

# Look Who's TALKING

2010

Speech-Language Pathology

Alumni Association Newsletter University of Toronto

## A Tribute in Celebration of Carla Johnson

By Sheila MacDonald M.Cl.Sc. SLP(C) Reg. CASLPO

Throughout her stellar career Carla Johnson has been a model of integrity, collaboration, and excellence. My history with Carla began while I was a student at University of Western Ontario and she was a clinical supervisor. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have Carla's supervision appreciated her calm, professional approach. She used a method of collaborative coaching in which we analyzed our videotaped sessions, and stated two things we did well and one that we would change. For many of us, this became a life long practice of self evaluation. Carla's positive style of critical appraisal became a model that I and many others have followed in our own careers as supervisors and therapists.

Carla's contributions to the profession have extended well beyond her role as a professor of Speech-Language Pathology at University of Toronto. Her dedication to improving services for those with communication challenges has led her to contribute countless hours with professional associations, CASLPO, and in numerous collaborations. She has worked tirelessly to further professional education and ensure clinical excellence. Our colleague, former UWO student, and current faculty member at Dalhousie, Pat Cleave mused about the irony in Carla's early counsel to her to learn to say "no" more often, a practice Carla clearly hasn't followed very often herself!

Carla has always viewed our profession as a community of colleagues and she created many connections among clinicians and researchers throughout that community. It was Carla's initial invitation to Theresa Young to speak to her class on multicultural issues that led to Theresa's early collaboration with Fern Westernoff, and their later creation of the OSLA multicultural/multilingual interest group. This group is now an international resource for clinicians. Theresa wanted to acknowledge Carla's initiative and insight into the importance of multiculturalism which led to a multitude of professionals receiving education pertaining to embracing the diversity that our clients bring to us.

It was also Carla's generosity of spirit that led to my success in publishing a standardized assessment measure called the



Functional Assessment of Verbal Reasoning and Executive Strategies. Carla believed in the concept of clinician researchers and felt committed to assisting clinicians in the field who wanted to take an idea further. Throughout the process, Carla acted as a mentor who ensured that the assessment tool met the most rigorous of statistical standards. Her involvement included many hours of meetings, ratings for inter-rater reliability, and editing of several drafts of our article. All of this was donated time, given selflessly in the interest of improving clinical service.

Carla's high standards in research and publication are well known. Consistent with Carla's lifelong dedication to clinical excellence, she published one of the first papers on evidence based practice in our profession. (Johnson, C. J. (2006). Getting started in evidence-based practice for childhood speech and language disorders. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 15, 20-35). This important and helpful resource received an award of excellence. Carla and I published two studies in *Brain Injury* together. The first was accepted without a single revision required! This was a welcome occurrence and one that I'll no doubt struggle to duplicate!

Carla's patience and dedication are phenomenal. There are not many who have been able to persevere long enough to conduct

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The Alumni Association is going green! If you would prefer to receive your annual newsletter electronically, send an email with the subject 'SLP alum e-newsletter' to [address.update@utoronto.ca](mailto:address.update@utoronto.ca). Help us make a difference!

## Distinguished Service Award 2009 – Dr. Robert Kroll

On November 12, 2009, the Alumni Association proudly awarded the 2009 Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Robert Kroll at the annual departmental awards breakfast. For more information on this award, see the description below. Dr. Kroll delivered an excellent speech, outlining his relationship and experiences with the SLP department over the past 30 years. The SLP Alumni Newsletter Committee is excited to share some of the highlights of Dr. Kroll's acceptance speech.

"It seems like not very long ago when I was invited to lunch by the former chair of the Dept of SLP Jean Walker to talk about the possibility of my potential involvement with the program. Believe it or not, that was well over 30 years ago. At that time I was a young newly graduated Ph.D., still feeling my way around the Speech Pathology Department (then known as the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry) and becoming acclimatized to the professional community in Toronto. In her most gracious fashion, Professor Walker spoke with pride and enthusiasm about her University program and left me feeling both complimented and excited to begin my involvement with U of T. I guess that my calling in life has been to teach... Teach people of all ages, whether University students, clients of all ages with speech and language issues or even mentoring colleagues who are just entering the profession.

