

Expressions

Volume 10

SJSU | COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND THE ARTS

Table of Contents

<i>Hammer 2.0: We Are Live!</i>	3
<i>SJSU to Host NEH Summer Institute</i>	5
<i>H&A Welcomes New SJSU President</i>	7
<i>Profile: Ruby Bridges</i>	9
<i>Profile: Tom Sanders</i>	10
<i>Profile: Gwendolyn Mok</i>	12
<i>Profile: Legacy of Dorothy Wright</i>	14
<i>It's a Dean's Life Vol. 10</i>	16

Hammer 2.0: We Are Live!

Hammer 2.0: We Are Live!

Long lines formed outside the newly renovated and grandly reopened Hammer Theatre (“nicknamed Hammer 2.0”) on March 2nd for the premier screening of Spartan Film Studios’ *The Yellow Wallpaper*. This gala event celebrated the opening of San Jose’s Cinequest Film Festival as well as the Hammer Theatre itself. Just a scant hour before, donors and benefactors had explored the newly renovated space and mingled with faculty, staff, students, and community members involved



in the revitalization of the iconic blue box. Rounds of applause rung throughout the building as Mayor of San Jose Sam Liccardo, Interim President of San Jose State University Sue Martin, and Dean of the College of Humanities and the Arts Lisa Vollendorf spoke, voicing support for the further growth of the Hammer 2.0 and thanking the dedicated workers responsible for bringing the space to life. The screening of *The Yellow Wallpaper* was the first of many events to come, and the future of the Hammer has never looked brighter.

Owned by the City and newly operated by San José State University, the Hammer Theatre Center is a distinctive, high-quality performance venue in the heart of downtown San José. The new theater will serve the University and the community through artistically and educationally excellent programming expressive of the unique characteristics and diverse cultures that comprise Silicon Valley. And it is prepared to bring in the crowds! Sobrato Auditorium, the main performance stage of the Center, seats 532 people: 370 in the orchestra and parterre, and another 160 in the balcony. With a moving orchestra pit, retractable panels, and newly updated technology including rigging, lighting, and sound systems, Hammer 2.0 is a premier space suited to a wide variety of public performances.

The Hammer Theatre was originally created through a partnership between San José's Redevelopment Agency and the San José Repertory Theatre Company. The building, named after former Mayor Susan Hammer and her husband Phil, opened in 1997 and housed San José Rep until the company closed its doors in June 2014. The Hammer sits on the Paseo de San Antonio, a vibrant pedestrian pathway that connects SJSU with the Tech Museum and bridges urban spaces from Saint James Park to the SOFA cultural district.

Hammer 2.0 launches with a number of goals, a primary one being to maintain and expand this important cultural asset in the heart of Downtown San José. Hammer's world-class main stage will feature a wide range of university performances and events, community arts and cultural organizations programming, and local and touring acts. A tiered rental structure ensures that Hammer 2.0 will feature local community productions along with larger regional and national acts. With such diverse performances comes the opportunity to bring new, diverse audiences to the Hammer and Downtown San José.

The Hammer Theatre Center also sets the stage for collaborations between academic departments and division at SJSU as well as with community partners. Our students will benefit from increased opportunities to work with and learn from professional performers, designers and technicians. The College's work on the Hammer thus far has already sparked a number of new ideas for innovative programs that will take SJSU's arts education to the next level. If Hammer 2.0's magnificent launch is any indicator of its future, the Hammer Theatre will soon be known as a destination-worthy regional arts facility.

To learn more about the Hammer Theatre, upcoming events, or rental information, go to: <http://www.sjsu.edu/hammertheatre/>

SJSU to Host NEH Summer Institute

NEH Grant Given to SJSU to Host a Summer Institute!



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES**

Dedicated to giving instructors opportunities to extend their mastery of the subjects they teach, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has given San José State University a grant to host a Summer Institute for School Teachers focusing on “The California Immigrant Experience through Literature and Theatre.” Led by Dr. Matthew Spangler and Dr. David Kahn, and featuring workshops led by prominent figures such as Maxine Hong Kingston, Luis Valdez, Kinan

Valdez, Sara Zatz, and Andrew Lam, institute participants will explore immigrant experiences through discussion, performance creation, and immersion in the theatrical experience. This is the second time that the prestigious NEH Summer Institute opportunity has been awarded to Professors Kahn and Spangler; a previous version of the workshop was offered at SJSU in 2014.

Composed of twenty-five K-12 school teachers competitively selected from around the country, the Institute will provide a framework for understanding political borders between geographic territories and social borders between groups of people, intercultural interactions between settled and immigrant communities, and changing family and gender dynamics within discrete immigrant communities.

