

Institute for the Study of Advanced Development
President's Report 2006
September 12, 2006

We have been very fortunate this year to have the energies of Frank Falk and Mary Haynes added to the ISAD Board. They have worked tirelessly and their contributions have been enormous. Jim Golanty also went into high gear in procuring a *Guidebook for Directors of Nonprofit Corporations* to assist us in reorganizing the Board. All Board Members received copies highlighted by Frank Falk. We revised our Mission Statement, our Articles of Incorporation, and our By-laws. We also underwent an IRS audit and received word that we were in compliance with laws governing nonprofit corporations.

Betty Maxwell, long-time Assistant Director of the Gifted Development Center, turned over that position to Barbara "Bobbie" Gilman, our Director of Staff Development. Betty now serves as Senior Staff Director. We have hired several excellent part-time testers, including Dr. Mindy Solomon, who moved from California to join our team. Mindy will be licensed as a psychologist in Colorado within the next ten days, and has already begun supervising our new intern from the DU School of Professional Psychology. In the event that something happens to prevent me from being able to direct the Center, Mindy has agreed to provide the legal/professional stability of our organization, as a licensed psychologist must be involved in the leadership of the Gifted Development Center.

In June of 2005, ISAD sponsored the 4th annual PG Retreat for families of exceptionally and profoundly gifted children. Once again, families came from all over the globe to attend. Allie Golon, who organized all of the preceding conferences, decided that this would be her last Retreat and the parents mobilized immediately to take over the event and keep it going. In June, 2006, 26 PG families gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Denver. Betty Maxwell participated in the event, discussing with exceptionally gifted teens the characteristics that make them unique. This was the beginning of data gathering on the traits that distinguish exceptional giftedness from moderate levels of giftedness.

A major achievement of ISAD this calendar year was a full-day Symposium on the Comparison of Assessment Techniques in the Identification of Gifted Learners for the 16th Biennial Conference of the World Council for Gifted Children. Dr. Richard Boolootian, of the Mirman School for the Gifted in Los Angeles, provided the financial support for the symposium and asked me to organize it. Frank Falk worked with several of the presenters to analyze their data. After Dr. Boolootian's introduction, I presented an "Overview of the Issues in Assessing Gifted Learners." Dr. Dawn Flanagan, co-author of *Essentials of WISC-IV Assessment*, spoke on "Use of the WISC-IV in the Assessment of Giftedness." Dr. Deirdre Lovecky and Kathi Kearney addressed, "A Comparison of the Stanford-Binet 5 and the SBL-M in the Assessment of Gifted Children." Bobbie Gilman and Frank Falk presented "Research on the WISC-IV on 103 Gifted Children." Dr. John Wasserman spoke on the "Utility of Nonverbal Measures with the Gifted." Dr. Annemarie Roeper discussed "Qualitative Assessment of Gifted Children." Each participant wrote a paper and the papers will be collected in a book co-edited by Richard Boolootian and myself. The symposium was extremely well received: Nearly half of the conference participants attended some portion of the symposium and I was asked to keynote the Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness by the Taiwan delegation.

In addition, Bobbie did a session on “Empowering Gifted Minds”; Allie Golon did a session on “Raising Topsy-Turvy Kids” and another on “Showing Your Work When There is Nothing to Show”; Steve Haas did a session on “Teaching Strategies for Gifted Visual-Spatial Learners”; Linda Leviton did a session on “My Socks Don’t Feel Right”; Steve Haas and I presented a session on “Giftedness and Visual-Spatial Learners”; Allie Golon and I presented a session entitled, “I Can’t See It! Learning through Imagery”; and the Visual-Spatial Resource Access Team presented a double session on “The New Mode of Giftedness: Visual-Spatial Learners.” Our Visual-Spatial Resource was highly visible at this international conference. The conference was held in New Orleans, just 10 days before Hurricane Katrina, and we were among the last visitors to enjoy the city.

ISAD was again well-represented at the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Steve Haas and I did several presentations on visual-spatial learners and I did one on the wisdom of aging.

