

# ADVANCES **IDEAS** **INSPIRATION** **IMPACT**

**IMPACT**  
*The campaign for IUPUI*

News from the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI

**VOL. 14, NO. 2/** <http://liberalarts.iupui.edu>



## THE LIBERAL ARTS, NOW AND FOREVER

WILLIAM BLOMQUIST, DEAN

At this moment, throughout the United States, questions are being raised and discussions are taking place concerning the value and meaning of a college degree. This is entirely appropriate, and it isn't new. We welcome it, because the worth of a liberal arts degree has stood the test of time longer than any other form of higher education. Education in the liberal arts provides both immediate-term educational benefits to students and long-term impact over the course of their lives.

As a Liberal Arts alum, student, faculty or staff member, or friend, you are likely involved in these very same kinds of discussions about college and what it means to be educated in the humanities and social sciences. As you engage in these conversations—explaining your point of view, drawing on evidence and experience, listening and respectfully analyzing alternate ideas—you are a living, breathing, talking expression of exactly what one gains from studying the liberal arts.

Awareness and understanding of people and place, past and present, the appreciation of art and culture, the development and contestation of ideas, the analysis of social organization in its many

forms, the use and interpretation of language and symbols—these are the knowledge bases upon which to build and from which to draw for a lifetime.

The abilities to reason, communicate in a variety of ways and contexts, conduct research, express oneself and appreciate others—these are the tools and talents of an educated person. Not surprisingly, they are also among the skills most sought by employers. No less important, they are the essential capabilities needed by citizens to engage in public life at local, national, and international scales. And it is worth remembering that these are also capabilities and forms of knowledge that do not become obsolete as technologies change.

We begin another academic year pleased to have the opportunity to do this kind of work and promote and sustain the advance in human development that higher education has represented and continues to represent. This year, we are joined by two additional avenues for pursuing these explorations: the Bachelor of Arts in medical humanities and health studies and the Bachelor of General Studies. We welcome these degrees to Liberal Arts.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION WITH DEAN BLOMQUIST ([BLOMQUIS@IUPUI.EDU](mailto:BLOMQUIS@IUPUI.EDU)).

LOOK FOR MORE ABOUT THIS TOPIC ON OUR WEBSITE ([LIBERALARTS.IUPUI.EDU](http://LIBERALARTS.IUPUI.EDU)) IN THE COMING YEAR

AND ON TWITTER WHERE YOU CAN FOLLOW THE DEAN (@LIBERALARTSDEAN).



## CURTIS FAMILY HONORED WITH IUPUI SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD

The School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI recognized Dr. Richard K. Curtis and his late wife, Mrs. M. Elizabeth Curtis, with the 2012 Spirit of Philanthropy Award. The award honors donors and volunteers who have contributed to excellence at IUPUI.

The annual IUPUI Spirit of Philanthropy luncheon and ceremony took place April 10, 2012, at the IUPUI Campus Center.

Richard "Dick" Curtis served as a founding faculty member of the IU School of Liberal Arts communication studies department. His distinguished career was marked by service as department chair, having honed his leadership skills as a pilot in World War II. Elizabeth "Beth" Curtis taught U.S. history at North Central High School, serving as chair of that department until her retirement.

Dick and Beth founded the Robert and Dana Curtis Memorial Oratorical Tournament (CMOT), in honor of Dick's two brothers who were killed at war. The CMOT challenges student competitors to study and present ideas for peaceful resolution of conflict and awards significant scholarships to the top speakers. The Curtis' vision resulted in a new themed learning community for undergraduates focusing on conflict resolution at IUPUI that culminates in the CMOT at semester's end.

The 2012 Spirit of Philanthropy Award honors this remarkable couple's commitment to the future, not only through education, but in their dedication to world peace. Dr. Curtis was joined by his sons at the luncheon to accept the honor as a tribute to his wife and their mother, Beth.

*Photo:*

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
'DICK CURTIS (ONE FROM LEFT) WITH SONS STEPHEN  
CURTIS (LEFT) AND DAVID CURTIS, AND DEAN  
'BILL BLOMQUIST

## SPIRIT & PLACE FESTIVAL CELEBRATES "PLAY"

A game about homelessness, a pumpkin-flinging contest for families, a conversation about video games as art, a performance about gender roles, a film on faith and football, a recital of improvised arias, a documentary about senior athletes, a comedy act by a rabbi and Muslim, a tour of Indy's best play spaces ... these are among the dozens of programs that will explore "PLAY" during the annual Spirit & Place Festival, November 2–11, 2012.

