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What Do Separated and Reunited Twins Tell Us About Heredity?

on March 29, 2012 | in [Science and Technology](#)

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How can twins explain the effects of heredity and environment?

Family and siblings play a large part in shaping us as unique individuals. But what if you were separated from your biological other half? As far-fetched as they might seem, the stories are often true and always fascinating: twins separated at birth, reunited in adulthood. What does their experience reveal about heredity and environment?

Award-winning researcher Nancy L. Segal, founder of the Twin Studies Center at California State University, Fullerton in 1991, is a nationally

recognized expert on such questions. The behavioral geneticist and evolutionary psychologist examined the nature vs. nurture argument in a lecture hosted by CSUN's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences as part of the distinguished Richard W. Smith Lecture Series.

In addition to three books on twins, including most recently "Born Together—Reared Apart: The Landmark Minnesota Twin Study" (2012), Segal has authored approximately 120 scientific articles and book chapters and is a frequent media guest.

And yes, in case you were wondering, Segal is herself a twin!

For more: [CSUN's Smith Lecture to Explore Twins Born Together, but Reared Apart](#) [CSUN Media Releases]

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MBA Students Nab Top Small Business Institute Prize

on March 29, 2012

in [Business](#), [CSUN Leaders](#)

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The CSUN campus.

Most graduate students aim to one day take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in the real world. This year, CSUN MBA students took the next step in preparing for that world by capturing top honors in a national competition hosted by the Small Business Institute.

“This...was the second year the MBA program participated in this competition, and we have gathered first-place awards each year we’ve competed,” said marketing professor Deborah

Cours, director of CSUN’s MBA program. “These awards are a testament to the quality of work by our students and faculty, and an honor for our MBA Consulting Program.”

Under the guidance of a faculty member, student projects focus on critical aspects of business development, such as market feasibility/business plans, marketing plans, new venture start-ups and new product introduction plans.

Taking first place in the Graduate Feasibility/Business Plan category for their client WatAir, a developer, manufacturer and distributor of atmospheric water generation technology, were Cal State Northridge students Jeremy King, Namdar Akrami, Robert Anton, Rohit Jain and Vanessa Walker, led by their faculty advisor, professor Lois Shelton.

Another CSUN MBA team took home third-place prize in the Graduate Specialized category. The client, Bruce Sandzimier of Sorrells Pickard Gourmet Peanut Butter, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with the award-winning team.

“Any success we achieve as a company will be (due) in no small part to the collaborative efforts of the CSUN MBA students we’ve worked with, and the excellent MBA program CSUN administers,” he said.

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The Four Long, Furry Arms of the Law: CSUN's K-9 Unit

on March 19, 2012 | in [Community](#)



Officer Raymond Gonzalez and Mitch (left) tag along with Cpl. Tom Finnerty and Dozer. Photo by Lee Choo

[Tweet](#) [Pin it](#) There are thousands of students, faculty and staff who come in and out of the CSUN campus every day during the school year. When you're the school's Police Services division and have that kind of population to protect, you may need to get some back up to help you. And what could be better than man's best friend?

Enter Mitch and Dozer. No, they aren't two fresh-faced rookies from the police academy. They're more like furry-faced companions who help Cpl. Tom Finnerty and Officer Raymond Gonzalez keep the peace. Mitch and Dozer are German Shepherds, and every day these two policing pooches help patrol the campus. And before you start to think being four years old (Mitch) or six (Dozer) is too young to be a cop, you don't know how much training these officers got even before they got to the United States.

"It's harder for a dog to become a police dog than for a human to become a police officer," said Gonzalez, referring to the detailed temperament and health screenings that take place in the initial stages of a dog's training.

The dogs begin their training overseas with a sport called "Schutzhund," which combines obedience, tracking and protection — three skills that make up the core of police dog work. From there, they are paired with a handler and learn a specialty. For Mitch, his job is to sniff out drugs: marijuana, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine and ecstasy. Dozer's nose was trained to detect 15 types of explosives.