Visits to San Juan Bautista, Angel Island, and San Francisco’s many immigrant districts will ground the texts being read in real places, and help to connect teachers to the lived experience and history of the diverse peoples who together comprise California. Hands-on learning opportunities will help participating teachers develop teaching materials focusing on immigration, enriching their students’ experiences in the classroom.

“This was a wonderful experience in every way,” remarked a participant of the 2014 workshop. “It will have a definite and direct impact on my teaching beginning with my professional goal next year: to find more ways to get students to adapt parts of novels into scenes that they can perform in the classroom. I also have learned so much about immigration that will inform my teaching of countless books in the future!”

The workshop is expected to grow even more this year, and the Institute instructors are as eager to share their experiences as the participants are to engage with them. Running from July 17th to July 31st, the Institute culminates in a public performance on July 29th, in which Institute participants share what they learned, allowing the larger community to benefit from the rich learning experiences that characterize the Summer Institute.

For more information, please visit <http://immigrationtheatreinstitute.org/>

By Kaitlynn Magnuson

H&A Welcomes New SJSU President



(Photo: David Schmitz)

College of H&A Welcomes New SJSU President, Mary A. Papazian, Ph.D.

The College of Humanities and the Arts welcomes Mary A. Papazian, Ph.D., as San José State's new president. Here at H&A, our welcome is especially warm because...she's one of us! Dr. Papazian earned her Ph.D. in English at UCLA and went on to distinguish herself as a scholar of John

Donne, the 17th century metaphysical poet. Currently President of Southern Connecticut State University, Dr. Papazian has also served as Dean of Montclair University's College of Arts and Science as well as Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Lehman College, which is part of the City University of New York.

Speaking to Dr. Papazian's selection as president, CSU Trustee Rebecca D. Eisen, Chair of the Trustees' Committee for the Selection of the President, says, "Dr. Papazian envisions partnering with faculty, the campus community, and external stakeholders to expand this sound foundation and bolster educational opportunities for students."

On July 1st, Dr. Papazian will become SJSU's 29th president and the third female president in its 159-year history. As President at Southern Connecticut University, Dr. Papazian implemented a number of initiatives that focused on academic programs, campus environment, and student success. She increased academic advising staff and services, expanded outreach to community colleges, and established a President's Commission on Campus Climate and Inclusion to strengthen the university's core commitment to social justice, equity, and inclusion.

"I am very excited that we will be having a Renaissance literary scholar leading San José State University next fall," says Shannon Miller, Chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature. "President Papazian's scholarship has explored the rich intersections of John Donne's poetry and religious belief," she continues,

“as well as the larger context of the Protestant Reformation. She will bring a profound sensitivity to the values of the humanities and the arts to San José State at a time when these vital components of a college education are often undervalued as a result of an overemphasis on STEM fields. I look forward to her leadership in integrating the power of the arts and the humanities into all aspects of our students’ education and experiences while at SJSU.”

San José represents a California homecoming for Dr. Papazian, who was born and raised in southern California. “I knew it was time I come back to California when people started thinking that I was actually a New Yorker,” she joked at her SJSU welcome reception on February 22nd.

At the reception, Papazian pointed to SJSU’s strategic location within Silicon Valley, and the continued potential such a relationship with the region engenders. “While we can look back at our origins as a public university and the oldest in the West,” she says, “we also recognize that we are housed in an incredible location that is building the future.”

With Papazian’s long-term commitment to lead SJSU into its next chapter, the future for H&A, and San José State, looks bright indeed.

Profile: Ruby Bridges

Continuing the tradition of recognizing those who have embodied author John Steinbeck's values in their actions and their lives, the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies honored civil rights icon Ruby Bridges with the Steinbeck award on February 24, 2016. Known as one of the youngest members of the Civil Rights movement, Ruby made history when she began the first grade as the first African American student at a previously segregated grade school. As depicted in the Norman Rockwell painting, "The Problem We All Live With," and in a passage in *Travels with Charley* by Steinbeck himself, six-year-old Ruby walked straight ahead and didn't look back, changing the face of education across the country as she went.



(Photo: Jason Kruppa)

Protected from the pressure of the ordeal by "the innocence of a child," Ruby remained in the formerly all-white school for the rest of the school year, studying as the rest of the students, over 500 children in total, were pulled out of the school by their parents. "I was never really afraid," she recalls. She was also unaware that she was making history until she researched the Civil Rights movement event in her high school years in order to understand the role that she had played.

Ruby travelled abroad later in her life while working for American Express, which opened up the world to her. She realized she had been put on a path that she had yet to complete—something to do with the piece of history that she helped create. After being given a chance to tell her story, she realized what she had to do. In an effort to teach racial tolerance and understanding, she told her story from the eyes of her six-year-old self, using the power of honest portrayal and childlike observations to combat racism. She continues to speak in schools and to reach out to younger children, promoting curiosity and understanding. In doing so, she feels that she has accepted her calling, living up to the goals that the "little Ruby" who took those iconic steps years ago began, and will continue to take for years to come.

