A Pillar of Rutgers Says Farewell
By Carla Capizzi

This spring Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration Gene A. Vincenti will begin a new life chapter: retirement with his wife, Regina, at his side. But his impact on the campus will be felt long after he is gone.

Vincenti arrived on campus in 1967, part of the first generation in his family to get a college education, the fourth son of an Italian immigrant father. Most of today’s buildings did not exist, a few were under construction, and the gravel parking lots became mudflats when it rained. After earning a bachelor of arts degree, Vincenti remained on campus to earn a master’s in business administration.

His Rutgers work life began in New Brunswick in 1973, but he returned to Newark in 1976 as assistant provost under Provost James Young. Over the decades, Vincenti was also a key member of the leadership teams of Provost Norman Samuels and Chancellor Steven J. Diner.

As part of the three teams, he helped spur “the growth of Rutgers-Newark’s human, fiscal and physical resources over the last several decades in service to the people of New Jersey,” he notes.

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**Renowned Scientist, Author and Playwright Carl Djerassi to Receive Honorary Degree**

By Ferlanda Fox Nixon

An Honorary Doctor of Science degree will be bestowed upon Carl Djerassi during this year’s commencement ceremony for the Newark College of Arts and Sciences and University College-Newark. Djerassi also will deliver the commencement address.

Djerassi, emeritus professor of chemistry at Stanford University, is a renowned scientist, educator, author, playwright and philanthropist who has achieved excellence in both science and the arts. He was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1923, and moved to the U.S. in the 1930s. He attended high school and junior college in Newark. After receiving his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin, he worked in the private sector before becoming a professor.

Perhaps best known as the first to synthesize a steroid oral contraceptive – norethindrone, commonly known as “the Pill,” for which he received the National Medal of Science in 1973, he also has conducted path-breaking work in the areas of steroid anti-inflammatory agents and antihistamines. He is credited with pioneering research in synthetic organic chemistry and medicinal chemistry, and made contributions in the insect control field for which he received the National Medal of Technology in 1981. He has published more than 1,200 articles and seven books on organic chemistry.

For the past 20 years, Djerassi has turned to fiction writing, mostly in the genre of “science-in-fiction” novels and “science-in-theater” plays that examine the human side of scientists and the conflicts they face in their quest for scientific knowledge, personal recognition and financial reward. His works on the culture and behavior of scientists include five highly successful novels and eight plays that have been presented on stages from New York, to London, to Tokyo.

The recipient of many honors and awards and more than 20 honorary degrees, Djerassi was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1978. An Austrian postage stamp honoring him was issued in 2004.

**Former Governor Christine Todd Whitman Presents SPAA with Scholarship Gifts to Advance Women Studying Public Service**

By Ferlanda Fox Nixon

The School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) has received two very generous gifts from former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman and her husband, John Whitman. The largest gift, in the amount of $100,000, establishes the Christine Todd Whitman Endowed Scholarship. The second gift of $5,500 establishes the Christine Todd Whitman Annual Scholarship. Both gifts will be used to provide financial assistance to women enrolled at SPAA.

“John and I are passionate about giving back to the community and especially committed to supporting women and women’s education,” noted Whitman. “Study after study has shown that advancing women is one of the best things any society can do, and we’re pleased to play a small part in that quest at Rutgers.”

Whitman served as the 50th governor of New Jersey from 1994-2001. She was the first, and to date, only female elected governor in New Jersey. A champion of diversity, Whitman, as governor, appointed the New Jersey Supreme Court’s first African-American justice and female chief justice. She also appointed New Jersey’s first female attorney general.

“We are sincerely grateful to the Whitmans for their generosity and desire to further the educational aspirations of our students,” said Marc Holzer, dean of SPAA. “These gifts will allow us to continue to attract talented women interested in pursuing careers in public service. Who knows … it’s very possible a recipient of the Whitmans’ beneficence may one day find herself elevated to the rank of governor of the State of New Jersey.”

