

# OLD Friends. new BEGiNNings.



2009 international  
alumni reunion



September 18-19, 2009

For more than 50 years, Eastern has hosted international students on its campus with the assistance of dedicated staff and the vision of its leaders. Today we commend those pioneers for the establishment of programs and structures to facilitate the opportunity for citizens of other countries to enroll at EIU. We applaud those daring and brave students for their courage in leaving home to live and study in a new land and culture. And today we honor those alumni who exemplify Eastern Illinois University's definition of global citizen. Once courageous students, they now share a common history, enjoy excellent reputations in their careers and lives, and project bright futures as EIU alumni.

We are proud and honored to name them  
**EIU Global Ambassadors**





## Vicente DiBella Jr., M.D., '81

### Brazil

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Dr. Vicente DiBella Jr's plans to follow in his father's tradition of becoming a doctor met a brief detour when he came to EIU to study and play soccer. Vicente, the son of a physician and elementary school teacher, planned to study medicine in his native Brazil until one of his physical education teachers, Schellas Hyndman, was hired as the head coach of EIU's soccer team. Hyndman invited Vicente to join him at EIU and offered him a Talented Student Athletic scholarship; Vicente accepted and began his studies in zoology at EIU in 1979. Vicente writes that during his junior year of high school he attended a soccer camp in Virginia and received eight invitations from eight different universities, one of which was the College of William and Mary. But he chose to attend EIU and "was very pleased to do so." Vicente and his teammates went to the NCAA Nationals at Stanford during Eastern's first year as Division I in 1980 and for many weeks the team was ranked best in the nation on the national poll. Upon graduating with his bachelor's in 1981, Vicente returned to São Paulo, Brazil and was accepted to Escola Paulista de Medicina, the same medical school where his father studied. He completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology and also obtained specialization in ultrasonography and colposcopy. . In 2007 he ran the Chicago Marathon and has run in seven other marathons. Vicente is married to Zsuzsanna, also an obstetrician-gynecologist, they have two children, Guila and Luca, and reside in São Paulo, Brazil. Vicente writes, "we are a happy family who loves sports; and are very honored to represent EIU all over the world."



## Peter Gitau, Ph.D., '95

### Kenya

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Dr. Peter Gitau, a native of Kenya, Africa, currently serves as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Departments reporting to him include Student Development, Disability Support Services, Judicial Affairs, Career Services, Supplemental Instruction, Student Legal Assistance, Rainbow's End Child Development Program and the Counseling Center. He also oversees the Campus Violence Prevention Committee and recently formed a university-wide student care program called Saluki Student Cares. Prior to joining SIUC, Peter filled the role of Dean of Student Life at the University of Dubuque, Iowa where he was a founding member of IOWASIDEA, a state-wide diversity consortium. As a global educator and community leader, Peter founded and serves as Executive Director of TMKC (Teach My Kenyan Children, tkmc.org), an international non-profit organization whose goal is fostering development through education in Africa. With this program, he has dramatically transformed rural villages in Kenya through strategic community development initiatives. Under his leadership, TMKC has provided learning materials to school children, conducted multiple medical clinics, trained teachers and other educational professionals, administered school feeding programs, constructed school community libraries and implemented an aggressive scholarship program for students in rural Kenya. Peter arrived at EIU as a graduate student in 1994, already earning a bachelor's in education from Kenyatta University. In 1995 he earned his master's in educational administration from EIU and also worked as a graduate assistant. He went on to earn a doctorate in higher education from the University of Kansas in 2000. Peter describes EIU as providing for him "an institutional support system that literally put its arms around the international community and demonstrated the utmost care." He contends that Eastern "has a unique way of drawing you in (and securing you) as one of its own. It has a small campus feel, is generous with its resources, and has an incredibly committed faculty and staff who value each student. Such are the memories that are forever etched in the mind of an EIU alumnus." Peter and his wife Trizah have three children and reside in Murphysboro, Illinois.

