African American religious history.

Faith Temple No. 2 Free Will Baptist Church has been a starting point for many of the paths in Wallace Best's life.

Growing up in the Washington, D.C., area, the Princeton religion scholar first encountered the church as his childhood place of worship. The church inspired his desire to be a minister, which led him to Washington Bible College. As his career goals shifted, a graduate school paper on the history of the church spurred his passion for further study of African American religious history.

"The church did not exist on an intellectual plane but a spiritual and emotional one in his experiences, said Best, a professor of religion and African American studies. "Once I found out that there were questions to be asked, and that there were answers to these questions, and that there were rich materials to read and analyze, there was no turning back."

Best's passion is evident in his many activities. Since arriving at Princeton in 2007 from Harvard Divinity School, he has taught courses on spiritual narratives by black women, religions of the Americas and African American religious history, among others. He also has organized a lecture series on black gospel music and taught a course on the Nation of Islam. He serves as the director of graduate studies in the religion department, as well as advising undergraduates. In addition, Best is writing a book on the religious writings and thought of Langston Hughes.

"Wallace is one of the most important African Americans in the history of his generation," said Glaude, the William S. Tod Professor of Religion and African American Studies.

"Wallace can move across the traditional archive of history to performance studies, with his series on black gospel music, to the literary imagination of Langston Hughes, all the while being trained as a historian and working in religion. Best fits the interdisciplinary nature of the Center for African American Studies, which Glaude chairs."

The ‘sultan of slime’

Molds still fascinate biologist Bonner after 70 years of study

John Bonner retired from teaching in 1990 but still conducts experiments daily from his lab on the top floor of Guyot Hall. At age 89, the George M. Moffett Professor Emeritus of Biology is one of the world’s leading experts on cellular slime molds.

Wallace Best (center), a professor of religion and African American studies, has made interdisciplinary study a hallmark of his work. Mining fields as diverse as sociology and literature, Best examines African American religious beliefs, practices and history. He also meets often with students outside of class, such as this session with senior Jonathan Nussbaum and sophomore Angela Groves.
Stanley Kelley Jr., professor and architect of University governance transformation, dies

RICH STEVENS

Stanley Kelley Jr., a Princeton political scientist who left an indelible mark on the University after chairing a key committee on governance in the late 1960s, died Jan. 17 from complications of Alzheimer’s disease. He was 83.

Kelley, a professor emeritus of politics, led the Committee on the Structure of the University from 1968 to 1970. The student-faculty group, which became known as the “Kelley Committee,” was appointed by President Robert F. Goheen after demonstrators at a rally in front of Nassau Hall called for a body to “determine a way of restructuring the decision-making apparatus of the University.”

Implementation of the committee’s 99-page report transformed governance at Princeton, instilling a more open process and greater participation by students and non-tenured faculty members.

Kelley also was known as an accomplished scholar and teacher on topics such as the American party system, elections, and voting and mass communications.

“Stan Kelley was an extraordinary person who touched the lives of countless students and faculty members,” said William G. Bowen, who joined the faculty in 1958, served as provost from 1967 to 1972 and served as president from 1972 to 1988. “He is, of course, best known for his pioneering study of university governance at the time of Vietnam (the work of the ‘Kelley Committee’); the final report of that committee’s recommendations on Princeton and remains the best commentary I have ever seen on how universities should be run.

“He was also a superb teacher, and his friendships with undergraduates were very special,” he continued. “But it wasn’t just students who learned from him. I don’t think I would have served as an administrator at Princeton for 16 years had it not been for his tutelage and unfailing support and encouragement. In a time when so many faculty

By the numbers

Staff and faculty members can take advantage of several programs for stress management through University Health Services, the Office of Human Resources and Campus Recreation. On-campus classes and counseling services are available for stress assessment and diagnosis, and learn stress-reduction skills.

The Mind-Body Team at University Health Services offers mindfulness meditation, and mental health providers as well as health educators, has created opportunities for staff and faculty members to practice stress reduction through meditation and stress management classes.