Now in its 17th year, the Spirit & Place Festival is a collaborative community project managed by The Polis Center, an independent unit of the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. Exploring a different theme each year, the festival brings together arts, and faith-based and civic organizations to create "never-seen-before" programs that inspire citizens to think and act differently on behalf of their community; an average of 75 percent of these programs are free.

The 10-day festival opens on Friday and Saturday with five signature events that feature urban art expressions, French composer Pierre Bastien (builder of mechanical instruments), as well as songs and stories from Scott Russell Sanders, Phil Gulley, Krista Detor, and Carrie Newcomer (who will also lead a writing workshop).

The following week explores PLAY through audacious performances, intergenerational workshops, provocative discussions, art exhibits, and more. From architecture to jazz, game history to art therapy, video games to drumming, there's something for all ages and interests.

The festival closes with the 17th Annual Public Conversation, Sunday, November 11, 5:30 p.m. at The Toby, Indianapolis Museum of Art. Bestselling author and internationally acclaimed game designer Jane McGonigal, stand-up comedian and Baptist minister Susan Sparks, and Grammy-winning cellist and former Hoosier David Darling will combine their talents for a night of conversation on the role of play in our individual and communal life.

Get more information and join the conversation online ([spiritandplace.org](http://spiritandplace.org)), on Facebook (Spirit & Place), Twitter (@spiritandplace), or by calling 317-278-3623.



### WHY PLAY?

Play exercises the mind, body, and spirit. We play to relax and escape, to energize and connect, and to celebrate and laugh. Through play we discover the world around us, and develop the skills we need to live in community with one another: problem solving, imagination, resilience, risk taking, trust, cooperation, and more.



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# FOOD FUELS ENGLISH PROFESSOR'S WRITING PASSION

BY JOSH FLYNN, BA ENGLISH 2007, WITH REBECCA DOWNS, STUDENT, LIBERAL ARTS

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Photo: Terry Kirts (center) with friends at the Indianapolis City Market



finding new subjects difficult, and it's often a challenge to determine if a restaurant merits a review. It's also difficult to be anonymous in a small city. "You run into chefs at lots of events, and you're bound to meet them just out and about," Terry says. "It's not a large enough metropolitan area to hide in, though I've done a pretty good job of it. I do make reservations under other people's names, and I try not to ask too many questions and never send anything back unless it's truly awful or just the wrong thing. I don't want them to catch on."

When it comes to Indianapolis cuisine, there's hardly a dish in town Terry Kirts, senior lecturer in English in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, won't try. He especially enjoys exploring international restaurants, fearlessly trying new dishes that include ingredients like pig's ear, squid, and pigeon.

When he's not teaching creative writing classes or lining up visiting writers as the director of the Rufus & Louise Reiberg Reading Series, Terry is thinking about food! He recalls a meal of choucroute (sauerkraut) and sausages during a trip to Strasbourg, France, a regional dish he was amazed by because of the way the French had adapted the German meal. "I was about 19 when I had it, and it was really the meal that got me liking food and wanting to explore its history," he says.

Terry's food memories begin as a child from visits to his grandmothers' homes. "They always kept me close in their kitchens," he recalls, "so I got to see them laboring over everything from scratch, starting dinners a day ahead, canning, pickling, preserving, and using everything as fresh as it could be."

While his grandmothers taught him about cooking, his great aunt was teaching him about writing and literature, sitting on her screened-in porch during the summer or huddling near a radiator during the winter reading. As time progressed, Terry began to write his own poems and his great aunt encouraged him to submit them to contests and publications. These moments with his aunt continue to inspire his teaching as he helps students improve their writing.

After finishing his MFA at Indiana University in 1995, Terry's two passions began to converge. "I wrote a couple of imitations of poems about food in the late 1990s when I was first a lecturer at IUPUI that people seemed to like, and then I started writing more about food," he says. "Eventually it snowballed into writing for various magazines around the city, which in turn fueled my poetry and nonfiction because I was already so focused on food."

Terry's creative writing background helps him craft each piece for publications like *Nuvo Newsweekly* and *Indianapolis Monthly*, as he says food writing requires the most descriptive and lyrical style of any type of journalism.