By Kaitlynn Magnuson

Profile: Tom Sanders



What started as a simple homework assignment in his senior year at Cal Poly has blossomed into a full-scale, ongoing project for SJSU alumnus Tom Sanders. Sanders, who earned his MFA in Photography in 2014, photographs and creates films for a wide range of clients in the arts, education, and the corporate world, but he is

best known for his series of photographs of United States veterans of World War II. Sanders has travelled to assisted-living homes all over the United States to capture these images, which are now preserved in permanent galleries and in his award-winning book, *The Last Good War: The Faces and Voices of WWII*.

Sanders was inspired to pursue this important project by his grandfather, who fought in World War II, and a neighbor who also was a WWII veteran. The men told highly detailed, almost gruesome stories of their war experiences that motivated Sanders to learn more about the breadth of sacrifices made by veterans of World War II. "None of [the veterans] think of themselves as heroes," Sanders remarked. "These are people who have made huge sacrifices and been in stressful life or death situations." *The Last Good War* preserves these veterans' stories in pictures as well as print, and was named nonfiction book of the year in 2010 by the Forewords Review.

Sanders' portrait series documents a history that is rapidly disappearing. "Many of these veterans are over 90 years old," Sanders explained. "Sometimes the few minutes I spend photographing them is the last time I'll see them." Some veterans, he noted, pass away in the six weeks between the photography session and the opening of the show itself, which makes his efforts all the more poignant and timely.

Sanders is now expanding his photography project to include younger veterans of more recent wars. He will soon work with Swords to Ploughshares, a San Francisco based nonprofit that supports veterans in need, to photograph women who are veterans of the Iraq War. When asked about his success, Sanders says that success

can come in many different forms, and that students “don’t need to go to an expensive art school to get a good art education.” Sanders’ photographs document the multitudinous ways human beings strive to succeed and help motivate his audience to pursue their own paths toward excellence.

For more information, and for a gallery of work, visit Tom Sanders’ website – <http://tomsandersphoto.com/portfolio/>

By Kaitlynn Magnuson

Profile: Gwendolyn Mok

Each year, San José State University bestows the President's Scholar Award on one faculty member who has achieved widespread recognition for excellence in his or her field. The College of Humanities and the Arts is thrilled that our own Gwendolyn Mok received this year's award. Professor Mok, an award-winning pianist and expert in Ravel and Beethoven, accepted this honor a few weeks ago at the Faculty Service Recognition and Awards Luncheon.



Professor Mok joined SJSU in 2003 when she was named Coordinator of Keyboard Studies, a position she has held since that time. Shortly before her arrival, she recorded the complete works of Maurice Ravel for solo piano, a 2-disc recording that continues to receive accolades from around the world. Since arriving at SJSU, Mok has recorded Brahms' late works (Op. 116-119), a highly respected 2-disc collection, and most recently *LEGACY: The Spirit of Beethoven*, which explores Beethoven's impact on Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, and Carl Czerny. Together, the three recordings constitute a series called *The Composer's Piano*, and are currently available on Musician Showcase Recordings.

For all of her CDs, Mok performs on historical keyboard instruments that are housed right here at SJSU in the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies and in the School of Music. Mok explains that she is drawn to these period instruments because of their unique sound qualities. "The Erard that I play is from 1868, and is straight strung. If you look inside your own piano, you will notice that the strings are all crossing each other. With the straight strung piano you get distinct registral differences—almost like listening to a choir where you have the bass, tenor, alto, and soprano voices. It is very clear and there is no blending or homogenizing of the sound. It therefore gives you huge opportunities in experimenting with color."

Fred Cohen, the Director of the School of Music and Dance, says that Mok's work has helped the School celebrate and realize the full potential of its historic keyboard collection. "Composers who were living before 1880 were actually writing for instruments that are fundamentally different from the modern piano," he explains. Hearing Mok perform on these earlier instruments "allows us to hear the music of Ravel, Beethoven, and others as the composers themselves would have heard it."

Mok performs widely with major international orchestras and has appeared in many prestigious venues. Upcoming performances include three recitals as pianist and

guest curator for the Old First Church Concert Series in San Francisco. On April 17, you can hear her perform selections from *LEGACY: The Spirit of Beethoven*. Her June 6 program, *Music and the Spoken Word at a Time of War*, features poet laureate Robert Hass. Her October 23 performance focuses on Music and Nature.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.oldfirstconcerts.org/>.

Profile: Legacy of Dorothy Wright



Established in 1987 as a memorial to former Department of English professor Dorothy Wright, the Dorothy Wright Outstanding Teaching Awards honor local high school English teachers who make a difference in the lives of students as they transition from their high school years to their college careers. Professor Wright taught at SJSU for 30 years before retiring in 1987, and was committed to teacher education.

