

# Alumna shares visions of dead

BY EMILY WICHMER  
Staff Reporter

Death can be a sad and painful thing, but alumna Jane Lea Dykstra said she believes it is important to remember the deceased are never truly gone from our lives. In her book, "What Heaven is Like: True Stories from my Dearly Departed" Dykstra said our loved ones still follow us during our journey through life.

Dykstra visited Truman State on Oct. 19 to sign copies of the book in the Truman Bookstore.

Her book is a compilation of her visions of deceased loved ones, Dykstra said. She said with her book, she wants readers to understand that they too can develop the gift of hearing their departed loved ones.

She said her visions began 6 years ago, when she found herself in the hospital.

"I was in an accident and had shattered my left ankle," Dykstra said. "While I was under anesthetic, I had visions of a bright light. I thought I had died, but then I saw a man who said he was the father of my fiancé, Richard. I had never met the man, and he had been dead for 44 years. He then told me some details about himself to tell my fiancé, saying they were things that only he would know. When I woke up, I told my fiancé all about it. He and I both believed I had a near-death experience and truly saw his deceased father."

Dykstra said that since then, she has experienced even more visions.

"After the surgery, I had visions of Richard's parents, friends and pets," Dykstra said. "The visions were so vivid, and I was told things that I couldn't possibly have known otherwise."

Dykstra said she also had visions of her own loved ones. She said she decided to write her book to share her encounters with others. She said she wants readers to understand that even though

loved ones physically are no longer in our lives, the deceased always stay with us.

"When you watch the Academy Awards, the winners will get on-stage, give their speech and say, 'If only my parents were alive, they would be so proud of me,'" Dykstra said. "They need to know that their parents are still with them, and that they are very proud of them. People need to realize that their loved ones are always with them. You can still share your experiences with them."

In her book, Dykstra wrote, "You know that feeling that comes over you when you sense that you are not alone, however, you look around and no one is there? Have you ever had an experience when you just knew, 'I should do, or should not do this?'"

Dykstra said this voice we hear in our heads telling us what we should and shouldn't do is our loved ones. She said she thinks with these voices, our loved ones are trying to protect us and guide us through life.

Dykstra said she decided to revisit Truman for her book signing because she had a positive experience at the school.

Dykstra graduated from Truman during the 1970s with a major in creative writing and a minor in English. She said even though she didn't realize it at the time, the writing classes she took during college have helped her with her book.

Forrest Wilsey, a freshman creative writing major at Truman, said the fact that alumni like Dykstra have published work is encouraging.

"Writing stories can mean the world to someone, but having someone else read them makes writing worth it," Wilsey said.

Wilsey said he also thinks Dykstra's message is very important. He said he believes love is not something limited by physical proximity, and knowing there is someone out there that supports people through



Calli Lowry/Index

Above, alumna and author Jane Lea Dykstra talks with professor Sharon McGahan, who teaches the Death and Dying course at Truman. Below, Dykstra signs her book, "What Heaven is Like," for McGahan on Friday at the Truman Bookstore. Dykstra graduated from Truman during the 1970s.

all times is essential.

"Even now in college, students find themselves away from their family or friends they grew up with," Wilsey said. "Knowing there are people out there who are with you every step of the way, even if they aren't physically with you, is beyond important."

Truman Bookstore manager Steve Pennington said the book will sell for \$12.99 at the Truman Bookstore. "What Heaven is Like" also is available as an eBook.

Dykstra said she will return to Truman for another book signing at 2 p.m. Nov. 3 at the Truman Bookstore.

For more information about Dykstra and her book, visit [www.whatheavenislike.com](http://www.whatheavenislike.com).



# Lecture examines serial killer psychology

BY SARAH MUIR  
Staff Reporter

For those who wonder what the inner workings of a serial killer's mind is like, psychology professor Sal Costa is delivering a lecture called "Inside the Mind of a Serial Killer."

Costa's lecture was sponsored by Truman State's Psychology Club and took place Wednesday in Magruder Hall. Costa described the crimes of John Wayne Gacy, Ted Bundy, Ed Kemper, Jeffrey Dahmer and more.

American FBI agent Robert Ressler, who has visited Truman during the past and worked on the Jeffrey Dahmer case, coined the term "serial killers," Costa said. Costa explained the differences between serial killers, gain killers, who kill for money, and spree killers, who kill random victims. Serial killers have a victim type that removes the random element from the killings, Costa said.

"Serial killers are about power and control," Costa said. "They go after victims that are weaker than them."

Serial killers are responsible for their actions, he said. They likely are to be white males ranging from age 20 to 40, and they like attention and notoriety, Costa said.

America has seen the most serial killers, with Germany coming in second and Britain third, he said.

"Serial killers are an American phenomena," Costa said.

This lecture was not Costa's first time teaching this subject. He has taught Serial Killers and Psychopaths, a junior interdis-

ciplinary seminar course, since 1994.

Sarah Jo David, junior psychology club copresident, and Cash Browning, senior psychology club treasurer, have taken Costa's JINS course. During a meeting with the psychology club's executive board, the idea of having Costa give a lecture about serial killers came up as one of the events the club could sponsor this year, David said. She said the executive board voted and chose Costa's lecture as an event.

Browning said he thinks people are interested about serial killers because of the shock value of the crimes. The press sensationalizes these stories and makes names for the serial killers famous, he said. For example, Albert DeSalvo gained the nickname "the Boston Strangler" for strangling his victims, but there is some speculation as to whether he was the one who committed those crimes, Browning said.

David said she thinks people are interested in this topic because they are trying to understand how anyone could commit these crimes. She said we try to understand serial killers in hindsight in the same way we try to rationalize catastrophes and explain why they happened.

Truman students might be interested in this lecture because of the serial killers class, David said. People might be interested in learning the basics of the JINS course about serial killers by going to this lecture, she said.

Browning said the course was interesting, especially the paper students write from the perspective of a serial killer. The psychology club and the lecture are open to all majors.

## SERIAL KILLERS THROUGHOUT MISSOURI

- 1. THE KANSAS CITY STRANGLER**  
**Lorenzo Gilyard**  
**Dates of murders: 1977-1993**  
 Sentenced to life in prison without parole during 2007 for strangling 13 women.
- 2. THE BUTCHER OF KANSAS CITY**  
**Robert Berdella**  
**Dates of murders: 1984-1987**  
 Sentenced to two life sentences without parole during 1988 for abducting, torturing and killing at least six young men.
- 3. RAY AND FAYE COPELAND**  
**Dates of murders: 1986-1989**  
 Convicted of shooting five people (and likely killed seven more, but the bodies never were recovered). The couple, from Mooresville, Mo., was the oldest couple ever sentenced to death in the United States.
- 4. MAURY TRAVIS**  
**Dates of murders: 2001-2002**  
 Strangled 12 women, but claimed to have killed 17. He committed suicide in a St. Louis county jail after being arrested for murders committed in his hometown of Ferguson, Mo.

According to: Source: <http://murderpedia.org>

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