Governor Christine Todd Whitman
An Actor Who Means Business

Hail and Best Wishes…

fellowship clinched his decision to start a new career in law, public affairs and criminal justice, with a program at Rutgers, which incorporated what he already knew in the small to provide solutions for a wide array of areas ranging from cancer detection and treatment, to environmental protection, to homeland defense. She also is a well respected teacher known for her ability to make challenging scientific topics understandable and relevant to her students, for which she was awarded the 2009 Rutgers Presidential Fellowship for Teaching Excellence.

Help for Haiti

The Rutgers community has responded on a number of fronts to assist the people of Haiti following the January 12 earthquake that left thousands homeless and destroyed much of the capital city. The annual Chancellor’s Research Day will take place April 22, 12 Rutgers researchers will gather in the Paul Robeson Campus Center as part of a prestigious showcase of faculty scholarship. The dozen, representing all eight schools at Rutgers in Newark, will be challenged to condense their research into presentations lasting only several minutes each, as part of Chancellor’s Research Day. The program evolved from the 2002 Norman Samuels’ Research Day, a tribute upon Samuels’ retirement as provost, recognizing his role in developing R-N as a strong research center during his two decades as provost. His successor, Steven J. Diner, has continued the tradition, embracing it as an opportunity for faculty to share their work with colleagues and students, and “open the door to collaboration.” The annual Chancellor’s Research Day will take place April 22, from 2 – 5 p.m., in the Paul Robeson Campus Center Multipurpose Room. It is open to the campus community. Vice Dean Ronald Chen, Rutgers School of Law-Newark, and Anela Laguna-Díaz, professor, Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures, will act as moderators as faculty members present research in disciplines ranging from the sciences, to the arts, to public affairs and law.

On the PLAZA

Showcasing Faculty Scholarship

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Help for Haiti

The Rutgers community has responded on a number of fronts to assist the people of Haiti following the January 12 earthquake that left thousands homeless and destroyed much of the capital city. The campus center is also being made available, free of charge, for Haitian fund-raising events by outside organizations. Meanwhile, several campus organizations have been conducting fund-raising efforts. Leading one of those efforts is Arthur B. Powell, associate professor and chair of the Urban Education Department, who is helping to raise money to rebuild one of the grade schools destroyed in Port-au-Prince. Powell is co-founder of Elevating Learning Above Teaching (ELAT), which was completely destroyed by the quake. The institutions that partner with ELAT on its teacher development programs are also partnering in the project to rebuild the school. Educational Solutions Worldwide Inc., Rutgers University, LTL Strategies, and Mona Foundation. For more information on the campus’s Haiti Relief efforts, go to www.newark.rutgers.edu/haiti/.
John Floreen Reflects on 30 Years Conducting the Rutgers University Chorus

By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

When John Floreen arrived at Rutgers University in Newark in 1979 to serve as conductor of the Rutgers University Chorus, he was presented with a major challenge. The chorus, then 32 years old, was lacking one critical component. “There were almost no students for me to conduct,” recalls Floreen.

Today, it is difficult to imagine the 50-voice chorus in such a state. Not only did Floreen recruit students, he developed the chorus into what has been described as a “veritable United Nations… with huge musical talent.” Under his leadership, and with the assistance of Assistant Conductor Susan McAdoo, the chorus has delighted audiences in and around Newark for three decades, been on seven international tours and released five CD recordings.

The first international tour to Germany and the Czech Republic was arranged to coincide with the chorus’s 50th anniversary in 1997. Since then, the chorus has performed in the Netherlands, France, England, Scotland, Wales and Italy, gaining glowing reviews along the way. In May 2011, the chorus will perform in Spain.

Floreen, the recipient of numerous fellowships and grants, including three Fulbright Scholar awards for music research in Austria, also has taken what he has learned abroad and incorporated that into the classroom and choral rehearsals. Over the years, he has expanded the choral repertoire, too, as a result of the international tours.

In anticipation of the upcoming concert tour in Spain, the chorus will be singing three works by Spanish composers at this semester’s spring concerts. Those concerts take place April 25 at St. Mary’s Church in Newark at 3 p.m., May 2 at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Montclair at 5 p.m., and May 3 in the Bradley Hall Lounge at 11:30 a.m.

To read more about Floreen’s reflections as conductor of the Rutgers University Chorus, go to www.newark.rutgers.edu/chorus.