"I can effectively search a building or a floor much quicker than with six or seven officers," Gonzalez said. "All I need is one cover officer and my dog, and we can do the work of six or seven guys trying to look for a burglary suspect."

For more: [CSUN Police Services K-9 Unit: Community Policing with Paws and Claws](#) [CSUN Media Releases]

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Outreach, Police Services

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Jason Flowers: Inspires Women's Basketball Team to Succeed

by D. Aja Franks | on March 16, 2012 | in [CSUN Profiles, Faculty and Staff News](#)

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Jason Flowers (center) is surrounded by women's basketball coaching staff.

Women have always been a strong influence in Jason Flowers' life. He was raised by a single mother, and a slew of other women also contributed to the man he is today. That's what Flowers, head coach of the California State University, Northridge's women's basketball team, in part credits, for his success in coaching women's basketball.

"Where some men have a hard time relating to women, I don't. It feels natural to coach women," said Flowers.

"Women taught me to be a man."

His talents are evident.

At 32, Flowers is the youngest head coach in the Big West Conference. He was named the Big West Conference's Coach of the Year and guided CSUN's women's team to an overall record of 17–13 and a conference record of 11–5.

The team's winning-record earned them a berth to the Women's National Invitational Tournament. The Matadors participated in the postseason tournament for just the second time in the program's Division I history.

Having won 13 more games than it did last season, Cal State Northridge's women's team is among the top turnarounds in the nation this season.

Flowers, who took the job in 2010, said the team has been successful because they have adopted his personal mantra and twitter handle "fighting for more than the title."

He said the mantra describes the team's ambition and eagerness to succeed.

“It is bigger than basketball for us,” Flowers said. “The goal is to develop the women’s team into a premier program on the West Coast that produces a network of young women that are role models.

“In the grand scheme of things, it’s about more than winning, but developing young women who can take on the world is the goal.”

Flowers is not just committed to the success of his players on the court, but supports their achievements off the court, in the classroom. His team had four players earn Academic All-Big West honors and the team saw four of its members earn degrees following the end of last season.

“Having academically strong players begins in the recruiting process,” Flowers said. “We recruit athletes that value the benefits of obtaining a college degree.”

Before arriving at CSUN, Flowers helped mold University of California, Riverside into an exceptional basketball program as an assistant coach. His head coaching experience began at Valley High School in Santa Ana, where he served as the head coach of the girls basketball program.

His college coaching career began at Long Beach State, where he was an assistant coach for four seasons. While at Long Beach State, Flowers helped coach the 49ers to the 2005–06 Big West Conference championship and developed 11 players into all-conference performers including the 2006 Big West Conference Player of the Year. His duties included player skill development, recruiting, and supervising team and individual camps.

In addition to his coaching experience, Flowers played division I basketball, splitting his time between UC Irvine and UCLA. He was a Big West Scholar-Athlete in 1999.

Flowers’ roots in Southern California are strong. Flowers graduated from Bellflower High School. He is married to Tairia Flowers, Cal State Northridge’s softball head coach. She was a member of the U.S. National Team (2001–08), won a gold medal as a member of the 2004 U.S. Olympic softball team in Athens and won a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Games. The couple has two children.

Flowers said he can relate to his players.

“My experience has helped me understand the relationship aspect of coaching,” he said. “I wake up and have the opportunity every morning to do what I love to do, and not everyone gets to do that. Now it’s my turn to help my players do things that they did not think was possible.”

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Whitsett Seminar and Lecture Provides Valuable Access to Graduate Students

by Lauren Glazer | on March 16, 2012 | in [Arts and Culture](#), [University News](#)

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Guest lecturer Brian Delay.

California holds many histories. In March, history graduate students from throughout the state will converge at California State University, Northridge to discuss a small but diverse sampling — topics ranging from the history of real estate education in California (and a countervailing movement of home ownership resistance) to the publishing of black queer periodicals in Los Angeles.