“We’re seeing a lot of interest in the community,” said Anita McLean, the director of Counseling and Psychological Services at University Health Services and a member of the Mind-Body Team. “These classes can help manage stress and improve performance.”

• Two meditation classes meet week- days on campus. “Stress Management: Meditation Over Lunch” is held at noon on Thursdays in Murray-Dodge Hall and is open to faculty, staff and students. Phyllana Fischer, an administrative assistant in the Woodrow Wilson School, said the class helps her “re-orient my mind whenever I need to focus on who I am. This is the precious moment to focus on myself. I learned the bene- fits of meditation for my mental and physical well-function, and I thought it a rare privilege to be able to mediate during my lunchtime at the work- place.” Another class, “Meditation for Staff and Faculty,” meets at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays in the Medical Center. The classes do not require registration, and both are free.

• Twelve staff and faculty members attend a yoga class on noon at Thurs- days at Firestone Library as part of a program that offers opportunities for offices or departments to hold a weekly yoga class. Jennifer Block, who works on interlibrary services, said, “I find the effects of yoga very powerful but subtle and consider it an essential part of my life. In addition to the physical benefits, I find yoga very effective and able to cope with life’s stresses. Yoga helps to keep me centered.” To sched- ule a yoga class for your office, contact Sandra Carello, coordinator of group and instructional planning in Campus Recreation, at 258-2634 or <scarello@princeton.edu>.

• Five audio downloads designed for stress relief are available along with more information on campus resources for meditation and other classes — by visiting <www.princeton.edu/uhs/pdfs/Mind-Body-Talks.pdf>.

• The Office of Human Resources offers assistance to faculty, staff and graduate students for managing work, personal or family issues at no charge to the participant through the Care- givers Employee Assistance Program. The program addresses dozens of issues, including stress and depression, finances, interpersonal relationships, child care, and time management and life balance. For more information, visit <www.princeton.edu/hr/benefits/worklife/caregivers/>. Campus Recreation offers 60 group and individual fitness classes at Dillon Gymnasium, including sev- eral types of yoga, Pilates, tai chi and Qigong. For information, you can be found at <www.princeton.edu/campusrec/ instructional-programs/>.

A weekly yoga class at Firestone Library is part of an initiative to help staff and faculty members cope with tension and lessen stress-reduction techniques.

Prospect board members sought

Nominations are being sought for the Prospect Association Board, an advisory group of faculty and staff who serve as an advocate for Prospect House.

Prospect House is the private dining club serving faculty and staff at the University. It is the home of the Garden Room and Tap Room and hosts several special events throughout the year. 

Prospect board members attend luncheon meetings at the house during the aca- demic year, supporting management in planning and implementing programs and serving as a liaison between faculty and staff members. Those wishing to nominate someone should make sure he or she is interested in serving for four years. Nominators should forward the prospective board members’ name and a paragraph of 100 words or less about why he or she would be a good advocate for Prospect House to Margaretta Vera at <mvera@princeton.edu> no later than Monday, Feb. 8. Self-nominations are accepted.

Deadline

In general, the copy deadline for each issue is the Friday 10 days in advance of the Monday cover date. The deadline for the next issue, which covers Feb. 15-28, is Friday, Feb. 5. A complete publication schedule can be found at <www.princeton.edu/bulletin>.

To suggest a colleague as a future “Spotlight,” e-mail <bulletin@princeton.edu>.
Trustees approve low fee increase, boost financial aid

University trustees Jan. 23 approved an increase of the lowest percentage increases in undergraduate tuition and fees since 1966 – 3.7 percent – while endorsing a 6.3 percent increase in the financial aid budget. The authorization came as the University is in the midst of a two-year plan to reduce its operating budget by $170 million. “We believe this recommendation strikes a reasonable balance that recognizes both the University’s budgetary challenges and the need to avoid putting unnecessary burdens on tuition-paying families,” said Provost Christopher Eisgruber.

