embark on a nationwide "palm-pressing and booksigning assault" to promote *America's Report Card*.

HOLDRIDGE TO RECEIVE MCCULLOCH FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

Irish literature professor and Director of the Wake Forest University Press, Dr. Jefferson Holdridge, has been selected to receive the McCulloch Family Fellowship, a three-year appointment given in recognition of his academic and professional contributions to Wake Forest.

Holdridge received his MA and Ph.D. from University College Dublin, in Dublin, Ireland. Last year, he edited and introduced *The WFU Series of Irish Poetry: Volume 1*, published by the Wake Forest University Press, the premiere Irish poetry press in North America.

Holdridge's publications include a wealth of poetry and two books, *Those Mingled Seas: The Poetry of W.B. Yeats, the Beautiful and the Sublime* and *Unspeakable Home: Landscape, Family and Home in Irish Literature* (in preparation).

“PUTTING WORDS TO WORK: THE MIKE HORN FORMULA” (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

“By teaching, I get the perspective of people who are discovering where they’re going in their lives,” Horn says. “By sharing that, I get a big kick out of seeing how many of my students turn that into their career profession.”

Part of only a handful of application-based journalism and communications classes, the course counts towards both the communications major and minor and the journalism minor.

In the six years since Horn began teaching, many students have later gone on to work in the fields of PR and Advertising, but even those who haven’t have learned valuable skills. “The best prep for Ad and PR careers is a liberal arts background. It’s best to know a little bit about everything.”

Horn’s ‘formula’ works in just about any field of study, he continues. “If you’re going to be a professional in [any kind of] business, you have to put words on paper. The process [I teach] is always applicable.”

The class, which spends half of the semester covering Public Relations (mostly media releases) and the other half on Advertising, focuses on what Horn sees as the four basic principles. Students need to see the “Goal, audience, benefit, and call to action” in everything they do. According to Horn, they should ask, “What’s in it for me [the consumer]?”

The formula is simple, and students can easily succeed – with a little hard work and dedication. “Everyone can rise to the occasion,” Horn says. But he still acknowledges the limitations of the discipline. “You can’t study hard for it. There are people who will be better at it than others.”

However, that doesn’t mean that every student can’t do well. Part of Horn’s charm and teaching style is not to test students on what they don’t know, but to teach them how to succeed with the skills outlined in class. Students are given the opportunity to re-do most projects and are awarded a higher grade if significant improvement is

shown, and Horn makes every effort to be accessible to students via email or telephone when not in class.

His is an innovative approach for a university known for its difficult grading scale. And despite the demand for more classes such as this one, class size or section numbers aren’t growing – for a reason. Students are admitted on a request-only basis, and “screened” by Horn from the first interview. “I won’t put someone in the class who doesn’t have the skills to succeed,” he says.

Horn’s dedication to helping students has paid off: hands down, students agree that it is among the most practical, challenging, and entertaining classes they have taken while at Wake Forest... this reporter included.

“The best prep for Ad and PR careers is a liberal arts background. It’s best to know a little bit about everything.”

-Horn

MIKE HORN UP CLOSE

Public Relations and Advertising Professor Mike Horn leads quite a busy life outside of his time spent teaching at Wake Forest. He is a founding partner of Horn & Stronach Marketing, an Advertising and Public Relations firm, which has received national recognition for client advertising and public relations. Horn has personally received the Piedmont Triad Advertising Federation’s Silver Medal for Industry Recognition.

In 2001, Horn was elected mayor of Lewisville, NC, a small town about 10 miles outside of downtown Winston-Salem. He now serves as mayor pro-temp. Horn also serves as a judge for the American Advertising Federation’s National Student Advertising Competition and the American Advertising Federation’s National Addy Awards program.

PROMINENT IRISH POETS TAKE RESIDENCE IN TRIBBLE

Vona Groarke and Conor O'Callaghan are Poets in Residence with the English Department at Wake Forest University. They come from Dundalk in Ireland, half-way between Dublin and Belfast, and have been here with their two children, Tommy and Eve, since August, 2005. Conor O'Callaghan's poetry collections with the Gallery Press in Ireland include *The History of Rain* (1993), *Seatown* (1999), and *Fiction* (2005), which was shortlisted for Ireland's most significant poetry award, *The Irish Times Poetry Prize*, in 2006. *Seatown and Earlier Poems* (1994) and *Fiction* (2006) have been published in the U.S. by Wake Forest University Press. His best-selling prose memoir about Ireland's involvement in the 2002 soccer World Cup was published by Bloomsbury in London in 2004.

Vona Groarke has just published her fourth poetry collection in Ireland, with the title, *Juniper Street*. Her previous collections are *Shale*, *Other People's Houses* and *Flight*, published by the Gallery Press in 1994, 1999 and 2002 respectively. Wake Forest University Press published *Flight and Earlier Poems* in 2004 and will also publish *Juniper Street* later this year.

How do they find Wake Forest? "I like teaching," says Groarke. "The students here are very lively and engaged. This semester, I teach the Advanced Poetry Course, which is a great opportunity to discuss good poems with people who have an active curiosity and keen intelligence about what it is that makes a poem work well.

I find I learn a lot in our workshop discussions and come away each week invigorated and refreshed.

"It's a good environment for teaching and writing," agrees O'Callaghan, who teaches Introductory Poetry Writing this semester. "I use the workshop model, where students write a weekly poem to a set assignment, and then we talk about their work together in class. Discussions tend to be lively and spirited, but it's all good humored and constructive. I find the students tend to be very supportive of each other's work."