The seventh annual Whitsett Graduate Seminar and lecture, hosted by the Department of History, honors the memory of W.P. Whitsett and his pioneering role in the San Fernando Valley and brings competitively selected graduate students together with internationally renowned history professors,

who moderate the discussions and provide valuable feedback on students' presentations. This year's seminar welcomes history professors from universities in California, Nevada, Wisconsin and Paris.

The culminating lecture will be presented by Brian Delay, professor of history at the University of California, Berkeley. His lecture — “So Far From God, So Close to the Gun Store: Borderlands Arms Trading and the Travails of Mexican History, 1810–1920” — will offer fresh historical insights while touching on issues still confronting California today.

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Can Judges Plead the Fifth?

on March 15, 2012

in [Politics and Society](#)

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Have you ever watched a movie or read a story set in a courtroom and wondered, “Is that even legal?” Well, maybe it’s time you ask a judge. CSUN is holding its yearly “Cross Examine the Judges” event, during which the public asks a dozen Superior Court judges questions.

“We hold this event every year as an outgrowth of the department’s Judicial Internship Program,” said Lawrence

Becker, chair of the [Department of Political Science](#). “It provides a way for members of the court, who generally do not interact with the public outside the confines of the courtroom, to answer questions from the public and, of course, from students.”

For more: [CSUN Forum to Turn the Tables on the Concept of Cross Examination](#) [CSUN Media Releases]

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CSUN Reaccredited, Noted for Being a “Model” School

on March 15, 2012

in [University News](#)

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The accredited CSUN campus.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges noted recently during its reaccreditation process that CSUN was “a model learning organization.” We couldn’t agree more.

“WASC’s reaccreditation report confirms what we already know — California State University, Northridge is a model learning organization whose faculty and staff are fully focused on student success and learning,” said Cal State Northridge Interim President Harry Hellenbrand.

The reaccreditation means that the independent reviewers from the WASC looked over every aspect of Northridge’s academic cannon and saw fit to give it another 10 years of its stamp of approval, the maximum allowed.

The process itself took almost five years and included an extensive self-evaluation of Cal State Northridge by university faculty, staff and administrators; a campus visit by a WASC evaluation team; and then consideration of the team’s recommendation by the commission, led by its president, Ralph A. Wolff.

“The commission commends CSUN for becoming a model learning organization characterized by collaborative and evidence-based planning, decision making and problem solving,” Wolff wrote in a letter that accompanied the letter of accreditation.

“Among its accomplishments during this review are its financial foresight and commitment to investing in critical functions finding efficiencies and allocating funds effectively, and its deep understanding of the characteristics and needs of CSUN students, which has led to programs and activities that promote student success,” Wolff said. “As noted by the team, ‘the foundation at CSUN could not be stronger.’”

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International Students Arrive for Intensive English Program

on March 14, 2012 | in [Education](#)



[Tweet](#) [Pin it](#) Students from around the world have arrived at the Tseng College for a spring [Intensive English Program](#) that will prepare them for study at English-speaking colleges or universities.

The 16-week “Spring 2012 Mid-Entry Program” starts this week. Approximately 70 new students from Brazil, Bulgaria, China,

Columbia, Hungary, Iran, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Thailand and Venezuela will stay at CSUN while taking English classes. They will also be exploring the local area and absorbing American culture.

For more: [Intensive English & University Pathways Programs](#) [Tseng College]

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on July 2, 2015

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Professor Featured on Science Channel

on March 14, 2012 | in [CSUN Leaders](#), [Faculty and Staff News](#), [Science and Technology](#)

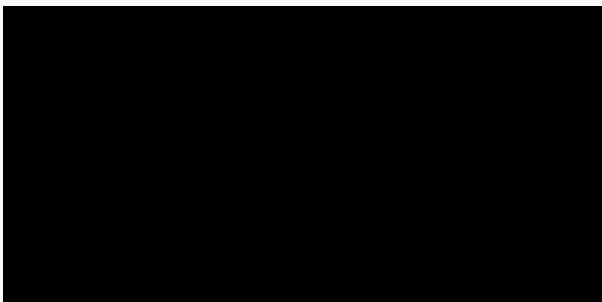


[Tweet](#) [Pin it](#) A magnificent robot created by CSUN engineering students and their faculty advisor C.T. Lin has earned quite a bit of recognition this year. The Red RAVEN (Robotic Autonomous Vehicle Engineered at Northridge), as it's called, can do many things independently, whether it's zipping through terrain or avoiding obstacles on its own.