Last year, the trustees approved the lowest percentage increase in the fee package in 43 years at 2.9 percent. The boost in the financial aid budget for 2010-11 — from $303.2 million to $313.1 million — is intended so that the University can continue to meet the full need of all admitted students. It also incorporates changes in the percentage of undergraduates on financial aid. This year, more than 60 percent of Princeton freshmen are on aid; next year, as much as 63 percent of the class of 2014 is expected to be on aid. This year, more than 60 percent of the class of 2014 is expected to be on aid.

“The University’s financial aid program is the most important vehicle for ensuring that Princeton education is affordable to the University’s students,” Eisgruber said. “For students on aid, the family contribution and the student’s work expectation are not on aid, the family contribution and the student’s work expectation are not on aid, the family contribution and the student’s work expectation are not on aid, the family contribution and the student’s work expectation are not on aid.”

The projected budget increase in the financial aid program will continue to support significant enhancements to the aid program — when 38 percent of the freshmen were on aid.

Princeton’s undergraduate graduates next year will include: $36,640 for tuition; $3,7 percent increase $35,540 in 2009-10; $6,467 for room, up $5,473 and up $5,473 for board, an increase of 2.5 percent from $5,540.

The trustees also approved a 3.7 percent increase ($3,300) in the regular graduate tuition, from $53,540 to $56,640, the same as undergraduate tuition; and a 1 percent increase in rental renewal rates of 2 percent for most graduate student apartments. In addition, they approved a 1 percent increase in graduate student stipends.

The University expects to increase the Student Health Plan fee from $1,270 to $1,450 for 2010-11. This increase is required to offset rapidly rising medical costs.

Gratitude, discipline and human capital

The fee packages were part of a 2010-11 overall balanced operating budget of $1.36 billion adopted by the board at its Jan. 23 meeting. The trustees acted on a proposal from President Tilghman that was based on the recommendations of the Priorities Committee of the Council of the Princeton University Community. Composed of faculty, students and staff, the committee has served for four decades as the most important recommendation fiscal and programmatic priorities.

“Last year’s Priorities Committee convened in the midst of a deep global recession,” said Eisgruber, who chairs the committee. “The University’s endowment had declined substantially when financial markets fell, and the University’s administration received word that the board wanted a two-year budget-reduction plan in the spring of 2009. I believe that the committee held its first meeting in October, the University’s managers were already on their way to meeting fiscal year 2011 budget reduction targets. Rather than hearing requests for additional funds, our job was to do all we possibly could, and this year’s committee named as cabinet officers described the budget this year as ‘balanced.’”

Eisgruber said three conclusions emerged from the committee’s deliberations:

Continued on page 8

Berlo selected as new director of Print and Mail Services

Deborah Berlo has been selected for the newly created position of director of Print and Mail Services at Princeton, to whom she will report. “She is committed to working effectively with campus clients to fine-tune their printing and mailing needs, and to accomplish that in a cost-effective and environmentally friendly way.”

At Brown, Berlo was instrumental in the successful implementation of a more financially viable, professional and customer-friendly operation, according to Brittain. She also led efforts that resulted in certification by the Forest Stewardship Council, guaranteeing that print stock came from responsibly managed, sustainable forests. Berlo received four outstanding service awards at Brown, and her department won design awards from Random House and from Kodansha. She also served as director of the University of Massachusetts, Berlo completed the print production certification program at the Rhode Island School of Design.

At Princeton, Berlo will be responsible for the University’s printing and mailing operations, which include offset press, digital printing and binding functions, computer-to-plate making systems and a bulk mailing process for printed documents and for mail-outs, contracts with commercial printers. She also will oversee copier operations, including campuswide automated copier contracts and the University’s administration and office copiers, plus campus community access copiers in the libraries and the Frist Campus Center. These two operations moved from the Office of Information Technology to University Services in summer 2009.

