



## Well done

### *Retiring Faculty 2002*

Eleven professors, with an average of 25 years service to the JMU faculty, retired in May. Following are brief biographies of each.

#### **Robert Atkins**

Chemistry professor Robert Atkins, who chaired the safety committee of the chemistry department, acted as a premedical adviser for the last 20 years and implemented a chemical laboratory safety course within the chemistry department. In addition to his faculty work, he served as a technical adviser to the Harrisonburg Fire Department and the JMU and Harrisonburg City Police Departments. He is the co-author of *Organic Chemistry: A Brief Course*, an organic chemistry textbook currently in its third edition. During his 31 years on the JMU faculty, Atkins researched at the National Cancer Institute and at the Process Safety Laboratory of Merck & Co. Inc. He says, "These experiences provided an opportunity to expand my learning horizon and to incorporate that learning into my teaching and research upon returning to JMU."

#### **Ashton Bishop**

Accounting professor Ashton Bishop, who brought significant acclaim to JMU's accounting program through the inception of the *Journal of Accounting Education*, retires after 21 years of service to JMU. Bishop came to JMU in February 1981 as a visiting professor and was soon offered a faculty position. Together with Ralph Benke, Bishop established the *Journal of Accounting Education* and then served as treasurer and manuscript editor for the accounting education publication. Bishop taught courses in cost accounting and managerial accounting and chaired the committee that prepared the School of Accounting Academic Program Review Report that led to significant curriculum changes in 1998.

#### **Jean Dalton**

Kinesiology professor Jean Dalton, who coached the women's fencing team for 16 years, served on the JMU faculty for 30 years. Dalton finds her long stay at JMU interesting considering she came to JMU in 1972 on a one-year contract. As the graduate coordinator for the School of Kinesiology and Recreation Studies, Dalton ensured that the curriculum maintained national standards and assisted in raising enrollment. She was also the primary researcher on an interdisciplinary software project between the 1999 kinesiology and biology departments. Dalton received an "Inspiration Award" from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education after being nominated by a previous student in recognition of her influence.

#### **Phillip Grayson**

A professor for 26 years, Phillip Grayson also served as director of technical production in the School of Theatre and Dance. Before joining the JMU faculty, Grayson worked with Illusion Corp., the company that designed and built Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Va. Grayson's contributions to the JMU community include designing the stage rigging, lighting and sound equipment for the renovation of Wilson Auditorium and Latimer/Shaeffer Theatre, as well as the conversion of the Godwin Hall dance studios into viable performance spaces. He also helped upgrade the facilities in JMU's Experimental Theatre. He says, "I

intend to stay active in local theatre, restore old British cars and motorcycles, raise chickens, goats, horses, hay and maybe a few pigs and enjoy sending my children off to college ... I will probably not write the great American novel, nor run for president."

## **Joseph Hollis**

Accounting professor Joseph Hollis, who served the JMU faculty for 26 years, founded and acted as faculty sponsor for the JMU Accounting Honor Society and JMU's chapter of Beta Alpha Psi, the national accounting honor society. Finding jobs and internships for accounting students proved to be a major part of Hollis' JMU life. He created the first internship program for accounting majors and instigated the first Jobs Fair held on campus. Recognized twice as the Outstanding Teacher in the College of Business, Hollis achieved the goal put forth to him, upon his hiring, by Ronald Carrier, to help "make James Madison University the best undergraduate university in the United States."

## **J. Gerald Minskoff**

Special education professor Jerry Minskoff served as coordinator of special education graduate programs. Prior to joining the JMU faculty in 1975, he served as executive director of the Groves Learning Center in Minnesota; professor of special education at Southern Connecticut University; and as assistant professor of educational psychology at New York University. At JMU, Minskoff served as coordinator of special education for nine years and he successfully wrote federal grant applications for teacher preparation in special education. He says, "One of my important memories at JMU was serving as a faculty-member-in-residence for the London Study Abroad Program and being the first faculty member to supervise students at JMU's Madison House in central London."

## **Joan Pierson**

Information and decision sciences professor Joan Pierson served on the JMU faculty for 16 years. Pierson, who was active nationally and internationally in curriculum development, specialized in IS curriculum development/evaluation and in evaluating information technology in academic institutions. She recently completed a leave at the University of Wollongong in Australia, where she developed a distance-education project in collaboration with the university's IDS department. Pierson received a Fulbright Scholarship to study in the West Indies in 1985 and 1986, and in 1996 she was selected by College of Business students as the outstanding undergraduate faculty member.

## **Gregory Versen**

Professor of social work Greg Versen joined the social work faculty in 1977 - the year Madison College became James Madison University. Versen taught courses in social welfare, social work practice and aging, in addition to acting as director of field placement. He was granted an educational leave for Spring 1995, where he served on the staff for the White House Conference on Aging (Washington, D.C.). Versen founded the Central District Social Workers Association and co-chaired a number of gerontology seminars and aging symposia, which have been hosted on the JMU campus. Versen was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Virginia Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers in 2001.

Also retiring, but unavailable for comment are: Charlotte Graves, professor of secondary education; Cletus Sellers, professor of health sciences and director of the JMU Center for Prehealth Resources; and Robert J. Vanderwarker Jr., professor of kinesiology.

*Story by Allison Swanson ('02)*