Don and Kay Cash
Graduate Research Grants in
Visual & Performing Arts
Dear Don and Kay:

I want to thank you for your generous support of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Last Spring, you provided funding in support of graduate research in TTU’s progress toward Tier I status. The funding was awarded through a program that we titled the, “Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grants in Visual and Performing Arts”. This program funded over 10 graduate students; several of those students are highlighted in this booklet. Your generosity has made it possible for our talented graduate students to complete their research in the arts and they are graduating this Spring, Summer, or Fall semesters. These students have had opportunities to complete and present their original research that, quite frankly, would not have been possible without your support.

This booklet is our way of sharing the appreciation of our College and the stories of these very special students. Several of those highlighted are Bruce Mackh, whose research on documentary photography examines its impact on our social conscience; Elissa Stroman’s research of feminist musicology and the underrepresented group of female composers in the nineteenth and twentieth century; and Kristina MacMullen, a choral conductor whose exemplary research has earned her a finalist nomination for a Fulbright Scholarship. Their academic lives have been forever impacted and their research enhanced by your generosity.

At the Season of the Arts gala last September, you again entrusted our College with additional funding support. I am pleased to report that we will be awarding competitive scholarships of $1000 each to 25 graduate students allowing for summer study. Again, the impact of these scholarships will allow our students to stay enrolled through summer sessions, graduate sooner, and be able to focus their efforts on their research and academic studies.

Don and Kay, I sincerely appreciate your support of the College and your confidence in my abilities to “do what I say I am going to do” (as Kay so clearly remarked!). Thank you for believing in us.

With Sincere Appreciation,

Carol D. Edwards, PhD
Dean
Bruce Mackh is a Fine Arts Doctoral Program (FADP) candidate whose dissertation consists of an examination of the practice and aesthetics of social documentary photography.

“Fine Art Social Documentary Photography and its ability to communicate and stir our collective conscience towards the plight of less fortunate sects of humanity has always been a passion of mine. Yet, despite the ongoing social awakening and cognitive impact of the work of many serious practitioners, the practice itself and the artifacts produced have received little official study regarding the aesthetic qualities and philosophies which might qualify such work as art. It is, therefore, my lifelong goal to examine such work and said practice in order to identify and legitimize this undertaking.

There is scant scholarly attention regarding social documentary photography as art, and thus the practitioners in this field have much to offer in the way of supporting evidence in my study. The receipt of the Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant will allow me to travel in order to interview three key practitioners of Fine Art Social Documentary Photography, which is an important component of my qualitative research methodology. The key participant, a very famous photographer by the name of Fazal Sheikh, lives in Europe. Travel for

the interview is essential in order to establish conviction, relate to one another our experiences utilizing qualitative methodological orchestration and gain understanding. Once accomplished, I believe that my research and dissertation will have long-term impact upon the fields of Social Documentary Photography, Documentary Photograph, Photographic Art, and Aesthetic Theory and Philosophy.”

– Bruce Mackh
Documentary photography is underrepresented in the scholarly literature and is even contested as to its status as art. Therefore, crucial information bearing on the status of documentary photographs as works of art may be gleaned through interviews with its practitioners.

– Dennis Fehr, Ed.D.
Regarding being selected as a conductor at the Michigan All-State: ‘This honor is MOST unusual for a person of her age and experience. I know of no other conductor in the country that has been so honored at such a young age. She has distinguished herself at TTU as well with her exemplary work in her studies and in the rehearsal setting.’

Richard Bjella
Director of Choral Studies,
Texas Tech University
Kristina MacMullen is a student in the Doctor of Musical Arts program majoring in choral conducting (School of Music).

In January 2011, The Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant provided the funds for Kristina’s flight to Michigan where she participated in the Michigan Music Conference.

“Most recently, I was honored as the elected conductor of the Michigan SSAA Honors Choir. The Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant provided the funds for my flight to Michigan for this event. One year prior to the event, Michigan teachers nominate conductors for this honor. In the following months, several rounds of voting narrow the field to the final candidates. After a conductor is selected, students throughout the state undergo a rigorous audition process at the district and regional levels. These fine young musicians come together in January for the Michigan Music Conference. As the conductor, I conducted two days (16 hours) of “open” rehearsals (educators observed throughout the process) with the finest high school musicians. On the third day, our preparation culminated in a final performance, attended by 2000 parents, students, and educators. The program I selected featured two premieres, one by Texas Tech Professor Richard Bjella and another by myself, both specifically penned for this occasion.