In addition, Berlo will be responsible for mail services, which moved from the treasurer’s office to University Services in June 2008. This operation handles inbound and outbound mail and packages for students, faculty, and staff.

“Proud to be a member of the University Services team,” Berlo said, “and look forward to tailoring our resources to best serve the needs and requirements of the Princeton University community.”

More news on the Web

Visit the News at the Princeton Page at www.princeton.edu/main/news for other recent stories, including the following:

- For the sixth consecutive year, Princeton has set a record for students applying for admission, with 26,166 applications received for the class of 2014. The number of applicants for next year’s freshman class represents a 19 percent increase over last year’s record.
- President Tilghman has been awarded the W.E.B. Du Bois Medal, the highest honor bestowed by Harvard University and the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, for his leadership in strengthening Princeton’s commitment to African American studies.
- Janet Dickerson, Princeton’s vice president for campus life for the past 10 years, received the University’s MLK Day Journey Award for Lifetime Service, which recognizes efforts to continue the journey to achieve Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision for America. Dickerson was honored Jan. 18 at the University’s King Day event.
- Princeton will present its top honors for alumni to Jim Leach, a long-time U.S. congressman and current chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus, who oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as commander of the U.S. Central Command. Leach will receive the Woodrow Wilson Award and Petraeus will be presented with the James Madison Medal at Alumni Day on Saturday, Feb. 20.
- Tilghman has charged a new committee of faculty, staff and students with developing a better understanding of how undergraduate students perceive and seize the opportunities available to them to assert leadership both inside and outside the classroom.
- Tugboat in the late 2000s and early 2010s, respectively, and an increase in the University’s overall balanced operating budget, as the Priorities Committee did last year.
- President Tilghman is pleased with the progress of the Frist Campus Center, which opened in January. She has established the Steering Committee on Undergraduate Women’s Leadership at Princeton in response to recent conversations on campus about women’s roles in academic and extracurricular activities.
- With the gift of a new dormitory in Princeton’s Butler College, John (Jack) C. Bogle, a 1951 graduate of the University and the founder of the Vanguard Mutual Fund Group, has established a scholarship fund named in honor of alumna Anne Bogle, whom she will begin her four-year terms in the residential colleges on July 1.
- The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs has selected five students to be the 2010 undergraduate cohort of the Scholars in the Nation’s Service Initiative, a scholarship program designed to encourage and prepare exceptional students for careers in public service.
- Josh Gehan, a senior with a lifelong interest in social justice advocacy, has been awarded the 2010 Daniel M. Sachs Class of 1960 Graduating Scholarship, one of the highest awards given to Princeton undergraduates. Gehan plans to use the Sachs award to pursue postgraduate studies in social policy at Worcester College at the University of Oxford.
- The University plans to build a facility to house its high-performance computing research systems on the Forrestal Campus in Plainsboro, New Jersey, just north of the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory. It would serve as home of TIGRESS – the Terascale Infrastructure for Groundbreaking Research in Engineering and Science Center. It also would support a much smaller component of the University’s administrative computing capacity.
- University officials are in the early stages of planning for a new facility to house visiting faculty members on the northwest corner of Olden and William streets in Princeton Borough. The facility would be designed and developed by local architect and developer John Robert Hierl.

Ruth Stevens
“Envisioning the world: The First Printed Maps, 1472-1700,” an exhibition opening Feb. 7 at the Milberg Gallery of Firestone Library, will feature approximately 30 rare world maps drawn from the collection of Henry Wendt of Princeton’s class of 1955. The exhibition will explore the major trends in intellectual history from the early Renaissance through the scientific era of the Enlightenment. This map from 1570 was part of the first modern atlas, Abraham Ortelius’ “Theater of the World,” and imagined an enormous southern continent that was assumed to exist in order to balance the weight of the Northern Hemisphere.

