

# The Phi Sigma Tau

Bulletin

A Publication of the Department of Philosophy, Southwest Texas State University

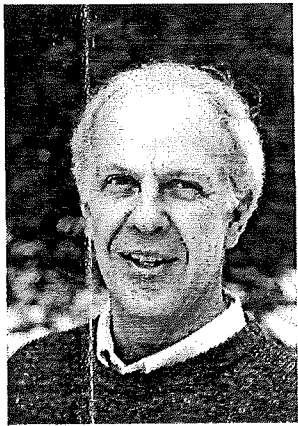
Spring 2003

Philouñton Sophían Timé

Issue 17

## Parker Palmer to discuss educational reform at SWT

*In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends. Teachers must be better compensated, freed from bureaucratic harassment, given a role in academic governance, and provided with the best possible methods and materials. But none of that will transform education if we fail to cherish—and challenge—the human heart that is the source of good teaching.*



(*The Courage to Teach*, 1998)

Persons at SWT and in the Central Texas area will have a rare opportunity to hear noted author and educational activist Parker Palmer in late April. Palmer will conduct a workshop with area teachers and will give three public lectures, including the LBJ Lecture on Monday evening, April 28 at 7:30 p.m. in Evans Auditorium.

Palmer writes and speaks about issues in education, community, leadership, spirituality, and social change. Often cited as a master teacher, he travels widely giving workshops, lectures, and retreats to colleges and universities, public schools, community organizations, churches, and foundations. He serves as a Senior Associate of the American Association of Higher Education, Senior Adviser to the Fetzer Institute, and is the founder of the national Teacher Formation Program for K-12 teachers. His work has been featured by *The New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Christian Century*, CBS News, National Public Radio, and The Voice of America.

Palmer received a B.A. in philosophy and sociology *cum laude* from Carleton College (Minnesota). After studying for a year at Union Theological Seminary in New York, he studied sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, receiving a Ph.D. with honors.

In his widely read book *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* Palmer uses his philosophical background to examine how epistemological paradigms have important implications for how we view education.

Contemporary discussions of educational issues and controversies tend to fixate on the externals of education, such as curriculum or methods. Palmer, while not completely discounting

these matters, wants to redirect attention to the inner life of those involved in the process. His focus is on the essential notion of selfhood which underlies the experiences of teaching and learning. According to Palmer, good teaching flows from an authentic self and cannot be reduced to a formula or a single technique. Rather, good teachers are those who find diverse ways *to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students and to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world.*

The theme of connectedness runs throughout *The Courage to Teach* and is the basis for Palmer's challenge to what he calls the "objectivist myth" of knowing. This view, based on the assumption that the objects of knowledge are properly regarded as isolated entities is, according to Palmer, the source of many misconceptions in education. He proposes an alternative paradigm in which reality is viewed as *a web of communal relationships known only by being in community with it.*

In addition to the LBJ Lecture, Palmer will give the Price Lecture (sponsored by the Campus Christian Community) on Sunday evening and the Teague Lecture (sponsored by the SWT Department of Philosophy) on Monday morning.

### Parker Palmer Lectures

Free and open to the public

#### Sunday, April 27

Price Lecture

*Education as a Spiritual Journey*

7:30 p.m.

First Christian Church

3105 Ranch Road 12

San Marcos, Texas

#### Monday, April 28

Teague Lecture

*Teaching, Learning, and Living:*

*Toward a Philosophy of Education*

10:00 a.m., Centennial Hall, Room 157

Southwest Texas State University

San Marcos, Texas

#### Monday, April 28

LBJ Lecture

*The Courage to Teach: Reforming Education from the Inside Out*

7:30 p.m., Evans Auditorium

Southwest Texas State University

North LBJ Drive, San Marcos, Texas

## Teague Lecture

The Honorable Judge Marvin O. Teague was an SWT alumnus who received a bachelor's degree in social studies in 1954. He subsequently earned a M.Ed. from the University of Houston and a J.D. from the University of Houston School of Law in 1957. Judge Teague remained very active with the university and the alumni association until his death in February of 1991, serving as president of the SWT Alumni Association in 1981-82. He was also a Distinguished SWT Alumnus.

A respected and successful attorney, Judge Teague joined the Court of Criminal Appeals in 1981. He was admitted to practice before the United States Court of Appeals, the U.S. Supreme Court, the Fifth Circuit Court and the U.S. District Court, Southern District.

