

Expressions

Volume 4

SJSU COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND THE ARTS

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LUNAR Award

National Design Award Goes to SJSU Alumnus



How can your SJSU Industrial Design degree land you at the White House? Funny you should ask.

Because that's what happened to alumnus Gerard Furber-shaw when the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Mu-seum announced that his firm [LUNAR](#) had won their [Na-tional Design Award for Product Design](#).

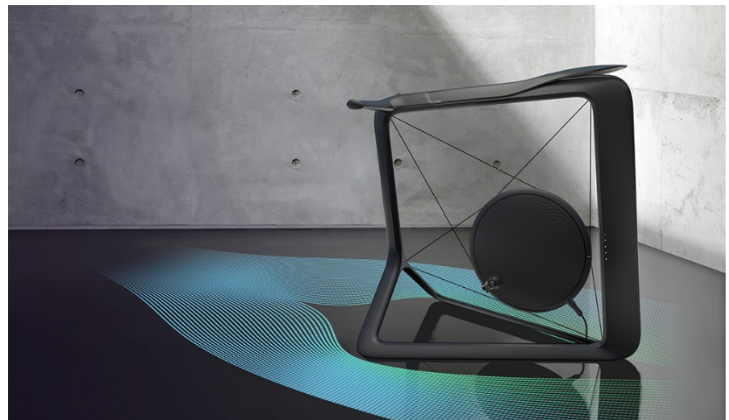
Besides landing the prestigious honor, the design world's equivalent of an Academy Award, there were other perks. "It was the weirdest experience. I rounded a corner in the White House and there she was..." She, meaning Michelle Obama. "It was incredibly emotional. She's such a warm

and unassuming person, and she has this aura about her that makes you feel completely accepted."

The presenter at the actual [awards ceremony](#) noted, "For thirty years LUNAR has been a beacon of progress in design. They carved a niche that wasn't there—a design that is distinctly American, Californian, and approaching technology objects in a completely new way."

As with most success stories, the end result lies in a beginning confluence of people, timing, and place.

Gerard Furbershaw, Jeff Smith, and Robert Brunner had worked together at a Palo Alto product development firm. They became frustrated with their employer's traditional approach and founded LUNAR in 1984—a pivotal year in the Silicon Valley that saw the debut of the Macintosh computer and HP's first laptop. Brunner, another SJSU Industrial Design graduate, later left the company to become Director of Industrial Design at Apple Computer.



But at their LUNAR start-up, Furbershaw, Smith, and the staff in their San Francisco of-
fice would go on to create award-winning designs for the next thirty years. They amassed a list of dream clients: Apple, Cisco, Clorox, Coca-Cola, Dell, DKNY, Google, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, Kimberley Clark, Motorola, Nike, Pepsi, Phillips, Rub-bermate, Seagate, Siemens, Sony, Steelcase, Sun Microsystems, and Xerox.

Clearly the physical proximity to Silicon Valley made an impact on their attractiveness to tech clients. But beyond the geography there were other factors that lured LUNAR to their projects. As Furbershaw notes: "There was a difference to the Silicon Valley design because most of these tech projects were for new products—they came with few visual precedents." This freedom was like catnip for a bunch of maverick designers and prompted their "distinctly American, Californian" aesthetic.

Ironically, this aesthetic had grown out of the LUNAR founders' admiration for European designers like Hartmut Esslinger and [Bill Moggridge](#). "We were blown away by their work and kept wondering 'How do they get their clients to let them do these designs?'" When the three California entrepreneurs founded their own firm, their guiding ethic was not money. "It was all about great design."



In the course of thirty years of successful practice, however, it's safe to say that money has been made as a by-product of this devotion to "great design." Today, Furbershaw has decided to share some of it with his alma mater.

The award-winning alumnus discusses why he chose to give back to the university by becoming a donor: "I owe San José State a lot. When I went back to campus to give a talk twenty years after I graduated, I noticed the students were still using the same desks that had been there when *I* was in school—and already at that time they were old—they looked like they'd been there since the Civil War!"

Some details only a product designer would notice.

Please see our [Gerard Furbershaw profile](#) for more details, and watch [the video](#) to hear his story.