I have always felt that one of the strongest points about our program at the U of T is the abundance of clinical experience that stu-



Dr. Kroll during his acceptance speech for the Distinguished Service Award on November 12, 2009.

dents obtain here. It has indeed been a privilege to have been selected as one of the clinical educators and to have the opportunity to work with the many talented students that have passed through the clinics that I have worked at. Having been in the field this long, it is so gratifying to see so many of my former students develop and go on to contribute immensely to our field and become leaders that we are proud of."

Dr. Kroll went on to thank some of the people who have influenced his time in the department:

"I would like to extend sincere thanks to Professor Jean Walker, for inviting me to join the Department back in the mid 1970's. And also to the chairs that succeeded Jean and continued to place their confidence in me, Professors Margaret Stoicheff, Paula Square and Luc De Nil. I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues George Shields and Margit Pukonen who welcomed me as I joined what was then called the Speech Foundation of Ontario and enabled me to introduce our clinical, teaching and research programs within the newly formed Speech and Stuttering Institute. I will always give thanks to Marlene Stein, who saw the importance of our clinical program and pulled out all the stops to maintain the service during the restructuring of health services. And to all of the many faculty, staff and students that I have had occasion to work with, this has indeed been and continues to be wonderful voyage. Thank you to all."

*Robert Kroll*

### Distinguished Service Award: Nominate your peers!

By Pamela Rahn, OT6

In an effort to recognize University of Toronto Department of Speech-Language Pathology alumni who have made outstanding contributions to the fields of communication disorders and swallowing, the Alumni Association selects one recipient annually who excels in at least two of the following areas of achievement:

#### Academic

- Exceptional contribution to research, teaching, and/or student training

#### Clinical Services

- Viewed by colleagues as a mentor or

resource due to professional and clinical expertise

- Implementation or involvement in innovative programs for the benefit of clients

#### Promotion of the Profession

- Volunteer involvement with the college and/or professional associations

- Professional representation on committees and/or health-related boards

- Involvement in innovative speech-language pathology program development (e.g., in hospital, school board, preschool centre, rehabilitation centres, private practice, etc.)

- Promotion of speech-language pathology to health professional, community groups, clients, students etc.

Nominations should include a brief letter outlining evidence of excellence in two of the above areas of achievement as well as a completed nomination form.

Nomination forms will be made available on the SLP alumni website at <http://www.slp.utoronto.ca/community/alumni.htm>.

Please submit your nomination to the alumni executive faculty representative by September 15th, 2010

### CARLA JOHNSON CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

longitudinal research spanning over 20 years as she has done!! Her motivation has been based on the belief that everyone in the field, clinicians and researchers, association staff, and College executives, has a role to play in improving service to those with communication challenges. Everything she has done in her career has been based on her philosophy that intervention for those with communication disorders will be enhanced if educational, clinical, research, and professional endeavors are collaborative. I've no doubt that as we weave together the many threads of Carla's career, we will marvel about the many facets of her contributions that we

did not know about. As a person, she is kind, unassuming, and very modest about her accomplishments, working diligently and with the utmost integrity at research, teaching, and encouraging a multitude of clinical research partnerships along the way. I am honoured and privileged to have had the benefit of her dedication.

Carla's influence extends well beyond the halls of the universities in which she has served, and into the hearts and minds of those she has mentored to be the best clinicians and researchers they can be. So on this occasion I know you will join me in congratulating Carla on her many contributions to the field and in wishing her many more rewarding collaborations in the future!!!

# YEAR 1

## Class of 2011

By Ruth Levin and Melissa James

Wide eyes, sweaty palms, racing pulses ... whether it was our first days of school, exam periods, or the endearing children we worked with during assignments and placements, the class of 2011 has become all but too familiar with these traits.

It is hard to believe that it has only been a few months since formally beginning this road to becoming SLPs. Though we may have lost some of our sanity and arguably decreased our calibre of humour (e.g. finding people dressed up as "Pop-Up Pirates" hilarious), the extent of our learning and the skills we are developing, both professionally and personally, continue to be invaluable. We find that it is fitting to describe our experiences thus far in the form of a SOAP note.

**Subjective:** The class of 2011 began the year excited, anxious, and most of all relieved to have been accepted into the program. They were grateful to the 2nd years for planning fantastic Orientation Week activities and were hopeful to make new friends. Although initially unaware that speech and language are not the same, and traumatized by terms such as pterygomandibular fossa and velopharyngeal insufficiency, the class demonstrated enthusiasm and determination to survive the next 2 years.