‘Imagine’ sustainability conference highlights latest research in field

“Imagine,” a conference focusing on current research in sustainable technology, policy, ethics and economics, is planned for 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, at the Friend Center. The event will feature keynote addresses by Robert Socolow, a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering and a leading figure in climate change research, and John Lettow, a 1995 alumnus and president of Vorbeck Materials, a startup company that is creating industrial applications based on Princeton materials science research. Representatives from industry, media, academia and government will participate in panel discussions on three topics: climate change, energy and community. The event also will include a poster session featuring Princeton academic research, sustainability efforts and student environmental groups as well as local sustainability-related community and business efforts.

The student-organized conference is sponsored by the High Meadows Foundation Sustainability Fund, which is administered by the Office of Sustainability. Anyone interested in attending must register online. The event is free for Princeton students, faculty and staff, $25 for students from other institutions and $35 for the general public.

ONLINE: More information
www.princeton.edu/~imagine/

‘Town hall’ set on financial outlook

The fourth in a series of “town hall meetings,” scheduled to provide updates on how economic conditions are affecting the University’s budget, is set for 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9, in Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall. Budget parameters for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 will be discussed.

The session is open to all members of the campus community.

Presentations will be made by Provost Christopher Eisgruber, Executive Vice President Mark Burstein, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer Carolyn Ainslie and Vice President for Human Resources LiAnne Sullivan-Crocker. There also will be a question-and-answer period. The meeting will take questions from the audience.

Princeton Tilghman will lead a conversation about topics on the University’s agenda during the next Council of Princeton University Community meeting on Monday, Feb. 8.

The meeting begins at 4:30 p.m. in Metters Auditorium, School of Architecture, and is open to all members of the campus community. Tilghman will begin with general comments and then will take questions from the audience.

One of the fundamental reasons the CPUC was created in 1970 was to provide a direct means of communication on a regular basis between the president of the University and members of the Princeton community. The council has been effectively used over the years as a sounding board and as a channel of communication for the University.

Princeton Tilghman to speak at CPUC meeting

Princeton Tilghman will lead a conversation about topics on the University’s agenda during the next Council of the Princeton University Community meeting on Monday, Feb. 8.

The meeting begins at 4:30 p.m. in Metters Auditorium, School of Architecture, and is open to all members of the campus community. Tilghman will begin with general comments and then will take questions from the audience.

ONLINE: More information
www.princetonvarsityclub.org

Triathlete Smyers to speak on overcoming challenges

Decorated triathlete Karen Smyers, a member of the Princeton class of 1983, will speak on “Pursuing One’s Passion Through Setbacks and Challenges” at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, in Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall.

The talk by Smyers is the latest event in the Jake McCandless ’51 Princeton Varsity Club Speaker Series.

Smyers is known for overcoming numerous physical setbacks, including a severed hamstring and thyroid cancer. She was named the United States Olympic Committee Triathlete of the Year in 1994-96 and 1999 and a member of the inaugural Hall of Fame class of USA Triathlon in 2009.

ONLINE: More information
www.princetonvarsityclub.org

Lecture: “Arsenal of Democracy: The Politics of National Security - From World War II to the War on Terrorism”
Julian Zelizer
4:30 p.m. Feb. 9
16 Robertson Hall

Lecture: “Flight of the Fruit Fly”
Itai Cohen, Cornell University
3:30 p.m. Feb. 5
222 Bowen Hall

Faculty meeting (University only)
4:30 p.m. Feb. 1
Faculty Room, Nassau Hall

Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas Kristof, authors
4:30 p.m. Feb. 4
Dodds Auditorium, Robertson Hall

Concert: Brentano String Quartet
8 p.m. Feb. 4
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Lecture: “Flight of the Fruit Fly”
Itai Cohen, Cornell University
3:30 p.m. Feb. 5
222 Bowen Hall

For more, visit <www.princeton.edu/main/news/events>
Panel addresses impact of Haiti crisis

The aftermath of the deadly earthquake in Haiti is the focus of a panel discussion titled “Crisis in Haiti: The Economic, Health and Stabilization Ramifications” to be held at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, in Dodds Auditorium, Robertson Hall. The panel is sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs as part of its “Up to the Minute” series on world events. Panelists will include: Audrey Dottulien, a Wilson School Ph.D. candidate and native of Haiti; Laura Kahn, a physician and health policy research scholar in the Wilson School’s Program on Science and Global Security; Christi- tina Paxson, dean of the Wilson School; and Robert Perito, a senior program officer in the Centers of Innovation and Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Engineering professors to discuss book on ‘structural artist’ Candela

Princeton engineering professors David Billington and Maria Garlock will discuss their book on Spanish engineer and builder Félix Candela at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, in 138 Lewis Library.

