Man's legacy helps UW program

This is a story about a man who loved poetry, his three sons who graduated from the University of Washington, and the bonds that tie a community to a university.

The story will be retold on Feb. 12 in the introduction to the second annual Afrassiabi Memorial Lecture, which honors Hoozang Afrassiabi, a leader of the local Iranian community who died two years ago.

The story really begins in Iran, where Afrassiabi was mayor of Shiraz, known for centuries as a city of roses, nightingales and wondrous wine.

After the turmoil of the 1979 revolution sent Afrassiabi to faraway Seattle, he soothed his homecoming by listening to cassette tapes of his son Amin’s UW Persian literature classes.

Soon, Afrassiabi got to meet the man behind the voice, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, a UW professor of Near Eastern languages and civilization and author of a dozen books. The émigré politician and émigré professor became close friends.

So when the senior Afrassiabi died, another son, Ali, a physician, pledged $25,000 to create an endowed fund in his father’s name to support the study of Persian civilizations. Until the endowment becomes self-sustaining, Ali Afrassiabi also has provided more than $2,000 extra each year for activities in Near Eastern languages and civilization.

Senators resolve

"Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate is in general agreement with the Statement passed by the Senate Executive Committee which reads: The Faculty Senate of the University of Washington has a long-standing commitment to the principle of enabling legislation for collective bargaining by the University Faculty. At the same time, the Senate Executive Committee wishes to state for the record that this Faculty cannot support any particular enabling legislation bill unless and until the University Faculty Senate has reviewed fully such legislation."

The Senate Executive Committee directs the Faculty Legislative Representative to communicate this position to all interested parties.

"This is an excellent example of how a community can build something of interest to their own culture."

Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak

UW professor

Hakkak said of some top-flight candidates, "They have to live with poverty."

The UW, indeed, is one of only a handful of schools offering a comprehensive slate of Persian language and literature and Iran-related courses, said Michael Williams, chairman of the department of Near Eastern languages and civilization.

And along with its scholarly contributions, the UW program has made in recent years to understanding Persian achievements.

And it all started with a politician who loved poetry.

"This is an excellent example of how a community can build something of interest to their own culture," said Karimi-Hakkak.

Steven Goldsmith, News & Information

Authors hope book gives readers knowledge

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World," published last month.

"It occurred to me that people in the sciences are bombarded with terms, phrases and innovations, and that there is a new world. Many people do not like to be in this new world. They just pretend they are."

David Barash, a zoologist who is a professor of psychology at the University of California, San Diego, is a graduate of the Early Entrance Program at the University of Washington and the author of a research paper on the obesity hormone leptin.

"I was very interested in getting a book out there for people who didn’t have a lot of science background to help them understand the new ideas about biology," said Ilona Barash. "The book is about our place in the natural world and how everything ties together and how we fit into it."

The title of their book, as they explain in the preface, stems from a scene in Ray Bradbury's science fiction novel "The Martian Chronicles." In it, a human family that has escaped from Mars to an impending nuclear war peers into the "canals" of their new home expecting to see Martians. And they do, seeing their own reflections.

"Like Ray Bradbury's Martians, we can all profit by looking carefully at our own mammalian reflections," the Barashes write.

Those reflections are quite extensive. The Barashes have put together a primer that explores and explains the biological world that we live in and the vast strides that science has made in recent years in understanding biology. It's a book that roams over an expansive territory extending from the cellular level to humanity's role on Earth.

"The Mammal in the Mirror" looks at a landscape that the Barashes have divided into three major sections. It begins at the microscopic and submicroscopic level, discussing DNA, genes, viruses and cells. Then it looks at human biological systems of sex and reproduction, the brain and behavior, and food and energy — systems they say that are not as familiar to most of us as our automobiles or televisions.

Finally, the book takes a longer view and examines human life, and life in general, in the larger context of ecology, evolution and sociobiology.

"I would hope that people get a sense of excitement of what's going on in biology," said David Barash. "What we wrote about is not rocket science. There is nothing at the core that is that a typical person can't understand. We just want people to know more about biology and that there is nothing to be afraid of. Biology is quite astounding."

Joel Schwartz, News & Information

University Week

INTEGRITY 101: J. Patrick Dobel, associate dean of the Evans School of Public Affairs and author of "Public Integrity: A Study of the Nature of Integrity for Public Leaders."

WHAT A GUY! Dr. Jonathan Wakefield, associate professor in the departments of statistics and biostatistics, was awarded the Guy Medal in Bronze for 2000 by the Royal Statistical Society. Dr. Wakefield's citation refers in particular to his published research on the development of statistical methods, with applications to spatial epidemiology and to population pharmacokinetic modeling.

SEA GRANT AWARDS: The Washington Sea Grant Program received an "Excellence in Education" award from the national evaluation team organized by the National Sea Grant College Program. The evaluating team's report noted that WSGP "substantially exceeds the benchmarks of expected performance" in program management, marine research and outreach activities. And on Jan. 20, WSGP won the "Distinguished Award" for its program brochure and 2000 calendar poster in the 1999 Society for Technical Communications awards competition. The brochure and calendar were written by David G. Gordon, designed by Robyn Rick's and illustrated by Joel Nakamura. The program also won an "Excellence in Education" award for its Web site, "Oyster Sew," which includes features and developments in Washington's oyster industry. That project was led by Nancy Blanton, designed by Rick's and produced by Susan Cook and Jay del Rosario.

TOP SCHOLAR: Jaime Diaz, a UW professor of psychology, was recently selected as a Carnegie Scholar for the 2000-2001 academic year. Diaz will be working with Carnegie in the College of Education on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Diaz is the third UW faculty member to receive this prestigious national honor. He will pursue research into the use of computer tutorials to improve student learning.

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