**Objective:** The class of 2011 remained attentive and engaged, 80% of the time, with enough coffee. They proudly represented the department of Speech Language Pathology at the Blue Jays game, and provided clear explanations to onlookers that it was in fact a larynx on their royal blue shirts, and not a lobster. They demonstrated appropriate pragmatic behaviour at Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club, and showed good motor coordination and problem solving abilities during the Amazing Race Challenge that took place all over downtown Toronto. Voice and resonance quality were astounding, as demonstrated by the delightful and hilarious performances by the year one choir, "The Glottal Stops." As well, students initiated social interactions by forming a "rehab" volleyball team, and organizing pot lucks and nights out.

**Assessment:** The class of 2011 are fortunate for their wonderful professors, faculty, and clinical educators. They are also so grateful for the support and wisdom provided by the U of T Alumni members. Although the amount of new information and demanding course work may be overwhelming at times, they have established a strong rapport with one another, resulting in the development of support groups and effective coping strategies.

**Plan:** The class of 2011 will continue to develop their skill set over the next year and a half, and learn how to consolidate prior knowledge with novel information pertinent to Speech Language Pathology (e.g. Raspberries are also a lip exercise, and shimmer and jitter are not necessarily dance moves). Most importantly, they will do their best to take advantage of each moment in this program, as it is going by far too fast!



The Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association is constantly striving to improve student life at the Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology, University of Toronto. Your help is invaluable in helping us reach our goals. If you wish to participate in improving the student experience you can do so by completing the pledge form below. You can mail or fax the form to the address listed, or use the following link:



<https://www.donations.utoronto.ca/medicine/medicine.aspx>

Yes! I would like to support the Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association at the University of Toronto.

<p><b>GIFT INFORMATION</b></p> <p>I have enclosed a gift of \$ _____ to be directed to:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Speech-Language Pathology Annual Fund 0560002755</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Margaret Stoicheff Bursary 0560006980</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Paula Square Travel Award 0560010817</p>	<p>NAME: _____</p> <p>ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>TEL.: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Please reply by mail or fax to:</u> Office of Advancement, Faculty of Medicine University of Toronto Medical Sciences Building, Room 2306 1 King's College Circle Toronto ON M5S 1A8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FAX 416-946-7722</p>
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# Y E A R

**T**hroughout this two-year Speech-Language Pathology program we have been exposed to classroom-based learning, as well as experienced practical learning through clinical placements. While course work offers us the theoretical foundation, our placements provide us with invaluable hands-on experience that contributes to the development of our clinical skills. Clinical educators play a vital role in facilitating this process. We would like to recognize the time and effort that is involved in mentoring a student clinician. As such, we thought of no better way to describe our appreciation than to express the thoughts of some of our classmates.

“In my experience, two indispensable qualities for a clinical educator to possess include the ability to build the student’s confidence and to provide constructive feedback.”

“My clinical educator specialized in the assessment and management of adults with developmental delays. She is a compassionate clinician, who provides a collaborative, research-based, and naturalistic approach to therapy for this challenging, yet wonderful, population. She is my personal role-model and I



By Christine Hardy and Stefanie Haws

Members of the Year 2 class, on a night away from their textbooks.

wish to someday reach her level of professionalism and care.”

“It truly was a wonderful experience because my clinical educator provided a very comfortable, non-judgemental environment that enabled me to grow as a student clinician.”

“My clinical educator has helped me grow as a future-clinician by creating an environment that allows me to take risks and make mistakes. I am developing the skills to be flexible in sessions and have learned a lot through trial and error. I have learned that mistakes will only lead to improvements.”

“She demonstrates her approach to assessment and treatment, and yet encourages me to create a style of my own.”

“My clinical educator has emphasized the importance of

working closely with other disciplines. This has allowed me to expand my understanding of team members’ roles and responsibilities and to develop an awareness of their contribution to client success.”

“My clinical educator created an atmosphere in which I felt comfortable asking questions and expressing my concerns. I am truly grateful for her dedication to my learning and development of clinical skills, as I gained confidence and new knowledge each day.”

“We, as students being evaluated, thrive off of body language. This being said, a smile goes a long, long way.”

Many thanks to the clinical educators and U of T SLP Alumna who contribute to our experiences!