## Karl H. Hecker, Ph.D., '86

### Germany

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As the recipient of an exchange fellowship and participant in the academic exchange program between EIU and Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Karl Hecker joined the chemistry program as a graduate student in the fall of 1985 where Professor Richard L. Keiter accepted him into his research team. He was awarded the master's degree in chemistry in December of 1986, after which he returned to his native Germany to complete his German degree. He received a 'Diplom Chemiker' degree from Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in January of 1988. Karl returned to the U.S. the same year to join the doctoral program at Florida State University and received his doctorate from the Department of Chemistry at FSU in 1993. Karl conducted postdoctoral training for two years with Professor Kenneth Roux at the Department of Biological Sciences at FSU and for three years with the renowned Professor J. Wayne Streilein at Harvard Medical School and The Schepens Eye Research Institute in Molecular Immunology. After receiving extensive training in academia, Karl transitioned into industry in 1998 where he held positions of increasing responsibilities in research and development at Transgenomic, Inc., Invitrogen Corporation, PerkinElmer Life and Analytical Sciences, and most recently at Quidel Corporation. During his industrial career Karl led the development of more than one hundred commercially successful products. While at PerkinElmer, he directed a team of close to one hundred scientists developing products for genetic screening, protein purification and analysis, high-throughput screening, and functional genomics. In his most recent position at Quidel Corporation Karl led a team of scientists developing rapid diagnostic tests for infectious diseases for point-of-care and over-the-counter use. He is the author of 16 peer-reviewed publications, which include two publications based on research performed at EIU with Prof. Richard L. Keiter in prestigious journals. He is also the editor of two books about genetic variance detection, holds several US patents, is the co-inventor on several published patent applications, and is co-author on a book chapter about PCR cloning protocols. Karl's wife, Wanping Mai, is an EIU alumna and former student of Prof. David Buchanan. She graduated with a master's in chemistry from EIU in 1987. Karl and Wanping live in sunny San Diego, CA with their 6-year old son Alexander. Their 20-year old daughter Amanda is a senior at the University of California in Los Angeles and currently studies abroad in Brussels, Belgium.





## Tian Li, '98

### China

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Tian Li counts himself as one of millions of college students who were active participants in the pro-democracy movement in China in 1989. It was this activism that prompted a strong interest in political science and the hope that he would be able to work to “bridge the West with the East.” Tian Li came to the United States in 1997 with a bachelor’s in English and a master’s in American Studies. He enrolled in EIU’s graduate program in political science and worked as a graduate assistant in the department. While here at EIU, he was an active participant in the activities organized by the offices of International Programs and the Graduate School and served as chair of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association. Tian graduated with his master’s in political science in 1998. Immediately following graduation, he secured a position as an International Broadcaster at Radio Free Asia, a non-profit news organization sponsored by the United States Congress. The mission of Radio Free Asia is to provide accurate and timely news and information to Asian countries where access to free press is prohibited. He contends that “the journalistic experience not only fulfills my career goals in helping promote China’s progress and bridging the East and West, but it also enables me to fully utilize the knowledge I acquired at EIU.” During his tenure at RFA, he has written and produced hundreds of reports and feature programs, some of which have been used or quoted by newspapers, magazines, research institutes, and the U.S. Congress. In 2000, he received the bronze medal from the New York Festival for a cultural feature program and was named a Distinguished Nominee by the National Broadcasters Association for reporting on the environmental issues facing China. His duties at RFA include conducting research and interviews, writing reports, editing the Asia Pacific News Bulletins and hosting a 70-minute news report. Tian writes that his work “is very rewarding because I have received much positive feedback from my audience in China.” He resides in Rockville, Maryland.

## Paramjit Sidhu, '91

India

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Paramjit Singh Sidhu worked as a bank manager and earned a master's in commerce and a law degree in his native India before coming to the United States in 1989. He enrolled as a graduate student in the business administration program at EIU, where he was and is known as P.J., and graduated with an MBA in 1991. Upon graduating, Paramjit remained in the U.S. and secured positions of manager, director, and vice president of finance in the home care and nursing home industry. Since 2001, he has worked as an administrator for Joliet Oncology-Hematology Associates, Ltd. (JOHA) where he oversees an oncology practice of 12 physicians in six locations. He also manages a multi-modality, free-standing diagnostic imaging center and between these businesses he leads a staff of 125. Additionally, he serves as CEO of a project in India where a JOHA promoter established a cyclotron facility to produce radiopharmaceuticals. He also serves as a trustee on the Board of Trustees for St. Francis University in Joliet. Paramjit and his wife Washinder have one son, who is 23, and training in Orlando to be a commercial pilot; they reside in Naperville, Illinois.



## Brenda Gonzales Tanner, '80 Philippines

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Brenda Gonzales Tanner earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of the Philippines and was inducted as a member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi in 1977. She arrived in the United States in 1979 after receiving a Foreign Student Scholarship from Eastern Illinois University to pursue a masters in business administration. While at EIU, Brenda was granted a graduate teaching assistantship in the Department of Computer Services. She participated in several international activities with the EIU International Student Organization and with the University of Illinois including being interviewed on the radio station, WEIU, regarding her stay in Charleston. An avid traveler, Brenda joined 20 other EIU students for an eight-week trip to Europe during her independent study in 1980. The resulting paper was entitled "The Effects of the U.S. Dollar on the European Market." Since then, she has traveled several times to Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. After graduating with an MBA in December 1980, Brenda worked at ATS Corporation providing information technology services to several government agencies, namely among others, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, and the Department of Defense where she is currently assigned. After over 28 years of service, she is currently a Project Management and Business/Systems Analysis Principal. Managing multiple contracts worth \$44 million and tripling the contracts' size are among her accomplishments. Awarded the National Partnership for Reinventing Government's Hammer Award in 1998 by Vice President Al Gore, she has also received several commendation letters from HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo on her contributions to the Community Builder program. In 2005, while actively participating in EIU international alumni events in Washington, DC, Brenda was invited by the Dean of the Graduate School at EIU to serve as a founding member of the International Alumni Advisory Board sponsored by EIU's Office of International Students and Scholars and she continues today serving on that board. Brenda has been a member of the Project Management Institute for 10 years and earned the Project Management Professional certificate in 2007. Her sister Elinor also attended EIU with a Foreign Student Scholarship and earned a masters degree in mathematics in 1987. Brenda recently married Donald Tanner on May 3, 2008, and they reside in Vienna, Virginia.

