A bit of history was made at Commencement in May when Michael Gooch became the first man—and the first flight nurse—to earn the School of Nursing’s Founder’s Medal, recognizing the year’s highest-achieving graduate. Gooch, a Vanderbilt Life-Flight nurse, is a trailblazer in many ways. He grew up on a farm in Goodspring, Tenn. As a freshman in high school, he joined the Explorer Post through the local emergency medical services office, and was allowed to go on ambulance runs and later spent time job-shadowing in the local hospital’s emergency department.

From then on he knew he wanted to pursue a health-care career. He attended Columbia State Community College to earn his associate’s degree and, at age 20, was working in the emergency department and critical-care unit at the local hospital. “I was able to give patients narcotics before I was even the legal drinking age,” Gooch says.

He earned his bachelor’s degree from Middle Tennessee State University after attending paramedic school. That’s when he got his first taste of what it’s like to be a flight nurse.

“I figured out what I needed to get under my belt in order to become a flight nurse,” he says. His strategy included working as a paramedic in nearby Williamson County, and working in the Vanderbilt emergency department as an R.N. He worked his way into a position on Vanderbilt’s LifeFlight team in 2002. After that he jumped at the chance to use Vanderbilt’s tuition-reimbursement program to enroll in the School of Nursing’s acute-care nurse practitioner program. Gooch will continue his work with LifeFlight. He’s also signed on with a Knoxville, Tenn.-based emergency department group and is working at River Park Hospital in McMinnville. He hopes to continue with community education and outreach and perhaps guest-lecture at the Vanderbilt School of Nursing. He’s also exploring options to pursue a doctoral degree.

Man Earns School of Nursing Founder’s Medal for First Time

Michael Gooch with School of Nursing Dean Colleen Conway-Welch

Five Prominent African-American Scholars Join Faculty

Vanderbilt has hired five prominent African-American scholars in a blockbuster recruiting coup that advances its efforts to be a major player in the study of African-American literature and deepen scholarship of Southern and American literature. Houston Baker, Hortense Spillers, Charlotte Pierce-Baker, Alice Randall and Ifeoma Nwankwo will begin work at the university during the fall 2006 semester.

Gooch will teach at Vanderbilt’s Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, which is planning a yearlong seminar on black European studies in 2007–08. Southern culture cannot be taught apart from African-American culture, says Jay Clayton, chair of the English department. “The South is the seedbed from which African-American music, literature, art and cuisine rose and spread. This is part of Vanderbilt’s re-imaging how to teach American literature.”

Baker, who leaves Duke University to become a distinguished university professor at Vanderbilt, is one of the most wide-ranging intellectuals in America. He has written about African and African-American literature, rap music, the legacy of Booker T. Washington and the Harlem Renaissance. Spillers, who works Cornell University to become the Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English, “is one of the most brilliant intellectuals working in literary criticism and theory from the 1970s onward,” says Clayton. She has written about psychoanalysis and race, how linguistics has failed black women, and crucial essays on authors including Zora Neale Hurston, Margaret Walker, Toni Morrison, Ralph Ellison, Gwendolyn Brooks and William Faulkner.

Fierce-Baker leaves Duke to become a professor of women’s and gender studies and professor of English at Vanderbilt. She was nationally acclaimed for her 1999 book, Surviving the Silence: Black Women’s Stories of Rape, and will teach sociolinguistics for the English department. Randall, a former visiting professor at Vanderbilt, returns for a three-year term as writer-in-residence. Her debut novel, The Wind Done Gone, a parody of Margaret Mitchell’s Gone with the Wind, sparked a First Amendment court battle, and her second, Puckabilly and the Queen of Spades, was critically acclaimed in 2004.

Nwankwo, who leaves the University of Michigan, was one of the most heavily tapped by Vanderbilt to be leaders in continuing efforts to pursue interdisciplinary studies, train minority scholars, and reach out to historically black colleges. Programs in collaboration with historically black colleges are already in place at Vanderbilt in fields including physics and medicine, and

Best Professor: James Lovenheimer, Assistant Professor of Musicology

For a professor who prefaces his class with a story about how he was a homeless substance abuser 20 years ago, he sure has come far. Teaching music history courses here at Vanderbilt, he brings musical excitement to all Vanderbilt students.

