

Undergraduate Fellows Program

Seniors expand studies

By DEE KAY

Twenty-three seniors have been selected to the Undergraduate Fellows Program, which is the pinnacle of the Honors Program.

This program, started by Dr. Mel Friedman, enables qualified seniors to substitute six credit hours of problems courses in their curriculum (three per semester) to pursue research under the direction of a faculty advisor and to participate with other Fellows and their Advisors in a "community of scholars."

"Our purpose," Dr. Friedman said, "is a broadening of learning how research is conducted in these other fields."

Raj Kent, a senior and vice-president of Academic Affairs, is one of the twenty-three in the program. Kent's research project is "Development of Greenhouse Potting Media."

Kent explained that there was a

shortage of pear moss, the most common potting medium, last year, and the shortage is becoming more critical. His research includes different potting media such as rice hulls and cedar.

Although there is no class time involved, much study and research goes into each project. Kent averages two hours daily between working with the plants and doing research.

Application for the program must be made in the spring semester of the junior year. The applicant must have a grade-point average of 3.5 or better, and endorsement of a faculty advisor, department head and dean.

Next, a six-page proposal including the objectives of the research project must be written. A committee then selects the members. A monthly meeting of the "community" is also required. The fellows discuss their research project with each other. They discuss why a

particular research program was chosen, how it will be approached and what the significant results might be. Results and findings will be discussed next semester.

"It is tremendous experience and beneficial for graduate school," Kent said. "I have also had a chance to interact with other people from other fields. I would encourage all who qualify to apply for it."

Stanton Jones, also a member, is doing research in the field of psychology. "I am investigating human learning and I hope to show that they are helpless in many situations."

An example of this would be a student failing a test and getting so depressed that it affects his other grades," Jones said.

"I think the Undergraduate Fellows program is great," he said. "There is such a diverse group of people, and it is interesting to see how they do research in their individual fields."

Dr. Friedman, in evaluating the program up to this point, said, "I think the program is working out better than we expected. The research is extremely imaginative and is being conducted in the highest standards. The "community" meetings are proving tremendously enjoyable and educational for both faculty and fellows."

Members of the program include: Mark Bauer, Barbara Bell, Michael Bergsma, Debra Ann Browning, Robert Davis, and Samuel Ferguson III.

Others include Stan Jones, Diane Kadane, Raj Kent, Cathy McNeal, Joe Morris, Jr., and Jane Sloan Mosley.

Also accepted for membership are Timothy Pawelek, Jason Porter, Deborah Richardson, Sharon Scuday, Darrel Allan Silva, Edna Susstek, Starley Thompson, and Andrew Ward, Jr.

Others include Gary White, Marla White and Thomas Woodfin.

Student's respirator mysteriously cut off

Associated Press

SELDEN, N.Y. — "Please understand. I don't have time," said Maryjane Dahl, a 16-year-old honor student who knew she would die but rushed with high hopes into life.

"I have Hodgkin's disease. I'm in a hurry," she told English teacher Jay Flescher in asking for help to graduate early. She wanted to get to college, study biochemistry and cure fatal diseases.

"Maryjane was an inspiration. She never talked about pain. She touched people," Flescher said of the tall, big-boned girl with big blue eyes and a big ready smile.

But Hodgkin's disease, a plague since she was 14, was not the cause of Maryjane's death; it was in remission. She became terminally ill with meningitis in October and fell into a coma.

She died last Sunday after her life-sustaining respirator was mysteriously unplugged and turned off.

Maryjane was buried Thursday as more than 150 students bowed their heads at her grave covered with red roses and white chrysanthemums. Maryjane loved flowers but used to say extravagant bouquets were wasted on the dead.

The exact cause of death has not been determined. An intensive police investigation is underway, raising the issue of mercy killing and the specter of murder.

The Nassau County Medical Examiner reported Thursday that her mother, Mrs. Kenneth Sarvent, of Upper Nyack, N.Y., had asked

doctors at least six times not to prolong her life with unusual measures. Her mother and her aunt, Jane Sheehan of Selden, had visited Maryjane on the night of her death but said they didn't pull the plug.

"I thought she was going to be cured of the meningitis, that she would beat that like she beat everything else," Mrs. Sheehan said Thursday in an interview.

But her family refused to discuss the investigation. Maryjane lived with Mrs. Sheehan and her grandmother, Mary Manuchin, in this small Long Island community.

"She was my sunshine. She was full of life and cheered everyone up," said Mrs. Manuchin. "She was the best kid on earth walking."

Days before she was admitted to the hospital on Oct. 15, she had been sewing a colonial costume for a Bicentennial school program and had tried out for a part in a school production of "Hello, Dolly."

She was a member of the school honor society, math club and science club. She worked on the literary magazine and newspaper. She excelled in all and planned to graduate next June and attend college in California.

"She never talked about death," her mother said. "We didn't dwell on it, and she didn't either."

Her best friend, Mary Jo Rasco, recalls that she and Maryjane went on a 20-mile walk-a-thon for charity a couple of years ago. After 10 miles, Mary Jo wanted to give up.

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