Her legacy lives on as the Awards bring together students, high school teachers, and members of the university community alike, encouraging communication and alignment between high school and university educators.

“So often at the university level, English instructors wonder about the preparation of their students, specifically asking what happened during their high school education,” Dr. Mary Warner, one of the organizers of the Awards ceremony, elaborated. “The Dorothy Wright Awards is a venue for high school teachers to communicate the realities of high school English classes.”

The Awards are unique in that they are given to teachers who have been nominated by students in freshman composition classes at SJSU, who are then honored in a ceremony on SJSU campus. The ceremony brings together students and the teachers that inspired them, letting them reconnect even across long distances. Teachers from Stockton, Oakland, Salinas, South San Francisco, and Watsonville have attended the Awards ceremony, attesting to the significance of the award as well as the teachers’ dedication to their profession. The students attending the Awards ceremony get a chance to see first hand what the honor means to their teachers, and the teachers in turn get to learn what their students valued enough to bring with them to their college careers.

The power that the ceremony has to bring together the educational community has event coordinators encouraging more students to get involved through the nomination process in order to keep this important tradition alive. It provides a unique opportunity for teachers and students alike, aligning with Professor Wright's dedication to teacher education and connection. Geoff Wright, Assistant Principal at Cupertino High School and one of Dorothy's three children, aptly expresses the significance of the Dorothy Wright Awards: "Thank you again for keeping this wonderful tradition alive. Nothing would have pleased our mother more than having outstanding English teachers honored by their own students. The work English teachers do is important: we hold the fire of words and emotions in our hearts and it is imperative we pass that fire on to future generations."



For a list of Awards recipients and additional information, please visit: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/community/highschool.html>

By Kaitlynn Magnuson

It's a Dean's Life Vol. 10



Spring is a season of joy at San José State University! For confirmation, just ask the 33,000 students who welcomed daylight savings time with a sigh of relief as they realized they had just captured one more hour of sunlight on our beautiful campus!

The College of Humanities and the Arts has much to celebrate this spring. Every day we create opportunities to connect the university to the community through high-quality arts and culture programming. Nowhere are these connections better illustrated than in our partnership with the city of San José to operate the Hammer Theatre.

On March 2, we celebrated the [opening](#) of the Hammer (formerly known as The Rep.) with a kickoff party and the newest film from Spartan Film Studios, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Films ran throughout the two-week festival, and the Mercury News covered the end of Cinequest with a fabulous piece highlighting the excitement around the [Hammer 2.0](#) initiative. We have posted rental rates for SJSU and off-campus partners on the [Hammer website](#), where interested parties can also fill out the rental inquiry form. If you walk by the Hammer, you can see the beautiful logotype and visual brand identity developed by Graphic Design professor Chang Kim, whose students continue to develop proposals for wayfinding and interior signage for the facility and the exterior plaza.

Our talented faculty, staff, and students continue to win major awards and inspire the rest of us to creatively express ourselves. Interior Design professor Virginia San Fratello recently won the university-wide [Early Career Investigator Award](#) for her groundbreaking work on 3-D printing of sustainable materials. San Fratello also designed the recent [Inspiration to Innovation](#) Tower Award given to alum Peter Ueberroth.

Spatial artist [Shannon Wright](#) has received one of this year's [SVCreates Artist Laureate Awards](#). These prestigious awards honor individuals' artistic excellence and community service. Professor Wright is a sculptor and installation artist whose work inspires others to think about the rich connections between creative expression and our communities and lived environments. This exciting news comes on the heels of glass artist and art instructor Cassandra Straubing's show, [Poetic](#)

[Ghost](#), at the Bullseye Glass Resource Center. In other news, Graphic Design instructor Levy Jean-Benoit has been busy promoting his students' work, including helping them to submit to the Tiburon Film Festival poster competition. SJSU student Katherine Chen won first prize! Read the whole article [here](#).

Philosophy instructor Michael Jordan has been active in coaching and assisting his talented Ethics Bowl students this year, and I am pleased to report that they qualified for Nationals, where they made a strong showing. I am thrilled that a Bioethics debate team is going strong this spring as well.

Like the rest of my colleagues in the College of Humanities and the Arts, I feel deeply privileged to be an educator in an environment that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and ethical citizenship. Our work is made possible by the commitment that our students and their families make to the pursuit of higher education and by our society's commitment to funding public education. As we speed toward the season of concerts, events, exhibits, and, finally, graduation, I urge all of us to keep in mind how fortunate we are to be associated with a university that has been shaping the region's workforce, economy, and artistic culture for 159 years.

Sincerely,



Lisa Vollendorf, Dean of Humanities and the Arts