Best Greek House: Beta Upsilon Chi

BYX is in its fourth year on campus and this year had more new members than any other frat. BYX is the lone Christian fraternity on campus and is known for its island party thrown on Alumni Lawn in the spring.

Worst Fashion Trend: Uggs (second year in a row)

Short for “ugg-ly” and by far the worst fashion trend ever to make it to the big market. Van- derbilt students have declared this to be a winner only in the sense that they never again want to see those shapeless boots strut the campus.

Pierce-Baker leaves Duke to become a professor of women’s and gender studies and professor of English at Vanderbilt. She was critically acclaimed in 2004.
Schmidt, Vanderbilt professor of computer science, is principal investigator of the Global Information Grid to help pilots and other U.S. military commanders use joint communications capabilities by utilizing the GIG to augment air-to-commander priorities and are protected from interception and disruption,” says Schmidt, “but also will ensure that all communications are delivered according to commander priorities and are protected from interception and disruption.” Vanderbilt is teaming with Carnegie Mellon University in the project.

University Names New Enrollment Strategist

Douglas L. Christiansen, Purdue University’s top admissions and enrollment management executive, has been named Vanderbilt’s senior enrollment strategist in a newly established position designed to enhance the university’s admissions and financial-aid efforts.

Christiansen, assistant vice president for enrollment management and dean of admissions at Purdue, will become associate provost for enrollment management and dean of admissions at Vanderbilt, where he will oversee the offices of undergraduate admissions and financial aid beginning in August.

“Doug Christiansen already has an exceptional track record as an enrollment executive in a very competitive environment, as well as a national reputation for academic excellence and integrity,” says Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Nicholas S. Zeppos. “He is a brilliant, thoughtful, analytical and creative leader who will help us build on Vanderbilt’s tremendous success in recent years.”

Under Christiansen’s leadership, admissions to Purdue increased 48 percent, resulting in improved academic quality, ethnic diversity and international presence. In addition to serving as chief enrollment officer at Purdue, Christiansen was administratively responsible for a wide range of programs, including admissions, financial aid, orientation, new-student programs, learning communities, early access programs, re-entry and enrollment-management analysis and reporting. He also had coordinating responsibility for the Office of space management and academic scheduling, the bursar, graduate school admissions, and international students and scholars. He held a faculty appointment as assistant professor in Purdue’s college of education.

Christiansen earned a doctor of philosophy degree in higher education administration, a master’s degree in public administration and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. He consults with universities throughout the United States on enrollment management and revenue-generation funding models.

Debate Team Takes National Championship

Vanderbilt’s debate team had a record season this past year, competing in 15 tournaments and more than 30 debate rounds, and winning more than 60 awards.

The team ended the season by competing in the Cross Examination Debate Association’s (CEDA) 2006 National Championship Tournament March 31–April 5 in Dallas. Team members senior Katie Ryocz and junior Phil Rapmund cleared to the final tournament bracket at the national championship—the equivalent of a college basketball team being invited to the NCAA tournament. Ryocz was chosen for the CEDA’s National All-American Debate Squad. During spring break, Vander-bilt juniors Courtney Gould and Russell Ross beat more than 80 debate teams from colleges and universities across the country to win the CEDA’s 2006 Novice National Debate Tournament at West Virginia University.

Gould’s and Ross’ win is the first national debate championship for Vanderbilt since the 1980s. “The squad really pulled together, and it has been an amazing effort on everyone’s part,” says M.L. Sandoz, debate team coach and the University’s director of debate. Sandoz is a senior lecturer in the Department of Communications Studies.

In intercollegiate debate, one resolution is chosen for the year. This year students from across the country debated whether the United States should assume leadership on China on economic, trade and diplomatic issues. During the year the students must approach the topic from several perspectives—both for and against the proposed resolution.

