

Lisa Giencke hired as first Mary McKee Felton Herbarium Intern

By Alan Weakley, Curator of the UNC Herbarium

When Mary Felton retired from the University of North Carolina Herbarium in 2000, friends, co-workers, and classmates decided to honor her by dedicating the Mary McKee Felton Herbarium Internship. It honors her for her more than 60 years of service to the University (30 of those years as the Assistant Curator of the Herbarium), and as a member and officer of the Class of 1938. The Internship is a gift fund from which the interest only is used to pay a student to learn the techniques of specimen preparation, curation, and botanical research in the UNC Herbarium.

This summer, Lisa Giencke, 21, of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota is the first Mary Felton Herbarium Intern. Lisa graduated with highest distinction in Biology from the University of North Carolina in May, 2003. She was the recipient of the Francis J. LeClair award, presented by the UNC Biology Department for excellence in plant science. The UNC Herbarium has already been the beneficiary of Lisa's interest in botany: she spent the past year as a work-study student, assisting us with entering data, processing loans, and filing specimens.

Lisa's project for the Felton Internship involves the ferns and fern allies (the "fern allies" are a diverse group clubmosses, quillworts, horsetails, etc.). Major taxonomic changes have affected the naming and arranging of southeastern United States ferns and fern allies at the familial, generic, and specific levels, with numerous new species named in recent years and many name changes reflecting new understanding of higher level relationships. For instance, there is now general consensus that the genus *Lycopodium* (the clubmosses) in eastern North America actually represents at least three, and probably more like seven to nine genera, as reflected in the Flora of North America volume published in 1993. The nine herbarium cases of specimens of ferns and fern allies at the University of North Carolina Herbarium have not kept up with the times, and specimens of some species are filed under two or even three different names! Lisa will be working with Curator Alan Weakley and Assistant Curator Carol Ann McCormick to correctly identify and rearrange the specimens according to the more modern treatments. Additionally, she will enter label and locality data into the herbarium database, and will prepare from the database new county dot maps (similar to those in the landmark Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas, but reflecting the new taxonomy and nomenclature) and serve them on the Herbarium's web page (www.herbarium.unc.edu).

This project is a pilot for a larger, and more ambitious goal: entering into the herbarium database all of the Herbarium's Southeastern United States specimens, creating a web-accessible database of label information, and preparing a new county atlas for North Carolina. This information will be a treasure trove for the serious researcher as well as the amateur wildflower enthusiast, and will inspire new efforts to document the botanical heritage of our state and region.

Congratulations to Lisa! The late Mary Felton was a constant inspiration and help to students over the decades, as this former student well remembers! It is only fitting that the generosity of her friends, family, classmates, and colleagues in establishing this internship provides an ongoing service to students and to the Herbarium. We look forward to a productive summer and a learning experience for us all!