The book, titled “Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist,” explores the career of Candela (1910–1997), who is best known for the elegant thin-shelled concrete structures he designed and built. During the 1950s and 1960s, Candela built hundreds of such structures near Mexico City, many of which are still standing. His most dramatic buildings include the Los Manantiales Restaurant, a round building with repeating arches that resembles a giant clam shell, and the Chapel Lomas de Cuernavaca, a church with a parabolahedron spire.

Billington and Garlock refer to Candela’s work as “structural art.” They led Princeton engineering stu- dents in a project to recreate Candela’s masterworks for a fall 2008 exhibition at the Princeton University Art Museum.

Photographs taken around the world by Princeton resident Rebecca Matlock — including this image, “Icelandic Sculpture” — will be on view Feb. 1–14 on the 100 level of the Frist Campus Center. The exhibition, titled “The Far North and the Far South,” will feature Matlock’s photographs from her years of traveling and living in locations such as Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska, South Africa and Antarctica. It is sponsored by the Davis International Center. Matlock will provide guided tours from 11 a.m. to noon Feb. 4 and 11.

Recycling centers on campus

With the semester well underway, the University will once again be collecting recyclable materials on campus as part of its spring recycling effort. The University will be collecting the following materials:

- Plastic containers with labels removed
- Newspapers
- Paperback books
- Magazines
- Cardboard boxes
- Glass bottles and jars
- Aluminum and tin cans
- Used batteries

The collection period for spring recycling will run from Wednesday, Feb. 3, through Sunday, Feb. 28. The items will be collected in bins located throughout the University. Check the University Recycling web site at www.princeton.edu/recycle for a complete list of collection bins and locations.

For additional information, contact the University Recycling office at 258-3181 or visit www.princeton.edu/recycle.
Bonner
Continued from page 1

Bonner and the Slime Molds, "took advantage of recent advances in microbiology. The cells’ motility is spun on film and set to classical music. As they get to the temperature of a slug, which then slowly inches along the Petri dish. A half-day later, the slug, made up of thousands of cells, will form what Bonner describes as a "frightening body," a dead stalk with a ball of live spores on the top. Out of the lab and in the natural world, the spores will poke through soil and be carried away by the wind. New pastures by crawling insects and worms. The main value of the self-sacrifice by the stalk cells, scientists believe, is to maximize the spread of the organism. Stirring up the air, it turns out, makes spores disperse more effectively. How it is that some cells are willing to be part of the stalk, and others are not, no one knows. Scientists may live on as spores. As Bonner has pointed out, this occurs because all of the cells are closely related genetically, and the last genes of the stalk cells are carried on to the next generation by the spores. Experiments have shown that mixtures of species will separate and sort themselves out. It is as if they know their own kind. Between them, their lifestyle and their other complex behavior, the slime molds raise compelling questions for scientists to ponder. At this time, Bonner believes he has yet to get to the bottom of it all.

Deep Focus

Among his peers, Bonner is admired for his deep focus. "What I think is most responsible for his long success is that he is tenacious in getting at something that he has yet to understand," said Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology John Horn, who describes his colleague as "an inquisitive mind." "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimulus — ever shown. "John has been a pioneer and an innovator, the embodiment of a cell or organism toward a chemical stimul..."
Best
Continued from page 1

attentive to the various ways religious meanings are being produced.” He passes on these talents to his stu-
dents, while actively engaging in the center as a warm, friendly colleague, Glaude said. “We are blessed to have him here.”