## ALUMNI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Layout by Ken Carriere

## Sonia Reichman (1948 - 2009) Speech Language Pathologist from the U of T class of 1988



**I**t was with sadness one year ago when the Toronto Speech Pathology community learned of the sudden and tragic passing of Sonia Reichman on March 17, 2009. Sonia was a mentor, colleague, and friend to many in our professional and educational communities. Interested in neurogenic communication disorders, she began her professional work at Riverdale Hospital in 1988, becoming supervisor of the Division of Speech Language Pathology from 1990 - 1992, and Director of Communication Disorders at Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care from 1993 - 2008. Her professional interests included dyslexia, and in addition to her full-time position, Sonia maintained a private practice on weekends providing literacy therapy. In June 2008 Sonia expanded this private practice to full time, serving children and adults with dyslexia. Over the course of her professional career, she lectured within the Department of Speech Language Pathology at U of T, participated in, and coordinated clinical education for students. She collaborated in aphasia research with publications in peer review journals, founded the Aphasia Interest Group in Toronto, and co-founded the Ontario Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. She is survived by her daughter, Hanna Novak, her mother, Dolly Reichman, and her younger sister, Judy Rom. Her voice of wisdom and humour is missed by all who knew her.

By Valerie Fish, 8T8

# WHO dat?

By Mohamed Oshalla, OT9

From November 19 to 21, several thousand speech-language pathologists and audiologists converged on the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, for the 2009 American Speech and Hearing Association Annual Convention. Every year, a gathering of this magnitude occurs, where the hard work of clinicians and researchers is shared in a forum dedicated to learning and the advancement of our professions. What was different about this year, however, was the large delegation of graduates and staff from the University of Toronto who gathered in the great city of N'awlins.

The many domains of speech-language pathology were not only represented in the posters, presentations, and workshops at the convention, but also in the U of T group. Speech, language, fluency, swallowing and hearing disorders across the lifespan were well-represented by U of T alumni and faculty. Several alumni presented posters and made presentations that drew considerable interest. One alumnus seemed to have reached star status, being recognized and approached with fanfare by adoring S-LPs on Bourbon Street!

U of T alumni enjoyed evenings taking in the charm of New Orleans. Be it sipping on mango daiquiris and riding the whale on Bourbon Street (you know who you are!), savoring fresh Gulf Coast oysters at the Acme Oyster Shack, taking in the sweet sounds of Frenchman Street, or walking along the Ghost Tour, U of T alumni didn't hold back on having a grand ol' time.



Bourbon Street featuring U of T SLP alumni (L to R) Deryk Beal, Sarah Strathy, Lisa McQueen, Steve Wilcox, Sonja Molfenter, and Ian Roth (photo: Mo Oshalla).

## RESEARCH CORNER CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

Deryk and Maria celebrated the birth of their first child, Emilija Joyce, a mere 20 months ago. Apparently, she's a great traveler too (short and long distance). Deryk acknowledged that he is an avid hockey and basketball fan, but truthfully said that he hasn't been playing much lately (so there has been some sacrifice). However, he has managed to swim to the island and back to his dock at the cottage a few times a year along with the odd canoe ride!

### Next Steps

Deryk is headed to Boston, to work in Dr. Frank Guenther's laboratory for three years. This postdoctoral research is supported by a

Canadian Institutes for Health Research Fellowship. Deryk will investigate models of stuttering using a well-established computerized neuronetwork for fluent speech. He would like to use the model to pose questions about stuttering, and alter the neuronetwork model to produce stutter-like speech. Deryk's final goal is to secure a tenure-track position as faculty, anywhere in the world. It sounds as though there will be lots of future travelling for Maria and Emilija to enjoy!

We wish Deryk a continued fruitful research career. If you are interested in finding out more about Deryk's projects and future plans, you can reach him at [d.beal@utoronto.ca](mailto:d.beal@utoronto.ca).

As we move forward into the new decade, social networking sites have become a convenient and popular way for many people to stay in touch. One such site is Facebook, which has become, arguably, the most widely used of its kind. Those who are familiar with the site find it a fun way to share thoughts, opinions, and photos with friends. Some might also say it's a great way to procrastinate or get absorbed in daily drama!