Before his death Judge Teague established a perpetual endowment with SWT. In 1993 the Department of Philosophy established the Marvin O. Teague Lecture in Applied Jurisprudence to honor his memory by bringing speakers to campus who would address issues in applied philosophy. Good law and good education were two of Judge Teague's passions; thus, the Department of Philosophy is pleased to designate Parker Palmer's lecture "Teaching, Learning, and Living: Toward a Philosophy of Education," as the 2003 Teague Lecture. It will take place on Monday, April 28, at 10:00 in Centennial Hall, Room 157.

### Previous Teague Lecturers

- Charles F. Baird, Justice, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (1993)
- William Winslade, Director of Medical Humanities, UT Medical Branch, Galveston (1995)
- Ted Schneyer, Professor of Law, University of Arizona (1996)
- Vincent Luizzi, Legal Ethicist and Chair, SWT Department of Philosophy (1997)
- Francisco Gomez, SWT Philosophy Alumnus (1998)
- Rui Zhu, Professor of Philosophy, Lake Forest College (1999)
- Gary Bledsoe, Austin Attorney, NAACP President (2000)
- Byron Sage, Criminologist, FBI (Rtd.), President, International Crisis Management, Inc. (2002)

### PRICE LECTURE SERIES

The Price Lecture Series was established in 1984 in honor of Mr. H.Y. Price, Jr. through an endowment to the Campus Christian Community. The purpose of the Price Lecture Series is to provide high quality speakers who address the concerns of the university community and area churches.

Mr. H.Y. Price, Jr. was the past president and chairman of the board of San Marcos Telephone Company and its affiliates. He was active in San

Marcos and other Hays County communities for more than forty years. Price's involvement in the telephone industry spanned eight decades. He died August 2, 1993 at the age of 87.

In addition to his successful business career, Mr. Price was the owner and editor of a newspaper in Colorado City. He served as executive assistant to the director of the Texas Department of Public Welfare, and later lobbied for legislation pertaining to mental health, child welfare, old age assistance, and aid to the blind. In San Marcos Mr. Price was known for his broad and generous support of such institutions as the Public Library, the Senior Citizens' Center, the Crisis Hotline, the Campus Christian Community, and a variety of area churches. He was also supportive of research in regard to dyslexia.

While a student at Texas Technological College, Mr. Price was deeply influenced by a lectures series. As a founding member of the Campus Christian Community, Mr. Price was interested in bringing speakers to the campus and community who would be challenging and, if appropriate, controversial. There have been numerous instances when Mr. Price supported speakers who did not agree with his own views. Among his criteria for judging speakers were: clarity of expression, profundity of thought, honesty in presentation, relevance to issues, and integration of stated values into personal life.

Previous Price lecturers include Marcus Borg, Sissy Farenthold, Betty Sue Flowers, James Fowler, Jim Hightower, Harold Kushner, Megan McKenna, George Ricker, John Shelby Spong, Richard Swinburne, and Andrew Young.

### Sponsors for Parker Palmer events

- Alamo Heights ISD
- \*Campus Christian Community (Price Lecture Series)
- College of Education
- College of Liberal Arts
- Department of Educational Administration and Psychological Services
- Department of Health Services Research
- Department of Philosophy
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Sociology
- Episcopal-Lutheran Campus Ministry
- Jeffrey Gordon, NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities
- \*Lyndon Baines Johnson Distinguished Lecture Series
- Marvin O. Teague, Jr. Lecture Series
- Office of Student Affairs
- Phi Delta Kappa*, society of professional educators
- Program for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- San Marcos CISD
- School of Social Work
- \*Texas Council for the Humanities
- University College
- University Honors Program
- \*University Public Lecture Series
- Viva Books

\*Primary sponsors

## FREEDOM IN THE CULTURE OF FANTASY

Jeffrey Gordon

In almost twenty-five years at SWT, I've had the pleasure of seeing many polite, obedient boys and girls come into their own during their college years as intelligent, aware, self-determining young men and women. I've watched this transformation with fascination and inspiration. The process is by no means automatic. Perhaps most of the people who pass through here never go through it at all. They simply convert from obedience to parents and elders to obedience to some larger social institution: the fraternity or sorority, then the rules of the business establishment or the catechisms of the middle class. But some actually do take their lives into their own hands, become their own person, achieve a critical degree of consciousness that separates them from the herd, gives to their lives seriousness and urgency, and to their perceptions originality and depth. How does this happen? Is there some crucial key to this transformation that I could use or help provide as a college professor?

The key is often some shock or painful experience: an unexpected death in the family, the disintegration of first love, failure in a moral crisis, sudden disillusionment. It seems that what is common to these metamorphoses is some confrontation with one's limits, or, to put it more directly, with the harsh terms of human life: the fact that one's time is short, that one's actions are writing an irreversible biography, that it all counts, that one will die.