At the national novice tournament, Gould was also presented with the fifth-place Speaker Award. Ross ranked 17th in the same category.

Sandoz received the 2006 John A. Jacobson Memorial Award for career contributions to education through debate. She also received the CEDA’s 2006 Galentine Award, given to an outstanding female debate coach and one of the two most prestigious national awards recognizing contributions to national education, community and competitive success.

Third Bed-Tower Plan Takes Shape

Vanderbilt University Medical Center is moving forward with longstanding plans to add a third bed tower to the main hospital. The 11-story tower would be built atop Van-derbilt University Hospital’s Emergency Department and would add 141 additional acute-care beds as well as several new operating suites. The project’s $234 million price tag includes renovations and additions to other areas of the hospital, as well as other buildings on the Medical Center campus.

VUH currently has 501 adult beds and is the largest hospital in Middle Tennessee. Including the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vander-bilt and the Psychiatric Hospita-l at Vanderbilt, VUMC is licensed for 805 beds.

With occupancy rates at VUH routinely around 90 percent, the addition is needed to keep pace with demand. High occupancy levels over the past five years have overtaxed the hospital’s capacity, resulting in patient diversions and exten-sive use of holding areas for patients who would otherwise be admitted.

Pending state approval, con-traction could begin this fall and is expected to be complet-ed in phases, with completion targeted for 2012. The new tower would consist of eight patient-care and two mechani-cal floors above the existing bed-one-story emergency depart-ment. The project also involves relocation and expansion of existing cardiac catheterization labs and cardiac “hybrid” suites.
operating rooms, relocation of a clinical research unit, and the addition of 14 new operating suites.

**Students Spend Summer in Uganda**

Vanderbilt University students spent the summer working with health organizations in Uganda as part of that country’s response to HIV/AIDS. Uganda’s HIV/AIDS response is viewed as a model to HIV/AIDS. They took a preparatory course this spring by HIV/AIDS. They took a preparatory course this spring by HIV/AIDS. They took a preparatory course this spring by HIV/AIDS. They took a preparatory course this spring by HIV/AIDS. They took an

**Sleep Core Adds to Research Arsenal**

It didn’t take long for Vanderbilt’s Sleep Research Core to fully awaken. Not yet a year old, the core—housed in Vanderbilt’s General Clinical Research Center—is supporting numerous clinical research efforts.

“Clinical sleep research is becoming more recognized as an important investigative tool,” says Beth Malow, associate professor of neurology and director of the Sleep Research Core as well as director of the Vanderbilt Sleep Disorders Center. “It really spans many disciplines, including neurology, pulmonary medicine, psychiatry and pediatrics. This core was established to develop collaborations among researchers with very specific clinical interests, allowing them to add a sleep component to their research.”

The core currently has nine ongoing studies, which include examining the effects of treating sleep apnea in people with epilepsy; studying how sleep patterns in children with autism impact their daytime behavior; and assessing how circadian/sleep rhythms impact protein content in human blood.

Two sleep rooms in the core are equipped with digital monitoring technology. Studies also can be done off-site or in patients’ homes. In the case of one current study, the research takes place in Vanderbilt’s Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU), where researchers are looking at how quality of sleep may affect outcomes in the MICU and how different types of sedation and medication impact sleep quality. “No area of clinical research is more productive and compelling at the moment than sleep and circadian rhythm studies,” says David Robertson, director of the General Clinical Research Center.

**Magazine Wins Two National Awards**

Vanderbilt Magazine won both a gold medal and a silver medal in the “Best Articles of the Year” category of the 2006 national Circle of Excellence competition sponsored by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Out of 265 entries in this category, 22 were recognized with awards. Vanderbilt and Johns Hopkins University were the only schools to win both a gold and a silver medal.

Vanderbilt’s winning articles were “Take the Side Road,” a profile of alumnus Roy Blount Jr. written by Dale Keiger (gold medal, Fall 2005 issue), and “One Chocolate at a Time,” a profile of alumnus Katrina Markoff written by Rachel Morton (silver medal, Summer 2005 issue).