UTAA on

facebook

Facebook users are also familiar with the option of creating and/or joining public or private interest "groups" on the site. Thanks to Pamela Rahn, the UTAA now has its own Facebook group. The intention of the group is to expand the UTAA network, and create a medium through which grads can stay connected with recent happenings within the UTAA, the U of T alumni community, and the S-LP community at large.

By Mohamed Oshalla, OT9

The group currently consists of 120+ members. If you haven't joined, all you need to do is to enter "U of T SLP Alumni" in the search bar at the top of any Facebook page once you have signed in. If you do not currently have a Facebook profile, signing up is easy: just follow the prompts, starting at <http://www.facebook.com>, and your profile will be up within minutes. Facebook offers privacy settings that enable you to control who sees what of your profile. It is important, however, to read the terms of your agreement carefully before you sign up.



# BRINGING THE PIECES TOGETHER IN FLUENCY RESEARCH: ONE STEP AT A TIME

By Heather Flowers, OT4

This year, the alumni association would like to highlight the research of our former-president and soon-to-be PhD graduate, Deryk Beal. Deryk is very close to defending his PhD dissertation and is busy packing for a move to Boston for a three-year postdoctoral position, yet he graciously agreed to an interview, providing comments of interest to research and clinical professionals. The extracted content (not verbatim) should provide great food for thought in the area of fluency research and also depict research (and life) in action!

## Deryk's Background

Deryk is originally from Brantford, a city about one hour west of Toronto. This city is known in the worlds of hockey and telephone communications, as both Wayne Gretzky and Alexander Graham Bell spent their formative years there. Let's hope Deryk puts SLP on the map, too! In 1998, Deryk completed his undergraduate at Huron College at the University of Western Ontario with a 4 year honours B.A. in psychology and linguistics. He graduated from the M.H.Sc. program in SLP at UofT in 2000. Deryk spoke with pride about his clinical years at the Toronto District School Board and the Hospital for Sick Children (HSC). He readily gave merit to colleagues that had mentored or inspired his practice, such as Joanne Shimotakahara and David Haffner, and to those that had influenced his entry into research, such as Drs. Eric Bouffet and Donald Mabbott from HSC.

## Deciding on PhD Studies

There were a few deciding factors for Deryk before he made the leap into PhD studies. The first was Deryk's work at HSC on the neurotrauma and neurooncology teams, where Dr. Bouffet fostered interdisciplinary work on team projects. Deryk became involved in looking at clinical speech and language behavioural outcomes as part of this team. The second inspiration was a long-standing interest in stuttering, coupled with Deryk's relationship with Dr. Luc DeNil through the Alumni Association. And finally, even though he entered the PhD program before securing the Clinician Scientist Training Fellowship at HSC, Deryk commented that this final piece showed him that "the stars were aligned".

## Primary Research Focus

Deryk's dissertation research has focused on how brain structure and function differ in children and adults who stutter relative to their fluent peers. This research has contributed novel findings and has also contradicted some stuttering theories. Deryk's MRI findings in the area of brain structure have suggested that compared with fluent peers children who stutter have less grey matter in speech relevant areas and that adults who stutter have more grey matter in speech relevant areas.

In his research of brain function, Deryk used magnetoencephalography (MEG) to study auditory responses to one's own vocalizations during speech playback or during active vocalization. These behavioral findings showed that in adult fluent speakers, the auditory response is suppressed during active vocalization compared to during speech playback and, in adults and children who stutter, there is the same suppression of active vocalization compared to speech playback. However, he found that children and adults who stutter took a longer time to process auditory speech information than the fluent adult speakers.

Deryk commented that the brain function findings might relate to different developmental trajectories in neuronal population for children who stutter compared to those that speak fluently. Concerning the behavioral findings, Deryk's work does not support previous theories based on fMRI literature. The sparse fMRI literature (primarily in adults) proposed that persons who stutter had more auditory suppression of speech than fluent speakers. Deryk's research showed no difference in auditory suppression between fluent speakers and those who stutter. However, his studies provided new information, suggesting that increased auditory processing time for speech sounds may be responsible for stuttering behaviors.

## Work-Life Balance

It was refreshing to hear Deryk describe a life outside of his studies that attested to his work-life balance. Deryk's wife, Maria, loves to travel, and ensures that they go on distant trips. When they can't get far away, they enjoy spending time at their cottage north of Huntsville. Through all the travelling, cottaging and PhD studies,

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