A certain degree of thoughtfulness, then, seems the key to this process. But there are many powerful enemies to this thoughtfulness, more now than in the past, and this is a curious paradox. For the burdens of eking out a mere subsistence have always been thought to be the greatest obstacles to thoughtfulness; we don't expect this quality in the literal slave or the wage-slave that replaced him. The staggering breakthroughs of technology have largely relieved us of these burdens, but other

technological advances are responsible for an even more potent enemy of thoughtfulness, and that is thought-control.

The most powerful teacher of most of my students, the teacher whose effectiveness I can't hope to match, is advertising. Its messages are broadcast everywhere, all the time, from billboards to pullovers; and beginning in the middle of the twentieth century, the overriding message has become increasingly uniform and subversive of genuine freedom. What the world of advertising has done for us is to create an alternative reality, one that is infinitely more appealing than the world of our day-to-day agitations. It is a world of sensuousness without commitment, excitement without risk, reward without labor, luxury without sacrifice. The world of advertising portrays for us in graphic splendor the reality we aspire to in our intimate fantasies: a reality in which we are supremely beautiful, eternally youthful, universally desired, forever at the top of our game in a world of unmarred grandeur. It is a reality in which all the contingencies that mottle our lives are altogether banished. Illness, lack of money, physical impairment, the necessity of labor, anxiety about our choices, the toll of unexpected consequences, failure, aging, decline, the miseries of the wretched of the earth, corruption of the environment, war, death: all these occur in a parallel universe, the universe in which we suffer now but from which our escape is imminent. This fragrance, this car, this subtly colored coat, this imported leather encircling my feet—each of these when bought and brought home has the power to hasten my deliverance: to remove me once for all to the world of perpetual fulfillment. The world of advertising is, above all, a world from which time has been banished, and with it, struggle, decline, loss, choices and events with consequents. The genius of contemporary advertising is to give direction to our nameless yearnings, to give focus and meaning to our strivings. Our calling in life is to be in this realm outside time.

What can be expected of a society whose imagination has been thoroughly captured by this aspiration? Three effects come immediately to mind. The first is political apathy. Issues about the goals and functioning of the larger community are so tedious by contrast with the

allurements of the culture of fantasy. And why are these political issues of any importance? Am I not told hundreds of times daily that fulfillment in life is a private matter, involving myself and one other in a landscape wholly ours? The second consequence is perpetual malaise. For the world one strives for is outside time, but the world one lives in cannot escape time. I may have the strongest feeling that all that is needed is this next purchase to assure my conquest of happiness, but my continued disappointment is inevitable, for the contradiction remains unresolved. The third effect is the most disturbing. To direct one's dreams to the world outside time is to postpone indefinitely the development of one's life skills: the ability to recognize the stakes in one's choices, the ability to identify and to weigh consequences, the ability to set clear goals and to chart an earthbound course to their fulfillment. The culture of fantasy that advertising conjures goes far to assure that we lack the skills to make our lives our own.

**Texas Council for the Humanities Funds  
Community Project  
*Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach:*  
A Community Discussion About Education**

The Texas Council for the Humanities has funded a community project grant for a seminar and a workshop for Central Texas educators in conjunction with the visit of Parker Palmer to SWT and San Marcos.

The *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach* seminar, to be held on Saturday, April 26 at Dunbar Community Center, will involve more than fifty teachers, administrators, school board members, and community leaders from several area schools.

In the morning session the participants will explore the themes of Palmer's book, *The Courage to Teach*. Discussion leaders include Nancy Chavkin (SWT School of Social Work), Paul Cohen (SWT Department of English), Craig Hanks (SWT Department of Philosophy), Susan Hanson (SWT Department of English), Diann McCabe (SWT Honors Program), and Inma de Melo-Martín (St. Mary's University Department of Philosophy).

On Saturday afternoon participants will engage with a panel of six educational experts on the questions

- What are the goals of education?
- Is progress toward meeting educational goals impeded or enhanced by standardized curricula, teaching, and testing?
- How can the selfhood of teachers and students become a legitimate topic in education and in our public dialogues about educational reform?
- What kinds of persons are most likely to emerge from various educational models?