What about Winston-Salem: How does it compare with Dundalk? "Well, it's a lot less rainy," quips O'Callaghan. "The blue skies here are something else. You really don't get this kind of daylight in Ireland in winter-time. Or even in summer-time, come to think of it," he adds.

Groarke thinks Winston-Salem is a good place to get poems written: "not too many distractions, but just enough so you can find them when you want a quick splash of urban life."

"In some ways, it's just like home," O'Callaghan adds. "Dundalk is a tobacco town also. There's times I step outside my office, smell the air and think I'm suddenly back at home!"

With almost one year over, their aim for next year is to travel around North Carolina a bit more. "We know it's beautiful," Groarke says, "but the

months have flown by and it's been busy settling in and getting used to our new life here. Now it's time to explore a little, to get our feet wet in the Outer Banks, to wander along the back-streets of Charleston and maybe even to go camping in the Appalachians."

"Yes," agrees O'Callaghan. "I'd also like to learn the names of the birds and the trees in our back yard. I don't think I've ever owned a tree before."

"That's a good thing for a poet," he continues. "Who knows – our persimmon tree and its woodpecker might even find its way across the Atlantic into an Irish poem – I just hope it feels as much at home there as we do here!"

*"I'd also like to learn
the names of the birds
and the trees in our
backyard. I don't think
I've ever owned a tree
before."*

-O'Callaghan

ALUMNI UPDATES

Jennifer Smith Brooks '73 is a Unitarian minister on Nantucket Island, MA. Two of her poems were included in the anthology, *For All That is Our Life*, published by Skinner House Books last fall.

D. Quincy Whitney '74, formerly Dorothy Q. Gooding, spent fourteen years with *The Boston Sunday Globe* and is now working on a biography of Carleen Maley Hutchins, the 95-year-old American female violinmaker. She has received two fellowships from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to support the project. Whitney is also seeking a publisher for a memoir about her life as an identical twin.

Tom O'Toole '78 is the editor in charge of college sports coverage for *USA Today*. His daughter, Jackie, just completed her junior year at Wake Forest.

Eric Nickeson '79 has had a 25-year career in hospital finance and currently serves as director of reimbursement/charging at Parview Health in Fort Wayne, IN. He sings tenor in the Heartland Chamber Chorale. He and his wife, Ellie, who have two daughters, met at the Chautauqua Institution and continue to attend in the summers.

Virginia Seawright '79 is a second-grade teacher in San Diego, CA. Her daughter, Emily, just completed her sophomore year at Wake Forest.

Susan Massucco '88 received an MA in teaching from Boston University in '91 and taught advanced placement Literature and Humanities for three years before taking a ten-year break to raise three children and teach English as a Second Language. She's now returned to the classroom fulltime and teaches AP Literature, World Literature and tenth grade English.

Melissa Tuttle '92, MBA '02, lives in Huntersville, NC, and is a strategic planning manager for Lowe's Home Improvement in Mooresville, NC.

Russell Smith '93 serves as pastor of Covenant-First Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, OH. He is currently working on a series of classes on "The Gospel of Shakespeare" and writes russellsmusings.blogspot.com, a blog on faith, culture, and life.

Keil Gunther, '97, formerly Keil Mello, works as a Communications Manager for a NYSE traded reinsurance company in her home country of Bermuda.

Elizabeth Fogle, MA '98, formerly Elizabeth Parkhurst, is pursuing a MFA in Creative Writing and teaching English Composition at George College and State University in Milledgeville, GA.

Kate Cosgrove Linkous '99 took a position as a speechwriter for Senator Bill Frist this past summer. Previously, she was a speechwriter for the Lieutenant Governor of Texas.

Clare Douglass '00 is a Ph.D. candidate at UNC Chapel Hill with a focus in nineteenth-century British literature. She has spent part of the fall semester in London conducting research for her dissertation, which will focus on the illustrated fiction of Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Elizabeth Gaskell.

Cameron Wilson '00 is pursuing a MA in Speech Pathology at UNC Greensboro.



ALUMNI CONTINTUED

Jaime Francis '01 is pursuing an M.S./Ed.S in school counseling at UNC Greensboro.

Christopher DeVault '02 received a MA in English from Georgetown University in '04 and was an adjunct professor for a year at both the University of Mary Washington and Northern Virginia Community College. He is now pursuing a Ph.D. in English at the University of Miami.

Anita Woolley '02 has recently been promoted to Project Controls/Cost Administrator with Tishman Construction Corporation and is relocating to Nevada for a major construction project on the Las Vegas strip.

Ann Curby '03 is in her second year of law school at University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, and works as a paralegal at one of Australia's top law firms, Clayton Utz.

Halley Davis '04 is spending a year in Thailand doing service work. Previously, she was a Field Service Representative for the Second Harvest Food Bank in Nashville, TN.

Sarah Hensley Ware Dec. '04 is in her first year of law school at Chicago-Kent College of Law.

To current and former Majors, to old and new friends: "Do let us know what significant events have taken place in your life."

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We also welcome comments and suggestions for the newsletter. Don't forget to include your full name and graduation year!

Contributions to the Edwin Wilson Chair in British Literature fund may be sent to Ms. Cameron Meador, University Advancement, Wake Forest University, PO Box 7227, Winston-Salem, NC 27109.

Contributions to the Bashir El-Beshti Memorial fund may be sent to Dr. Eric Wilson, Chair, Committee for the El-Beshti Memorial Fund, Wake Forest University Dept. of English, P.O. Box 7387, Winston-Salem, NC 27109.

This fund has been established to provide for the educations of Dr. El-Beshti's children. For more information, please visit <http://www.wfu.edu/english/memorial.htm>

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