The effects of this opportunity will have long-term benefits for my career. Having been selected by my peers is an incredible honor. The experience provided wonderful exposure for the School of Music at Texas Tech University. This honor will also help me to become established as a conductor. It may also lead to future opportunities. A composer in attendance emailed me after observing one rehearsal. She shared that she had contacted colleagues in both Arkansas and Kansas, suggesting that they invite me for conducting engagements. Most exciting, I was contacted by Ohio State University last week with regard to a position for next year. The gentleman mentioned that he knew of my conducting the Michigan Honor Choir, and was impressed by this accomplishment. In relationship to my degree requirements, a DMA in choral conducting requires that I fulfill four performance projects. In my personal degree plan, we have marked this performance as partial fulfillment for the second of these four recitals.

Thank you again for your kind support. The Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant in Visual & Performing Arts is opening new opportunities in my life. In a few weeks, I have begun to see the impact! Thank you for your steadfast support and commitment to the arts. This boost has truly “launched” my career into the professional realm, with lasting momentum for my future.”

– Kristina MacMullen
Trey Shirley is a FADP candidate from the School of Art.

In December, 2010, Trey used his grant money for a research trip to the United Methodist Church General Commission on Archives and History in Madison, New Jersey and the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, PA.

“In my dissertation I am looking at religious branding imagery as visual evidence of the socially constructed worlds of American Christians and the lived experiences of belief for these adherents. My research revolves around the United Methodist Church “cross and flame” insignia and the Presbyterian Church (USA) corporate seal as primary case studies of denominational branding in the United States during the twentieth century.

By visiting the national archives of both denominations I was able to collect the most essential data for my research project. In my visits, I was allowed to comb through thousands of documents related to the design, implementation, and management of these denominational images, and collected many photographs and photocopies relating to the images’ origins and current uses.

Overall, I was able to find an immens amount of information relating to my dissertation research, which would not have been possible if it weren’t for this generous grant. I am so grateful to the Cash family, whose generous gifts have helped promote research and meaningful academic contributions at Texas Tech. It is this kind of generosity that is going to help Tech become a Tier 1 institution. This designation will reflect the high degree of academic scholarship at this great school. I’m honored and humbled by this gift and hope that my research is worthy of the sacrifices b those like the Cash family who have made it possible.”

–Trey Shirley
During his years at Texas Tech University, Mr. Shirley has proven himself to be a dedicated and competent scholar, as he has maintained a 4.0 grade point average in his doctoral coursework and displayed a rigorous work ethic in each of his academic pursuits.

–Dennis Fehr, Ed.D.
The caliber of her (Elissa Stroman) work has been recognized with awards and invitations to present papers at regional, national, and international conferences, and the range and scope of her scholarship make her a prized member of and advocate for the TTU Musicology department, particularly in the area of recruiting.

Dr. Christopher Smith
Director, Vernacular Music Center; Associate Professor and Chair of Musicology
Elissa Stroman recently began coursework in the Fine Arts Doctoral Program with a musicology emphasis.

Elissa is primarily interested in researching musical women from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially in America. The Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant enabled Elissa to travel to Missouri present her research at Truman State University’s 16th annual Women’s and Gender Studies Conference.

“My master’s thesis was entitled The Etude Magazine and the Archetyping of American Musical Women, 1886-1926. Now I am exploring various research avenues in hopes of determining a dissertation topic. The research that I represented was on the French Romantic composer Cécile Chaminade, who wrote mostly smaller parlor works. This research looks into the idea the Chaminade created a distinctly feminine music in her piano pieces, which fit well into the title of the conference: Composing Feminity.

The conference in Kirksville was an invaluable experience for me. Conference organizers devoted an entire afternoon to feminist musicological study, and coincidentally, three other papers dealt with women pianists from the same era that I study: Clara Schumann, Mrs. E.A. Parkhurst, and Teresa Carreno. I was able to make connections with scholars from the University of Kentucky, Eastman School of Music, and Texas State University. This era of women from around 1840-1920 is rarely addressed in musicological literature and especially these composers and performers, who were negotiating the roles and implications of what it meant to be female in a male-dominated musical society.

I cannot thank you enough for the Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant for helping me attend this conference. It has inspired me even more to pursue my goal of becoming a published scholar on the subject of musical women.”