Six panelists will consider these issues in a dialogue format with seminar participants. They are: Yolanda Almendarez (Principal of DeZavala Elementary, San Marcos CISD), John Beck (Dean, SWT College of Education), Nathan Bond (Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, SWT), Kevin Brown (Director of Personnel and Public Information, Alamo Heights ISD), Jovita Ross-Gordon (Associate Professor of Educational Administration and Psychological Services, SWT), and Sylvester Perez (Superintendent, San Marcos CISD). Jeffrey Gordon, SWT Professor of Philosophy and NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities, will moderate the panel discussion.

On Monday afternoon, April 28, the participants in the seminar will have the opportunity to meet personally with Parker Palmer at the San Marcos Activity Center, where he will conduct a workshop on the theme *When Teachers Lose Heart: An Approach to Renewal*.

For more information on these or other Parker Palmer events, contact project directors, Jo Ann Carson (512-245-3143) or Karl Brown (512-396-4222).



The *Phi Sigma Tau* Bulletin

Editor . . . . . Jo Ann Carson  
([JC28@swt.edu](mailto:JC28@swt.edu))  
Technical Assistant. . . . . Beverly Pairett  
([BP06@swt.edu](mailto:BP06@swt.edu))

The Bulletin is published in the fall and spring semesters by the SWT Department of Philosophy, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas 78666

## News from the Delta

**Sixth Annual  
SWT Philosophy Symposium  
Friday, April 4, 2003  
11:00-3:30  
Philosophy Dialogue Room, PSY  
132**

11:00 Vanessa Voss  
Southwest Texas State University  
"The Unconscious Mind and Music"

11:30 Doug Owings  
Texas Christian University  
"Syntax of the Soul: Aristotle's Meaning  
and Truth in *De Interpretatione*"

1:00 Trey Brant  
Southwest Texas State University  
"Demystifying Mysticism: A Naturalistic  
Explanation for Mystical Experience"

1:30 Tracie Mahaffey  
Southwest Texas State University  
"Children, Reference and the Axiom of  
Existence"

2:00 Don Wilson  
Southwest Texas State University  
"The Role of Neuroscience in Education"

2:30 David Paz  
Southwest Texas State University  
"Symbolism in Zen"

3:00 Amy Wilson  
Southwest Texas State University  
"The Role of Emotion in Ethical  
Deliberation: Finding a Model for an  
Interdisciplinary Approach"

What lies behind us and what lies ahead  
of us are tiny matters compared to what  
lies within us.

—R. W. Emerson

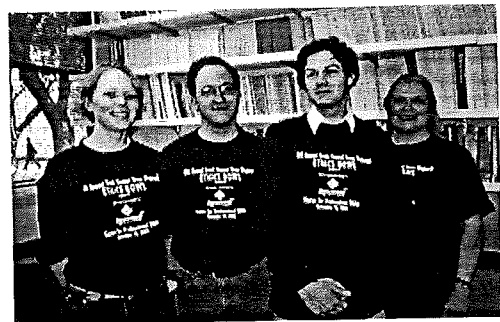
The SWT Delta chapter of *Phi Sigma Tau* sent two teams, *Paideia I* and *Paideia II*, to the fifth annual Central Texas Regional Ethics Bowl at St. Mary's university in the fall semester. *Paideia I* brought home the first place trophy, which is prominently displayed in the main office of the philosophy department.

Adapted from the television version of "College Bowl," the Ethics Bowl allows students from universities across Texas to consider a set of "real life" cases ranging from personal situations to public policy to professional ethics. This year's cases involved marijuana legislation, university admissions standards, local regulation of unrelated occupants in single family dwellings, the use of force by police, high school graduation requirements, and the increase in violence by athletes. All teams in the competition are required to identify the ethical implications arising from the cases and to formulate and justify their answers concerning the best resolution of the issues involved. They must also be ready to respond to challenges or questions from the judges or members of the opposing team. Judges then evaluate the responses and score the teams according to a point system.

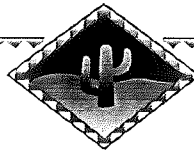
The SWT students began meeting regularly to review the cases a month in advance, and also held a mock competition in the philosophy dialogue room with SWT professors to help prepare for the event.



*Paideia I*: (left to right) Tracie Mahaffey, Taj Watkins (team captain), Vanessa Voss, Prof. Lynne Fulmer (Ethics Bowl coach)



*Paideia II*: (left to right) Kelly Nelson, Jackson Schwartz (team captain), Jake Holt, Prof. Jo Ann Carson (*Phi Sigma Tau* advisor)



---

*"The best thing for being sad," replied Merlyn. . . " is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, . . . you may see the world around you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honor trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then—to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you."*

T. H. White, *The Once and Future King*  
(quoted by Parker Palmer in *The Courage to Teach*, p. 141)