

## San José State University Emeritus Faculty Association Biography

**Name:** Patricia Causey Nichols

**Department:** Linguistics &  
Language  
Development

**Academic Rank:** Professor

**Year Retired:** 2000

**City of Residence:** Ashland, OR



**Facebook Page or Website URL:** [www.facebook.com/patricia.c.nichols](http://www.facebook.com/patricia.c.nichols)

**Birthplace:** Conway SC      **Birth Year:** 1938

**Marital Status:** Married    **Spouse:** Frank H. Nichols Jr.

**Children's Names:** Keith Nichols; Marnia Nichols Brownell

**No. of Grandchildren:** 6      **No. of Great Grandchildren:** 0

<b>Colleges or Universities Attended:</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Degree</b>
Winthrop College (SC)	1958	BA - English
U of Minnesota	1969	MA - English
San José State U	1972	MA - Linguistics
Stanford U	1976	PhD - Linguistics

## San José State University Emeritus Faculty Association Biography

<b>Teaching Experience:</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Hampton City Schools (VA)	1958	1960
CA Community Colleges	1969	1972
San José State U	1973	2000
U of South Carolina - Columbia	1980	1981

### **Administrative, Business, or Professional Experience (other than teaching):**

Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies 1974-75: field work on Gullah language in coastal South Carolina

Rockefeller Postdoctoral Fellowship, UNC, Institute for the Arts & Humanities: Comparative Cultures of the South, 1992-93 – field work on Lumbee Indians in southeastern North Carolina

California Education Round Table, Task Force on K-12 English Standards, 1996-97 (CSU representative appointed by CSU Academic Senate)

Institute for Southern Studies & South Carolina Humanities Council: member of Editorial Advisory Board for *the South Carolina Encyclopedia Project*, 2000-2001

Santa Clara County Food Systems Alliance, 2013-2016 (Slow Food South Bay representative)

### **Selected Publications:**

"Fieldwork in Remnant Dialect Communities" in *Data Collection in Sociolinguistics: Methods and Applications*, eds, Mallinson, Childs, & Herk, Routledge 87-90 (2013)

*Voices of Our Ancestors: Language Contact in Early South Carolina*, U of South Carolina Press (2009)

"Language" in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, U of South Carolina Press 534-536 (2006)

"Creole Languages: Forging New Identities" in *Language in the USA*, eds, Finnegan & Rickford, Cambridge U Press 133-152 (2004)

"Spanish Literacy and the Academic Success of High School Students: Codeswitching as a Classroom Resource" (with M. Colón), in *Foreign Language Annals* 33.5, 490-511 (2000)

"The Role of Social Networks and the Strength of Weak Ties in Changing Language Policy: Gender Neutralization in American English," in *Sociopolitical Perspectives on Language Policy and Planning in the USA*, eds Huebner & Davis, John Benjamins Publishing 347-360 (1999)

## San José State University Emeritus Faculty Association Biography

“Pidgins and Creoles,” in *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*, eds McKay & Hornberger, Cambridge University Press 195-217 (1996)

“Language in the Attic: Claiming our Linguistic Heritage,” in *Diversity as Resource*, ed Murray, TESOL Publications 275-293 (1992)

“Storytelling in Carolina: Continuities and Contrasts,” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 29, 232-245 (1989)

“Networks and Hierarchies: Language and Social Stratification,” in *Language and Power*, eds Kramarae, Schulz, & O’Barr, Sage Publications 23-42 (1984)

“Linguistic Options and Choices for Black Women in the Rural South,” in *Language, Gender, and Society*, eds Thorne, Kramarae, & Henley, Newbury House 54-68 (1983)

“Black and White Speaking in the Rural South: Difference in the Pronominal System,” *American Speech* 58, 201-215 (1983)

“Ethnic Consciousness in the British Isles: Questions for Language Planning,” *Language Problems and Language Planning* 1, 10-31 (= *la monda lingvo-problemo*, 7, n-ro 19) Berlin-New York (1977)

### **Personal Commentary:**

For a sociolinguist, SJSU was an incredible place to be in the 1970s and beyond. Southeast Asian students enrolled in large numbers after the fall of Saigon, surprising many of us in the English Department who had just created a new remedial program for home-grown speakers of minority dialects. As someone who had studied an African American language that developed in the early colony of South Carolina, I was intrigued to discover similarities in the academic writing of these new immigrants and grammatical patterns similar to those in rural African American children’s written schoolwork. Abstract linguistic concepts came alive in the pages of my SJSU students’ essays in the 1980s.

I have since come to understand that both groups were often regularizing some of the grammatical patterns of old and middle English still in use in modern academic English. Sometimes they were using their own native language structures with English vocabulary — a familiar practice in this nation of immigrants, which has led to a unique American English.

Over time, the depth of the second-language challenge to the entire university

## **San José State University Emeritus Faculty Association Biography**

became so obvious that then-Provost Arlene Okerlund fostered the creation of a separate department of Linguistics and Language Development. As a founding faculty member of this new department in 1991, I worked with colleagues to prepare teachers of speakers of languages other than English at all levels and in many countries around the globe. Working with colleagues across the campus was a delight as we all began to “own” this challenge.

Through my work with students and colleagues at SJSU, I came to realize that the mosaic of languages in early South Carolina had been something of a precursor to what we were observing at a much faster pace in contemporary California. Questions that I could never answer about the sociolinguistics of California led me to focus instead on what must have happened earlier in my native state with the mingling of cultures from three different continents. Using summers and an occasional visiting appointment or grant to return to the site of my original research on an African-English creole language, I began to recognize that the story of what happened there could never be understood without looking at the social connections between three major ethnic groups of that early colony. After retiring from teaching in 2000, I completed a book on the language contact that occurred in the centuries prior to statehood between First Carolinians, European settlers, and enslaved Africans of South Carolina.

Now living in Oregon in a second retirement with fewer household responsibilities, I am investigating the early culinary contact between South Carolina’s three ethnic groups. Just as the first book led me out of my comfort zone into history and anthropology, this new research leads me to read colleagues’ work about South Carolina in ethnobotany, paleoarcheology, economics, and nutrition. Like two of my heroines, Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Emily Dickenson, I have long loved the “vegetable world.” In this new venture, my lifelong kitchen gardening and cooking-from-scratch adventures are helping to tease out the reality behind academic documents.

Throughout all these work and retirement phases, I continue to celebrate and to promote SJSU as one of the most valuable resources of the dynamic Silicon Valley. Its evolution reflects a shaping of language and culture that future generations will understand far better than we who have been in the middle of it.

**Date Revised:** July 29, 2016