The Science Channel recently caught up with the robotic project and featured Lin, who is a professor in CSUN's Department of Mechanical Engineering and also teaches in the Tseng College's [Assistive Technology and Engineering](#) (ATE) master's degree program. The TV segment included a demonstration of Red RAVEN's capabilities to navigate terrain. To do this, the robot uses sensors and an onboard laptop to drive through open paths and avoid obstructions on its own.

Red RAVEN was entered in CSUN's Senior Design Projects Showcase last year in the mechanical engineering category. Lin's student engineering student team also took First Place and Overall Grand Award at the 2011 Intelligent Ground Vehicle national competition.

For more: [Master of Science in Assistive Technology Engineering](#) [Tseng College]



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Connecting Ancient Cultures to the Modern World

on March 13, 2012 | in [CSUN Leaders](#)

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CSUN professor Owen Doonan.

CSUN Professor, archaeologist and art historian Owen Doonan is changing the way people think about Arab, Turkish and Persian cultures.

Doonan, who has taught, traveled and conducted research around the world and studies cultural transformations resulting from interactions among cultures, specializes in the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. He was recently named CSUN's 2011–2012 Jerome Richfield Scholar — awarded each year to an outstanding faculty member conducting research in the arts, sciences or

humanities.

“I’m very aware of the really great work my colleagues are doing, and the idea that I would be singled out, it’s great, it’s wonderful,” Doonan said. “CSUN is a learning-centered university where people are doing some really exciting research. There is vibrancy in the intellectual community here when it comes to learning, doing research and connecting to the real world.”

Doonan’s passion for the Middle East and that regions’ contemporary art served as a catalyst for him and business partner D. Carl Dentzel to open a gallery in Northridge called The New Sahara Galley.

“There is this stereotype that the Middle East is not very contemporary or progressive, and I knew that wasn’t true,” said Doonan. “All the Middle Eastern art you see in museums and in books are from the past, and I want to change the way people think about Arab, Turkish and Persian cultures. I’m hoping that The New Sahara is one way to do that.”

For more: [Art Professor Owen Doonan Named CSUN's 2011-2012 Jerome Richfield Memorial Scholar](#) [CSUN Media Releases]

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Rethinking No Child Left Behind

on March 8, 2012

in [Politics and Society](#)

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Current Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education at NYU, Pedro Noguera.

Many people have and still believe that the “No Child Left Behind” program works and has been successfully implemented in schools around the country. Urban sociologist Pedro Noguera, however, will take a different look at the program during a lecture on the CSUN campus that will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Presentation Room of the Oviatt Library, located in the center of the campus at 18111 Nordhoff St. in Northridge.

Noguera feels that the tenets of the No Child Left Behind program focus the wrong things and believes that getting students to take ownership of learning encourages them to become engaged in using knowledge to solve problems and addresses the challenges confronting the most marginalized communities.

Noguera is currently the Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education at New York University and has held tenured faculty appointments at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he was named the Judith K. Dimon Professor of Communities and Schools, and at the University of California, Berkeley, where he also was the director of the Institute for the Study of Social Change.

“Noguera is an urban sociologist whose scholarship and research focuses on the ways in which schools are influenced by social and economic conditions in the urban environment,” said Chicana/o studies professor Renee Moreno, director of the university’s McNair Scholars Program, which is co-sponsoring Noguera’s lecture. “His most recent work focuses on African-American and Latino boys. His talk Monday should provide some things for all of us to think about.”

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CSUN Today



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CSUN Honors Three Alumni

on March 7, 2012 | in [CSUN Leaders](#), [University News](#)



Honorees John J. Harris, Joan Chen and Richard Kaufman. Photos by Lee Choo.