There are plenty of challenges as a food critic in a small metropolitan city. The slow pace of restaurant turnover makes

Terry recently published a chapbook of poetry entitled *To the Refrigerator Gods* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2010). He also brings his love of food into his classroom, creating a variety of writing exercises for his students such as writing about a food memory or collaborating on a restaurant review (of which several have been published in *Nuvo*) and holding classes in Indianapolis' different restaurants so the students can experience new tastes.

"Opening oneself up to different food experiences is very instructive in terms of understanding how different people (whole cultures and regions within cultures) nourish and delight themselves through food. It's just as important as understanding how different cultures have expressed themselves and their values via art, literature, and music," says Terry. "A variety of different food experiences literally liberates the palate and inspires creativity of all kinds."

## VEGETABLE CRISPER

BY TERRY KIRTS

O, swollen belly of the mother ship, who calls  
the carrots and the English cucumbers  
two by two, who protects the baby lettuces  
from wilt and rust, who lets not the tuber  
nor the taciturn root weep in its slow reckoning  
nor send out hapless shoots. Be for this frigid  
house its temperate cellar, its hardest zone,  
the frost-free box my grandmother dreamed about,  
eating her pickles. How she pined for winter  
salads that were not salted, for peas that snapped,  
for beans that did not taste like their can.  
May the beet tops spring as from fertile earth  
and the cabbages rise like craterless moons.  
In this valley of shadows, may the leek be at peace  
with the pepper, the potato lie down among onions.  
May you never surprise us with leaf mold or rot,  
no sack of mush where we expected dinner.  
May you honor the hands that tilled, sowed, and plucked  
so that you might never empty, never not be our plenty.



Clockwise from top left: At Playa Girón (the Bay of Pigs); Rebecca Downs and Heather Hayes (and Omar), Old Havana; Banao Ecological Reserve, Sierra de Trinidad; Aaron Pierce in the barber's chair, Havana

## DESTINATION CUBA: POSTCARDS FROM A FORBIDDEN NATION

BY TIM BROTHERS, PROFESSOR OF GEOGRAPHY • PHOTOS BY AARON PIERCE, GEOGRAPHY STUDENT

Cuba has been off limits to American tourists for a half-century now, behind a U.S. economic embargo meant to bring down Cuba's revolutionary government. Yet Cuba still holds tremendous fascination for many Americans. Who is not familiar with the old American cars, Cuban *rumba*, and iconic images of *el Che* and Fidel?

In fact, it has always been possible for some Americans to visit Cuba, even during the coldest days of the cold war. These include not only journalists and humanitarian groups, but individual American university students and even entire U.S. university classes.

In the past dozen years, I've journeyed to Cuba four times to teach an IUPUI summer course on the geography of Cuba, most recently this past summer with another class in Spanish. Following three weeks of intensive pre-departure study at IUPUI, we traveled to Cuba in June by a U.S.-licensed charter flight for 16 days of field study focusing on Cuba's landscapes and culture.

Our first stop was Havana, especially Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage site being restored after decades of neglect. Before the Revolution, Havana was notorious as a sinful American playground, rife with corruption, gambling, and prostitution. The Revolution in effect turned its back on the city until 1990, when the collapse of its Soviet patrons forced it to welcome foreign tourists once again as a source of foreign exchange. The old city is now being

painstakingly and beautifully refurbished, in hopes of attracting tourists more dedicated to history and culture than drinking and gambling.

On the last day there, geography students sallied forth to make field observations for a course project tracing the evolution of Old Havana's landscape from colonial times to the present day. They rode downtown in cheap taxis—the famous old American cars Cubans call *almendrones* for their resemblance to big almonds—and crisscrossed Old Havana in small groups on foot. Their task was to visit not only the tourist zone but the poor, overcrowded neighborhoods surrounding it, to record relevant details of period architecture and landscaping and to query residents about the nature of daily life in the past and now in the hard times brought by the collapse of the Soviet Union. They worked well together, some contributing their knowledge of Spanish, others their expertise in cultural and physical geography, and others their photographic skills.

The rest of our time was divided among three multiday field trips: to the tobacco region of western Cuba; to the mountains, cane fields, and colonial cities of central Cuba (Sancti Spiritus, Trinidad, and Cienfuegos); and to the coastal tourist mecca of Varadero. We rode in two small buses and made frequent roadside stops (in tropical sun, bugs, and occasional rain) to discuss items of special interest: the karst towers and caves of western Cuba, the remnant



tropical forests of the Sierra de Trinidad in central Cuba, the reorganization of the rural landscape in revolutionary cooperatives and “new towns,” the spectacularly rapid hotel development at Varadero, and so forth.

