

■ class notes

Rongeur and also holds several foreign patents.

1978 John F. Wasik LAS, MA '88 LAS, of Grayslake, has authored his 10th book, *The Merchant of Power: Samuel Insull, Thomas Edison and the Creation of the Modern Metropolis*, which will be published by Palgrave-MacMillan in March 2006. The book profiles the rise and fall of Chicago utilities baron Samuel Insull. Wasik currently serves as the personal finance columnist for Bloomberg News.

1979 Brandon Hamilton ENG, of Alsip, is a business professor at DeVry University in Tinley Park. An advocate for public service, Hamilton served as a consultant to Chicago Public School's Office of Community Relations, helping to develop a Web site to facilitate community building. After receiving his MBA from the University of Southern California in 1991, Hamilton graduated from the CORO Foundation Arts Leadership Fellow Program in 1996. Following graduation, he served as chairman of the board for Dancesence, Inc., the management organization for Donna Sternberg and Dancers. While working on his Ph.D. at Indiana State University, Hamilton served as the acting director of computer programs at Ivy Tech State College in Valparaiso, Ind. He later discontinued his studies to help establish a campus of Westwood College of Technology in Calumet City.

1979 Jesse G. Reyes LAS, of Chicago, has been elected first vice president of the Illinois Judges Association. Reyes is an associate judge in the Chancery Division in Chicago. He previously served as secretary, third and second vice president, and has been an IJA member since 1997. He also is a member of the Circuit Court Committee

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT

Problem solving

Once fearful of mathematics, Professor M. Vali Siadat mastered the subject and is named Professor of the Year

Like an Ironman competitor, M. Vali Siadat, MS '86 LAS, PHD '90 LAS, DA '97 LAS, likes a good challenge. That's why, as a high school student in Iran, Siadat decided to conquer his biggest fear: mathematics. "I had a phobia about mathematics because I found it so overwhelming," he says. "But the challenge of it also intrigued me."

Not only did Siadat eventually overcome his phobia, he embarked on a major effort to master mathematics when he immigrated to the United States at age 17. After completing his electrical engineering degree, he earned his master's, Ph.D. and doctorate degrees in mathematics.

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Decades later, Siadat is reaping the benefits. In his current role as professor and chair of the Department of Mathematics at Richard J. Daley College in Chicago, Siadat has earned national recognition for his work in mathematics and education. This past fall, he was presented with the 2005 Illinois Professor of the Year award by the Carnegie Foundation



Courtesy of M. Vali Siadat

In addition to improving math proficiency, M. Vali Siadat's "Keystone Methods" system has increased students' reading scores and their ability to concentrate.

for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Siadat has earned praise for his "Keystone Methods" system of teaching mathematics, which he and UIC Professor Yoram Sagher developed. Designed to help college students who are unsuccessful in basic mathematics, the system is based on Siadat and Sagher's research, which showed that administering daily math quizzes, providing immediate feedback and "re-teaching to attain mastery" dramatically boosted students' math proficiency. Since these findings were published, the Keystone Method, or aspects of it, have been implemented by 43 U.S. institutions, and instructors have reported "staggering results," says Siadat. —Rachel Parker

Send your suggestions for this column to Rachel Parker, Assistant Editor, UIC Alumni Magazine, 750 S. Halsted St., Ste. 520, Chicago, IL 60607 or e-mail rparker3@uic.edu.