[Tweet](#) [Pin it](#) On Apr. 21, the CSUN Alumni Association will be celebrating the post-graduate lives of three former Matadors by giving them the Distinguished Alumni Award. Actress Joan Chen '92, executive vice president of Nestlé S.A. John J. Harris '72 and Grammy Award-winning conductor Richard Kaufman '77 will be reminded where it all started and how happy the

university is they represent it.

“There’s no better way to judge a university’s quality than to see how successful its alumni have become,” said D.G. “Gray” Mounger, assistant vice president for **alumni relations** at CSUN. “The current and past recipients of the Cal State Northridge Distinguished Alumni Award are among the nation’s very best in almost every profession, field or endeavor. We are very proud to call them Matadors.”

Chen is known for her work on both the big and small screens, most notably “The Last Emperor” and “Twin Peaks.” She is also the recipient of five Golden Horse Awards, China’s answer to the Oscars. Harris is one of the highest-ranking executives at Nestlé, currently sitting in the EVP chair of Nestle worldwide, in Vevey, Switzerland. Kaufman is a two-time Emmy nominee who supervised music at MGM for nearly 20 years before pursuing his conducting career full time. But maybe most importantly, he penned the school’s fight song.

The trio joins a pretty awesome group of people who previously received the honor. Some of them include former Governor of Hawaii Linda Lingle, former California Lt. Governor Mike Curb, CBS executive Michael Klausman, actors Teri Garr and Cheech Marin, astronaut Scott Horowitz, Oscar-nominated producer Don Hahn and opera singer Carol Vaness.

For more: [Three Cal State Northridge Alumni to be Feted for Contributions to Their Fields](#) [CSUN Media Releases]

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CSUN to Offer New Minor

on March 5, 2012 | in [Politics and Society](#), [University News](#)

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It's been a long time coming for Nayereh Tohidi, a professor in CSUN's Department of Gender and Women's Studies. Since 2005, she has been working on a project to start a Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (MIES) program at CSUN, and it's been announced that it will be a minor in the fall 2012 semester.

"This is the fulfillment of a long-standing dream to create a program that will be diverse and inclusive of all cultures throughout the Middle East," said Tohid.

The new minor program, which was formed with help of a \$100,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant, will be under the umbrella of the College of Humanities. The program will provide students access to courses in the languages, histories, religions, cultures, sociology and politics of the Middle East. It will also focus on the study of Middle Eastern countries of Israel, Jordan, Turkey and Palestine as well as the study of Muslim communities in South and Southeast Asia and North Africa.

The minor will be the only undergraduate program of its kind in the Los Angeles area, which is home to the largest Middle Eastern American community in the United States. Some of the courses in the MEIS program satisfy general education requirements at CSUN, or may be used as electives in several majors.

For more: [CSUN to Offer Minor in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in the Fall](#) [CSUN Media Releases]

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Using Video Games, CSUN Professor Plays The Numbers Game

on March 2, 2012 | in [Science and Technology](#)

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Richard Lorentz (left) discusses abstract game theory with a colleague in Jena, Germany.

Computer science professor Richard Lorentz takes his games seriously. But you won't find him glued to a PlayStation or engrossed in the latest version of The Sims. In Lorentz's world, games are a great way to test computer algorithms. As the College of Engineering and Computer Science's 2011–12 research fellow, he's studying the merits of different algorithms in computerized versions of board games.

Specifically, his research focuses on algorithms called minimax and the more recently discovered Monte Carlo tree search (MCTS), in an ongoing quest to understand why the latter works so well.

"MCTS has revolutionized a lot of games," Lorentz, who's been teaching at Cal State Northridge for 25 years, said. Lorentz has been studying variations of the MCTS algorithm, and his Amazons program, a blend of minimax and MCTS, is the current world champion.

Expanding his investigation to additional games, Lorentz works in collaboration with students who learn the algorithms and how to implement them efficiently and to modify them for the task at hand—skills they can adapt to the workplace whenever they need to implement an algorithm with which they are unfamiliar

For more: [It's All Just a Game for CSUN Computer Science Professor Richard Lorentz](#) [[@CSUN](#)]

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