In the evenings, students explored in groups, eating in *paladares* (the small private restaurants only recently allowed again, after a decade of government restrictions) and dancing to live *rumba*, *son*, and *salsa* (a now-universal style, but with Cuban roots).

For the first time in this course, students stayed in private homes rather than in hotels. Like the *paladares*, these are licensed private enterprises allowed only recently as part of the government’s grudging economic liberalization. We stayed in lovely old high-ceilinged urban homes and in smaller, simpler country homes, all spruced up to varying degrees (but *always* with the addition of an air conditioner) to meet the standards of visitors not used to the hardships of Cuban life. This arrangement gave students much more contact with ordinary Cubans than most had expected. Though some had worried about being in an “enemy” country, they found that Cubans were generally delighted to meet Americans and curious about life in the United States. Many Cubans have family in America, but only a few of them have ever visited: they, like us, have only vague images of reality on the other side of the Florida Straits.

Not only did the course change the way the students view Cuba, but it may have changed the way some Cubans view America. They might have found that not all Americans are as unfriendly as we are often painted in the government press; that not all Americans are wealthy or materialistic; and that not all are culturally insensitive. In my estimation, the IUPUI students who participated in this course were excellent ambassadors: not for the American government (this was not a course in politics), but simply for being American.

*To learn more about the course, which will also be offered next summer, contact [tbrother@iupui.edu](mailto:tbrother@iupui.edu).*



*Pictured:*

EMERGING FROM THE CUEVA DEL INDIO, SIERRA DE LOS  
ÓRGANOS, WESTERN CUBA

## WHAT DID THE STUDENTS LEARN IN CUBA?

The students certainly saw the problems brought by 50 years of a dictatorial command economy and overreliance on Soviet assistance. On the other hand, they learned that the roots of Cuba’s economic woes reach deeper than the revolution, to Spanish colonialism and American neo-imperialism. They also saw many things to admire: mountains, tropical forests, colonial streets, and gorgeous beaches. They found that Cubans enjoy some benefits that Americans do not, such as free health care and free education. Some must have mused, at least for a moment, about what it would be like to finish college with no student loan debt. Above all, they learned that Cuba is a much more complicated place than is usually portrayed in U.S. media. Practically everything written about Cuba in the United States is polemical, intended to tell the reader which side of a two-sided “reality” is the right one. The virtue of a field course such as this is that students can learn for themselves.

## “EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT IN THE END. IF IT’S NOT ALL RIGHT, IT’S NOT THE END!”

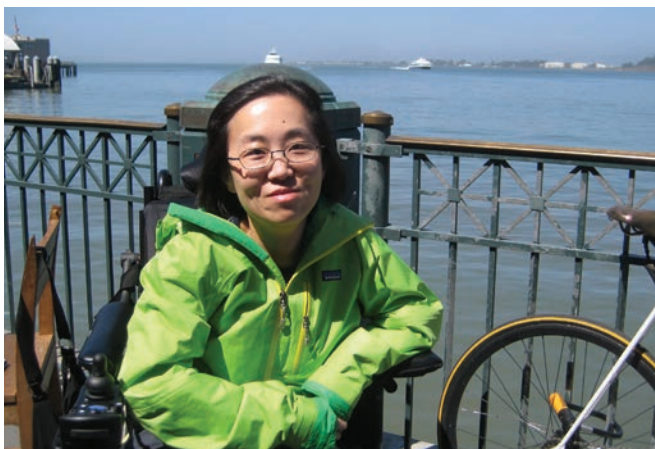
Alice Wong (BA, sociology and English, 1997) dreamed of attending a small liberal arts college when she graduated from Carmel High School. Born and raised in Indiana of immigrant parents, she yearned for the experiences of college life. A bright, articulate, and excellent student, she had choices. Except that she didn’t. To live on her own, away from home, Alice would have required significant assistance for her daily needs.

IUPUI became a practical solution to a sticky problem, and Alice was not happy about it. “I was miserable, but I had no choice. I couldn’t live on my own and Indiana Medicaid wouldn’t pay for the aides I needed for daily living.”