Church community and history
The success Best is enjoying has been long in coming and was unexpected, to him most of all. He also has 15 children; his father, Leviticus, was a sharecropper on a North Carolina farm, and his mother, a former slave. His mother, Queen, was an unskilled worker often holding down multiple jobs. When he was 2 years old, the family moved to Washington, D.C. Though his father was attached to farming the land and growing food — a connection shared by many blacks of his generation — his older siblings, most of whom had left the farm for the city, convinced his father to come north. “I learned through the process that the transformation of church culture played in the Great Migration and religious practices of the movement, as well as its charismatic leaders such as Malcolm X.”

Best’s course “The Nation of Islam in American” took students on a journey through cultural and religious practices of the movement, as well as its charismatic leaders such as Malcolm X.

“I have no idea of what people faced”

“I was always interested in the transformation of church culture in China. It became his first book, “Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1959,” which won the 2006 Illi-
nois State Historical Society Award. By 1920, he wrote, census figures showed that 35 percent of African Americans in Chicago were born outside of Illinois.

“If you’re going to make an argu-
ment about the broad changes in demographic shift brings about, you’ve got to talk about the broad changes in the central institutions among these people,” Best said. “The lower-class and working-class culture of these Southern migrant began to dominate the entire culture.”

Nancy MacLean, a professor of his-
tory and African American studies at Northwestern, served as Best’s adviser and remembers him as an unusually resourceful researcher, and ever so careful, in 1997, Best was able to convince the family of one of his subjects, a Pente-
costal pastor named Leon Smith, to donate her papers to the Chicago Public Library for other scholars’ ben-
efit.

“That’s not something a graduate student usually does. It’s a sign of the generosity of spirit that characterizes Wallace’s relations with everyone,” MacLean said. “He’s an extremely dili-
gent scholar, and he wrote a successful dissertation and book that made a very important contribution to American religious history, the history of African American religious history and the history of Chicago. He approached it in a very careful way, with an eye to the sensitivi-

ty and careful attention to gender and class and the way they affected the American religious scene.”

After Northwestern, Best taught at the University of Virginia, took fel-

dships at the Center for Study of Religion at Princeton and the W.E.B.

Du Bois Institute at Harvard, and taught for three years at Harvard’s Divinity School.

At Harvard, he began working on his next book, a study of the religious thought of Langston Hughes titled “Langston’s Salvation: American Religion and the Black Novelist.” Hughes is remembered as a radical social political poet, Best said, but over the span of his 40-year career he also wrote about religion in works such as the philosophical novel “Black Naivety.” Hughes expressed “his faith in Christian beliefs at an early age, Best added, but he developed a broader philosophy of religion.

“It’s a book where I’m trying to de-

velop the main religious ideas of Langston Hughes as seen in his poems, stories and gospel plays,” Best said. “African American religion has been dominated by white people who speak from the perspective of religi-

sious faith, tradition or conventional faith while the voices of nonbelievers have been silenced. In some sense, the highest aim of the project is to under-


tend African American religion in a different light.”

An educational home
Best was eager to return to Princeton when he offered the opportunity to work with the extensive community of scholars at the Uni-


dered a cultural and historical anthropology and sociology one day and writing about literature the next, he said, on the part that is important to be comfortable crossing fields.

“That interdisciplinary coopera-
tion is one of the signature features of Princeton,” Best said. “It’s encouraged from the president, Shirley Tilghman, all the way down.

That approach shows in his teach-

ing, where a recent section of his class on the recreation of African American religious history and the political evolution of Malcolm X — and related it to fashion, for example. “Regarding the meaning of Malcolm X, is he dangerous to close to losing a sense of the metaphor to mean so many things?” Best said as he wrapped up his lecture. “X hats were taken quite seriously as symbols of a type of black militancy. What is the state of black politics when it can be con-


terned on your hat?” Such provocative questions have led senior Saba McCoy to spend time after class working out class discussions.