The *Visual-Spatial Identifier* (VSI) became automated this year, which enables us to process larger groups of students. A Javits grant won by the Page Unified School District provided the financial means to automate the VSI. ISAD sponsored two research studies on the VSI this year, one in Page, Arizona, and another in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Data were collected on third and seventh graders, expanding the age range of the instrument. We now have cross-cultural data, since the population in Page, Arizona was primarily Navajo. The insights gained from this study led to a proposal for the 2006 NAGC conference on, “How Can Education Become Culturally Relevant for Gifted Native Americans?” The Visual-Spatial Resource Access Team had another proposal accepted for the 2006 NAGC conference on “Through the Eyes of Another: Differentiation for the Underserved.”

In September, Allie Golon was asked to keynote a workshop at the Mirman School for the Gifted on highly gifted visual-spatial learners, and Linda Leviton and I were invited to join her. Every teacher received a copy of Allie’s book for children, *If You Could See the Way I Think: A Handbook for Visual-Spatial Kids*. Since teachers enjoyed the book so much, Allie created a similar book for teachers this year, *The Visual-Spatial Classroom: Differentiation Strategies that Engage Every Learner*, complete with a disc of reproducibles. She has also created two mini-books based on the larger book for teachers, *Nothin’ But the Facts: A Visual-Spatial Strategy for the Times Tables* and *I Can’t See it! A Visual-Spatial Approach to Language Arts*. Allie self-published all four of these books. Michael Piechowski, an advisor of ISAD since its inception, published a book this year as well: “*Mellow Out*” *They Say. If Only I Could.*”

In November, Allie Golon launched a new website for the Gifted Development Center, including a new shopping cart. It is much easier to navigate and better optimized for search engines to find us, resulting in increased traffic, internet sales and consultations.

I was invited to speak in The Hague, Netherlands, at the European Council for International Schools annual conference in November. I conducted a full-day pre-conference on Upside-Down Brilliance and two additional sessions. Then I went to Driebergen, Netherlands, at the request of Willem Kuipers, who attended our 25th anniversary conference, and Annelien van Kempen, to address unrecognized giftedness in women. I also spoke about visual-spatial learners to the Maria J. Krabbe Foundation on

Visual Thinking in Driebergen. Mechel Ensing, who organized the presentation, and Annelien van Kempen will be visiting the Gifted Development Center in October.

From The Hague, I went to London, where two parents of profoundly gifted children tested at our Center created a support group, PEGY—Profoundly and Exceptionally Gifted Youth. I spoke for two days at a conference they organized. Then, I went on to Great Missenden to address parents at The Gateway School at the invitation of Astrid Axson, the learning support person at the school, who has visited the GDC twice. My last stop was the University of Warwick in Coventry, where I addressed the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, a government agency.

In May of this year, Bobbie Gilman, Allie Golon and I were invited to present at the first conference on giftedness in Tokyo, Japan. We helped a new school get started, Tokyo Gifted Academy, and tested several children for admission to the school. There was such interest in the testing that Helen McVicar and Ann DeMers agreed to come at the last minute and joined Bobbie in Tokyo to test children for another week. This led to a new concept for the GDC: going global. The ex-patriot community tends to move between Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, London and New York. We have strong relationships with the gifted communities in these countries and we are currently exploring the possibility of sending teams of testers to these areas of the world. Allie Golon and Helen McVicar will be returning to Tokyo in November, and Bobbie Gilman and Karen Rogers plan to go to Tokyo in February.

There were many presentations for ISAD staff in the United States and Canada as well. For me, the most memorable was presenting at Calvin College's January Series to a general audience of over a thousand. I was very well received and the event was videotaped. I also keynoted the Center for Gifted Education National Curriculum Network Conference at the College of William and Mary.

In June, I was invited to co-chair a Working Committee on Assessment for NAGC. Bobbie Gilman was invited to participate as well. Frank Falk will be analyzing data to assist the committee in determining selection criteria for gifted programs throughout the country. At the NAGC Conference, I will be presenting a policy statement from the committee to the NAGC Board for their consideration and dissemination.

In July, Frank Falk and Nancy Miller moved to Denver, where they plan to devote their time enhancing ISAD's mission. We are thrilled to welcome them to our community and look forward to many productive years.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Silverman".

Linda Kreger Silverman, President