Still, Alice had drive. She set out on an ambitious academic journey that has served her well. And although she never would have chosen IUPUI or the School of Liberal Arts, once she got going, she met IUPUI up close and personal, and discovered a place that nurtured its students, regardless of their situation in life. As she delved deeper into her major courses, she connected with faculty who became her mentors and friends.

“In the ‘90’s, IUPUI was a boring place. There was no student life. Students came to classes and left.” As a full-time student who got around in a motorized wheelchair, Alice was not one of those students who left. Most of her classes were in Cavanaugh Hall. And after a while, things changed for Alice. Professor of sociology Carol Gardner saw her potential and invited her to participate in her research, exposing Alice to her love of research and giving her invaluable training. English professor Karen Johnson became a valued teacher and mentor. Tere Molinder Hogue gave Alice her first paying job as a tutor in the Writing Center, and sociology professor Linda Haas involved her as a student mentor. Other faculty who deserve special mention: Colin Williams, Ain Haas, Missy Kubitschek, Jane Schultz, and David Hoegberg.

Looking back on her experiences and the professors who became lifelong friends, Alice notes, “I wouldn’t have had these same opportunities anywhere else. I am blessed that it turned out so well. I have such fond memories of the faculty and staff, like Pam King in Adaptive Educational Services. It was many little things that people did to help me along the way. Between classes I could go to Pam’s office and they would help me switch out my books for the next class. Not a big deal for most students, but for me, it eliminated a



barrier that could have ended my student career. It meant a lot.”

Following the direction and advice of sociology and English faculty, Alice structured her studies to get into grad school. She took five years to earn her BA, taking courses in two majors through every summer session and all semesters, never taking a break. Now a researcher at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Alice has become active in her community (another hallmark of an IUPUI

grad) on issues of accessibility, autonomy, and independence for people with disabilities. She is author and co-author of numerous articles and is an eloquent speaker and presenter.

Her work has been recently recognized with the first annual 2010 Chancellor’s Disability Service Award at UCSF and the Mayor’s Disability Council Beacon Award (San Francisco) for her outstanding leadership at the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act celebration. The award recognized her work at UCSF and as the president of the San Francisco In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority Governing Body.

Currently, Alice is developing an online curriculum to train home caregivers, to make them better prepared to manage individuals’ in-home care, enabling more people the right to age in place, or to live safely and independently at home. One of Alice’s goals is to help people understand that persons with disabilities simply navigate the world differently. They can be active and productive citizens, working and living full and fun lives.

As a student, Alice found a home in the Liberal Arts and among the staff and faculty. Their gifts of enthusiasm and support and confidence have set in motion a woman who is making things right, building awareness and helping change attitudes. She makes you believe that, in words from the film *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, “everything will be all right in the end. And if it’s not all right, it’s not the end!”

To learn more about Alice, check out the video she submitted to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, “What’s Your Story” Video Challenge: <http://tinyurl.com/cn3jofh>. Alice’s video was voted as one of the 11 top finalists in the challenge. Follow Alice on Twitter: @SFdirewolf.

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THE CAMPAIGN  
FOR IUPUI

\$1,759,849 to go!

With more than \$16.2 million raised, the School of Liberal Arts is 90 percent of the way in its effort to raise \$18 million during the historic IUPUI IMPACT Campaign. The seven-year, \$1.25 billion campaign will conclude at the end of June 2013.

Annual gifts count! Gifts of future assets often count, too. So if you are considering making a gift in either the short or long term, there is no better time than now to let us know.

Think big! Maximize the value of your gift through university matching funds for new endowed chairs and scholarships.

Visit <http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/index.php/giving> to learn more





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## WORKING TO LEARN, WORKING TO GIVE

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Diana Dean-Spurgeon's workday may have ended every day at 5:00 p.m. but, academically speaking, her day was just beginning. The now-retired insurance executive recalls earning both her college degrees while working full time and attending class at night. "It was a challenge," she says, "and among my proudest accomplishments."

When Diana moved from Baltimore to Indianapolis to live with her aunt and attend college at what would later become IUPUI, she took a job at Block's Department Store downtown. When the opportunity arose for her to make \$5 more a week calculating premiums on insurance policies, Diana left Block's and began what would become a 40-year career in the insurance industry.

After graduating with an English degree in 1970, Diana was transferred to Chicago where she continued her education at the graduate level. Soon she added a master's degree in literature from DePaul University to her list of credentials.