“Think what’s been great about this class is that Professor Best has been very open about the reversions . . . and they go into all kinds of direc-

tions,” she said. “The Nation of Islam is considered to be an actual religion, so we’re looking at it through history, theology and politics. It’s clear that these courses cut these lines blur, which is why it is in real life, so it’s wonderful.”

“Helps us open up these texts. 

“Some students feel that they’ve been confronted with this tradition and these ideas before. They come with a certain sense about African American reli-


gion,” Best said. “I always encourage that you don’t know and that you won’t know the entire story when you’ve heard the story.”

Best’s sense of wonder is as exten-

ting his teaching, advising and research at Princeton, a long way from the Burnham Library for other scholars’ ben-

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ting his teaching, advising and research at Princeton, a long way from the Burnham Library for other scholars’ benefit.
The title of your book alludes to the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Supreme Court decision ending segrega-
tion under a previous “separate but equal” doctrine. How does your research look at this question of educational equality?
We say in the beginning that our aim is to pull back the curtain on the selective college experience and examine how students’ racial and social class backgrounds influence the admission process, as well as various aspects of campus life. Our book does begin as a study about inequality, but the research showed that these differences are not just to be understood but that it was hard to ignore them.
I think the thing that I found most surprising was how inequality in society as a whole — both by race and by social class — finds its way onto the college campus. It gets transformed in certain respects by the elite college experience, but nevertheless there are important dimensions of inequality that elite higher education just can’t totally eliminate.

Was it your goal to focus on the racial achievement gap?
Not at all. I’m not sure that I even knew much about the achievement gap when I started. But if there’s any significant recommendation that comes out of the book — and we have three in the final chapter — the most important one is spurred by a societal challenge posed by the racial gap in skills and knowledge, and what as a society we ought to be doing about it. It is an issue that affects higher education, but it also pervades much of inequality among adults in this country. And it has implications for the quality of the U.S. workforce and the competitiveness of the U.S. economy.

Although our book is about higher education, so many of the dimensions of inequality that we have detected relate in one way or another to this racial gap in academic achievement, something that begins long before students even think about applying to college. And in part, it’s an urgent challenge because of the uncertain life expectancy surrounding race-based affirmative action.

In your book, do you describe a Manhattan Project for social and behavioral sciences. What do you intend in applying this term to the problem of the achievement gap?
What we want to suggest is a research project that has the same scope, urgency and sense of importance as the original Manhattan Project. But our proposed project involves following a large sample of children from birth to roughly age 18 or onto the first year of their postsecondary plans. We need to know when and exactly how achievement gaps develop and what can be done to eliminate them.

The original Manhattan Project lasted from 1942 to 1946 and had three main sites in addition to many smaller research units around the country. At any one time, there were 125,000 people involved in the Manhattan Project, and the total cost of it over the four years in today’s dollars was about $30 billion to develop the atomic bombs that dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Another similarity — and why we call it a new Manhattan Project — is that the purpose of the research is to address a critical achievement is a vital element of our national defense, not necessarily in a military sense, but in terms of the strength of the economy (and) in terms of the strength of the quality of the workforce.

The urgency is created by this implied sunset provision. Young people who are going to college in the year 2028, which is 25 years after the 2003 Supreme Court decision, will be born then. That’s saying that the reasons for the research we are reading this article, some students in the entering first-year class for the fall of 2028, who have already been born. This fact creates a sense of urgency. It’s not that we have until 2028 to figure out what’s going on. We really need to be starting much sooner than that.

What I’m hoping is that our dis-
cussion will add yet another voice to a growing number of academics and non-academics who are talking about the societal importance of the racial gap in skills and knowledge. I’m also hoping that we’ll be able to generate the necessary funds to mount a project on a scale previously unimagined in the social and behavioral sciences. I didn’t choose this analogy to the Manhattan Project lightly.

To read the full interview, visit <www.princeton.edu/main/news>.