## Ray Wallace, Ph.D., '81, '82

### Northern Ireland

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Dr. Ray Wallace, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, earned a bachelor's degree in physical education in 1981 and a master's in English in 1982 from EIU. He holds a doctor of arts degree in English from Illinois State University. Ray was born in Antrim, Northern Ireland and arrived at EIU in 1978 on both a track scholarship and an international student academic scholarship. He represented his country from 1977-81 in international track events all over Europe, represented EIU in track from 1978-1981, and became a US citizen in 1989. He has published five books, thirty chapters and articles, and has made more than forty lecture presentations at national and international conference venues, including South Africa, Ireland, France, Spain, China, Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Japan, and Australia. Prior to his position in Arkansas, Ray held two Arts and Sciences deanships at Clayton State University and earlier at Troy University. Previously, he served as the Director of the Louisiana Scholars College, the state's designated Honors College in the liberal arts and sciences, and as the Department Head for Languages and Communication at Northwestern State University of Louisiana. He had formerly held faculty positions at the University of Tennessee as the Director of the University Writing Center, the Director of Technical Writing in three Governor's Schools for the Sciences, and as an Assistant Professor of English, after moving from the Pacific Rim at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, where he served as an Assistant Professor of Writing and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). His post-doctoral experiences include selection into the inaugural class (2009-2010) of the Twenty-First Century Leadership Institute for Provosts and Chief Academic Officers. In addition, in May 2009 he was selected by the Japanese government as a member of The Japan Foundation Invitational Program for U.S. Educators. He was also a member of the Class of 2006 at the Institute for Management and Leadership in Higher Education (MLE) at Harvard University. From his early days as an international student at EIU he understood the importance of diverse cultures working together to make the planet a better place to live. With two recent Asian tours to cement exchange programs with twenty universities, an invited tour by the Japanese government, a recent Fulbright experience in South Africa, added to earlier understanding garnered by leading academic and cultural tours to Ireland and Scotland and developing exchange programs in Spain, as well as helping other faculty attain Fulbright Awards to Thailand, China, Argentina, and Chile, he has become an even more enthusiastic proponent of international outreach for both students and faculty alike. Ray is married to Susan Lewis Wallace. Ray plays golf, badly and is an award-winning amateur photographer in his limited spare-time.



## Wen-Jyh Daniel Wang, Ph.D. '89 Taiwan

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Wen-Jyh Daniel Wang was born in a rural town in Taiwan where he attended Kao-Hsiung Teachers College. Upon graduating he began his teaching career at Ping-Tung Industrial Vocational High School where he taught mechanical technology to adult students. Daniel's decision to pursue a higher degree in education resulted in his coming to the

United States at the age of 35 to pursue a master's in technology from EIU. He graduated with that degree in 1989 and he considers his studies at EIU to be the first chapter of his pursuit of advanced study. The second chapter he spent studying at Purdue University and in the final chapter he earned his doctorate at Pennsylvania State in 1993. Daniel writes that he feels very fortunate "to have the chance to learn from many outstanding professors at EIU" and that his experience "reshaped my value structure about education." He also shares, "each university inspired me differently and helped to form my values and teaching philosophy." Daniel returned to Taiwan and accepted a position teaching at Chen-Shiu University in 1993, which was a junior college at that time. In 1995, he was named chair of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management and during this time the college was officially degreed. Daniel attributes that success to making Chen-Shiu a leader in their field. Promotion by the Taiwanese government of the vocational certificate system led Daniel to earn two professional certificates, in computer aided drawing and advanced project management professional. Daniel continues to teach at Chen-Shiu University as an associate professor. He writes, "I love teaching the most, sharing my knowledge and experience with students of all ages is my favorite job. Hopefully the values I teach my students will benefit them in their later lives and society can be a better place." Daniel and his wife Vicky's son Shou-Jen "Steve" is carrying on the tradition; he is a graduate student at EIU in the technology program.

