

2009

Celebrating the People of Bloomington



Camilla Williams Opera Great

Camilla Williams is a rock star of opera. As the first contracted black singer at the New York City Opera in 1946, she created the role of Madama Butterfly and two years later created the first Aida. And she sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the March on Washington only moments before Martin Luther King Jr. spoke the words “I have a dream.”

Born in Danville, Virginia, young Camilla’s world was filled with music. “Everybody sang,” she says. “My uncles, my auntie, my mamma.”

Williams became Indiana University’s first African American professor of voice, moving here in 1977 at the invitation of Charles Webb, dean of the IU School of Music. “He was my mentor,” she says.

Williams died January 29, 2012.



Photo by Steve Raymer



Photo by Eric Rudd

Brad Lawrence Gold Casters Celebrates 25th Year

When local jeweler Brad Lawrence started out in 1984, he was a 20-year-old kid with a dream: to build a world-class jewelry store in Bloomington. Armed with a degree from the Gemological Institute of America, he rented a small room at the back of his mother’s beauty shop and got to work.

Twenty-five years later, Lawrence has more than realized his dream. His store, Gold Casters, at East 2nd and South Washington streets, is not only a top-of-the-line jewelry store, it’s the largest in southern Indiana.

“A lot of people were interested in designing a unique piece of jewelry but assumed that custom design was just too expensive,” Lawrence says. “I set out to show them it wasn’t.”

Meg Cabot Bloomington’s Own Fairy-Tale Princess

It’s a classic Cinderella story: Lonely, small-town girl transforms into wildly successful international sensation. But there was no fairy godmother to wave her wand over Bloomington native Meggin Cabot.

“We only had three TV channels. We didn’t have computers,” Cabot, 41, recalls about how she began imagining and writing her own stories.

Now she’s easily recognizable as one of today’s most prolific authors of popular fiction for children, teens, and adults, having published more than 50 novels, including *The Princess Diaries*.

Cabot has now authored more than 80 books—including multiple No. 1 New York Times bestsellers—and sold more than 25 million copies worldwide. She lives in Key West, Florida, with her husband and several cats.



Photo by Steve Raymer

Ben Chappell South Grad is IU Quarterback

Ben Chappell never thought he would attend Indiana University, but he is now the team's starting quarterback. "I grew up here," the Bloomington High School South graduate says, "so obviously I didn't want to go to IU. ... I wanted to go south and play football."

But Chappell also knew about the strong accounting program at IU's Kelley School of Business, and he saw what Coach Terry Hoeppner was doing with the football program. "The more I looked," Chappell says, "the more I knew I couldn't pass up this opportunity."

A 22-year-old redshirt junior, Chappell uses his position on the team's Leadership Council to push his teammates. "We're all brothers on the team, so we help each other any way we can," he says.



Photo by Steve Raymer



Photo by Jeffrey Hammond

Edward Auer Celebrated Pianist

The music world is preparing for the 200th anniversary of Frederic Chopin's birth in 2010, but Edward Auer has been ready for most of his life.

The Indiana University piano professor, a celebrated interpreter of the Polish composer's work, has already recorded the complete Chopin preludes, waltzes, ballades, and, most recently, two volumes of the nocturnes and scherzos.

Now 67, Auer began studying piano at age 5 and, at 23, became the first American to win a prize at the prestigious International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland. Becoming a Chopin specialist, he says, "was not my choice; it chose me."

Kathy Schick & Nicholas Toth A Stone-Age Honeymoon

The husband-and-wife team of Kathy Schick and Nicholas Toth are experts in "the archaeological study of prehistoric human origins and Paleolithic technology's adaptation and development."

In other words, the Indiana University anthropology professors know about stone tools.

They also co-direct the Stone Age Institute, opened in 2003 and widely regarded as the best research center in the world for the study of tool evolution and how it coincides with human evolution.

"We spent our honeymoon in a canvas tent in Africa," says Schick, "and our first anniversary at a workshop on flint-knapping (the chipping and splitting of flint to make tools) in Washington state."

Schick and Toth were the first to use brain-imaging technology to study human evolution.



Photo by Tyagen Miller



Photo by James Keller

Michael Sheldon Biographer

Mark Twain: Man in White (Random House) is the fourth biography by Michael Sheldon, who lives in Bloomington and has taught literature and writing at Indiana State University for 30 years.

"I loved the world of Huck and Tom, the world of the Mississippi," he says, adding, "Twain knew exactly how to live and had a great time doing it."

Sheldon went to college in Nebraska and then came to Bloomington and earned a doctorate at Indiana University. It was his early biography of Cyril Connolly that caught the eye of an editor at the *Daily Telegraph*, who recruited him to write celebrity features, which he did for nearly 20 years.



Photo by Adam Reynolds

Mitch & Eileen Rice Playing Root Music that Kids Love

Mitch and Eileen Rice have been performing regularly at the Farmers' Market for the past 30 years. "As far as I know, we were responsible for bringing music to the Farmers' Market back in 1979," says Mitch.

The music they play is described variously as old time, folk, or roots music, played acoustically with Mitch on guitar and harmonica and Eileen holding time with the Limberjack—a wood instrument made of a loosely jointed figure on a stick slapped against a thick plank.

"We are recognized wherever we go and that is a good feeling," Mitch says. "It helps define our place in the community and makes us who we are."

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