–Elissa Stroman
Steven Wood is a FADP candidate in the Department of Theatre and Dance who hopes to defend his dissertation, “Evangelical Theatre in the United States,” in March 2012.

“The Don and Kay Cash Grant helped me travel to Dallas for an interview with Curt Cloninger, well-known Christian actor. Mr. Cloninger is the focus of my dissertation chapter entitled: “The Gospels According to Curt, Tom, and Max: Portrayals of Jesus by Evangelical Touring Solo Actors.” Since the early 1980s, Mr. Cloninger has been performing gospel monodramas for thousands of churches throughout North America. Amazingly, he has never been the topic of research until now. The Cash Grant gave me the opportunity to sit down with him before his performance of “Celebrate the Child,” at Altamesa Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas.

Through the Cash Grant, I was able to spend an entire day with Mr. Cloninger and gain valuable insight for my research about portrayals of Jesus among Evangelical Christians in the United States. Eventually I hope to turn my dissertation into a book and draw attention to issues and trends in religious theatre.

I cannot emphasis enough just how important the Don and Kay Cash Graduate Research Grant was to my research. As a young and emerging professor, it is always a challenge to balance career and family responsibilities. Awards such as the Cash Grant assist me in both. I believe your generosity has given me an important “push” towards completing my dissertation and continuing forward in my professional endeavors. Thank you again for your support. I will be acknowledging the Don and Kay Cash Grant in my dissertation.”

–Steven Wood

Curt Cloninger
Steve’s topic is theatre within evangelical Christianity in the United States within roughly the past thirty-five years. He has been willing to ask no-nonsense questions about the possibility that such theatre merely “preaches to the choir” and about why such a relatively old-fashioned form of narrative entertainment thrives in the era of mega churches, websites, and even simply video.

Dorothy Chansky, Ph.D.
Don and Kay Cash
Graduate Research Grants in Visual & Performing Arts

Program:

The CVPA has a significant but finite sum of funding to support and stimulate graduate student research, made available through the generosity of Don and Kay Cash. As support for research, activities that are to be funded will relate to final projects required for the applicant’s degree program since these constitute original creative/research. We envision applications from all graduate degree programs for such support as:

» Student travel to professional meetings at which they present their own research results.

» Expenses involved with shipping MFA art/design projects to peer-reviewed exhibitions.

» Participant travel to peer-reviewed exhibitions if attendance at the event’s opening is required.

» Student travel (DMA students, for example) to professional performance venues essential to establishing creative/research reputations.

» Student travel to competitive creative/research performance venues.

» Student travel to archives, etc., to consult resources essential to final projects.

» Student travel to consult persons whose expertise is important to final projects (e.g. interviewing).

In order to realize completely the gift’s potential, students whose projects are funded by the college must seek matching funds, if eligible, via the Graduate School’s Travel Funding program: depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/current/travel.php

The Graduate School requires materials at least 30 days in advance, so allow substantial lead time for the decision-making process.
Should Graduate School funding be denied, applications can be re-submitted to the CVPA with [1] clear indication of re-submission status, [2] documentation of denial, and [3] reasons for denial, if known.

Students whose projects are funded must file a letter of thanks for the Don and Kay Cash Research Grant with the CVPA dean’s office for subsequent delivery to the donors.

**Application Procedure:**

Complete application form using 12-point font (two-page maximum), and obtain departmental signature.

**Attach:** copy of verification from sponsoring agency, acceptance of submission, or other evidence of peer review, as is appropriate for the discipline and project.

**Attach:** letter of support from principal advisor or graduate coordinator. The letter of support [1] should be concise (not more than one page single-spaced), [2] should explain scope and significance of venue in relation to profession, [3] should provide qualitative assessment of project, and [4] should verify/explain relationship of project to degree requirements. The letter can also provide additional information that should be considered in the decision-making process.

**Send to:** Associate Dean Brian Steele, 102 Drane Hall, CVPA, MS 5060, with a copy to Business Manager Mike Smith, 102 Drane Hall, CVPA, MS 5060.

**Review:** Applications are reviewed by the dean’s office as received, on case-by-case basis. Criteria used in decision-making include: total and unfunded costs of project; scope (international / national / regional); scope of degree program (terminal or leading to other); significance of proposed project in relation to degree requirements; GPA; etc.