Enriched by her liberal arts degrees, she rose through the ranks in the insurance industry, becoming an expert on professional liability products and continuing her educational growth by earning the CPCU designation, a property-casualty insurance industry certification.

In the mid-1980s, after returning for a tour of the IUPUI campus, Diana began contributing annually to her alma mater, supplemented by matching contributions from her employer. This encouraged her to increase her annual giving as she saw the added benefit her gifts generated.

Unwilling to allow retirement to interfere with her desire to continue her philanthropy, Diana contacted IU Foundation's Office of Gift Planning and arranged to create a charitable gift annuity that will result in the *Diana Dean-Spurgeon Working Student Scholarship*. Once fully funded, this scholarship will help students who, like Diana, need to work full time to finance their education. She feels especially called to help students at IUPUI as they move through academia and the workforce.

"I try to reach out to people who need a little extra boost," she says. "I know what it's like to count every penny and want to succeed in school. I've done well for myself, and to me education is the best way to benefit others."

### A GIFT THAT GIVES BACK

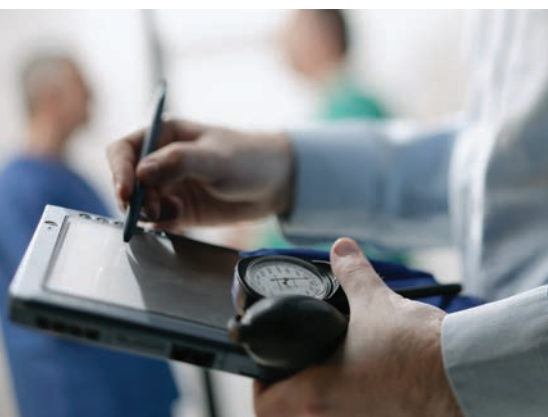
Did you know that there is a gift that gives back...for the rest of your life?

A charitable gift annuity (CGA) made sense to loyal School of Liberal Arts alumna

and supporter Diana Dean-Spurgeon, and you might consider if it would make sense for you. A CGA is a simple arrangement in which you make a gift now and, in return, receive a fixed, guaranteed payment based on a percentage of that gift for the rest of your life. The percentage is based on the age (or ages, there can be up to two) of the annuitant(s) at the time the gift is made. This is usually a person and perhaps his or her spouse, but some donors have also created CGAs to boost their parents' retirement income. You will be eligible to receive an income tax charitable deduction in the year of the gift with a carryover of up to five years. You can choose to receive your payments in quarterly or annual installments and part of your payment may even be tax free.

Your gift can support any department or program you choose within Liberal Arts and you'll have the satisfaction of supporting liberal arts education now while also securing an income stream for your future. Let us show you how to make an impact with a CGA.

For more information about how you can make a gift that gives back, contact Kristen Cameron, JD, Indiana University Foundation, at [cameronk@indiana.edu](mailto:cameronk@indiana.edu) or 812-855-3388. Learn more about CGAs at [iufoundation.iu.edu](http://iufoundation.iu.edu).



## WELCOMING LIBERAL ARTS' NEWEST DEGREE PROGRAM

### BA IN MEDICAL HUMANITIES AND HEALTH STUDIES

Medical Humanities and Health Studies (MHHS) is the study of medicine, health, and illness from a range of humanities and social science perspectives. History, economics, anthropology, sociology, literature, geography, philosophy, and religious studies all contribute to understanding the nuances and complexities of human experience with illness.

<http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/mhhs/medhum@iupui.edu>, 317-274-1669



## SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

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6:15-7:30 pm, Lecture, Theater

# IUPUI

The John D. Barlow Lecture in the Humanities

## "Cry the Cosmos":

RAY BRADBURY AND THE AMERICAN IMAGINATION

Featuring

### PROFESSOR JONATHAN R. ELLER

Professor of English and Director of the Center for Ray Bradbury Studies  
Institute for American Thought, IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI

Professor Eller first met Ray Bradbury in 1989, eventually developing a working relationship that lasted until Mr. Bradbury's death in June 2012. Professor Eller is the author of *Becoming Ray Bradbury* (2011), which centers on Bradbury's early life and development as a writer.

Presented by:

IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI  
Liberal Arts Student Council

Information/RSVP: [libarsvp@iupui.edu](mailto:libarsvp@iupui.edu)

<http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/barlowlecture>

Professor Jonathan Eller with Ray Bradbury, 2008. Background photo provided by NASA and STScI.