By Cathleen Miller

Linguistics Grant



LLD Secures a Grant for \$1.1 Million!

Can language save the world?

Apparently the U.S. State Department thinks it certainly can help, because they have awarded \$1.1 million to SJSU's Department of Linguistics and Language Development. According to department chair and proposal author Dr. Swathi Vanniarajan, the grant aims to facilitate U.S./Pakistani relations and develop better understanding between the two nations. In this vein the LLD faculty from SJSU have been working with faculty and graduate students from the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan.

Our campus has already welcomed four visiting faculty from Azad Jammu, two men and two women. They were intrigued by our model of student-centered education, where much of the content of coursework is driven by student ideas and interests. This method in turn serves as a model for participatory democracy, which is one of the State Department's goals.



During this visit, Dr. Vanniarajan presented on his specialty of second language acquisition. Other faculty participants included Daniel Silverman on phonology and Roula Svorou on syntax and semantics. One of the great gifts of this award, however, is that *all* instructors in the department will play a role in working with their Pakistani cohorts, providing the entire LLD faculty an opportunity for professional enrichment and offering unique

learning opportunities for their students.

Other benefits of the grant are that LLD has developed a synergetic relationship with the State Department, including consulting work on English as a Second Language. The Linguistics and Language Development faculty also have welcomed Fulbright scholars to campus who are working in their discipline. Activities like these are placing the department in a globally prominent position.

Some of the tasks the two cohort schools will be working on together are creating a written language and reference grammar for Pahari, a language from Kashmir. Other projects include revising curricula in linguistics and applied linguistics, research collaboration, and a faculty exchange to enrich both groups' outlook and an understanding of one another's culture. Lastly, our San José State team will seek to impart the concepts of American values and American culture to their Pakistani counterparts.

The backstory to this success is one of perseverance by Dr. Swathi Vanniarajan. He applied for the State Department grant last year but was turned down. Learning valuable lessons from that experience, he applied again this year and beat out numerous universities from around the nation. He feels SJSU was an attractive choice for the mission because our LLD program "has always believed in globalization. Our Applied Linguistics curriculum offers TESOL and a focus on World Englishes. We feel there is no one standard English; there are many, for example Standard American English, Standard Indian English, and so on. Each has its own flavor, and they must be recognized as equals."



Apparently this global and democratic perspective was attractive to the State Department's award committee, realizing that English—while becoming the lingua franca of the planet—needs skilled messengers to spread the word(s).

By Cathleen Miller

Humanities Honors



Humanities Honors: After Sixty Years

"A liberal arts education experience at a large, public university"—those are the words used to describe San José State University's Humanities Honors Program. On October 3, the program celebrated its sixtieth anniversary. Founded in 1954 by four Humanities professors—Rex Burbank, Jack E. Fink, O.C. Williams, and Richard Tansey—the Humanities Honors Program was designed as a multi-disciplinary academic experience that would be team-taught in both lecture and seminar settings. Over the years, the program has evolved into the current four-semester experience that enables students in the program to fulfill general education requirements while bonding with both peers and professors in a close-knit group experience.

Members of Humanities Honors are the cream of SJSU's crop. To apply, students must have a 3.0 unweighted GPA in high school and one of the following: a 550 or above on the SAT Critical Reading, a 24 or above on the ACT Verbal, a 3 or higher on the English AP exam, or a 150 or above on the English Placement Exam. The program is open to all majors. Students, however, must come prepared and, as the Humanities Honors literature states, "willing to work with integrity." The twenty-four unit curriculum covers various areas of study, including religion, history, government, literature, music, and art. Satisfying requirements in nine general education areas, the program is ideal for a student in any major, either complementing a humanities major or diversifying an engineering major's course load.

Professor Cynthia Rostankowski, the current Humanities Honors program director, still preserves the founders' legacy of teaching hard-working students. The first noticeable object in Rostankowski's office is her inflatable model of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* on the top of her filing cabinet. But, it contradicts her personality completely. With a soft-spoken enthusiasm in her voice, she talks about the program: "By means of their engagement with one another, the students come to understand much more deeply the material that was covered, material that was the foundation for much of their educational life."

Since 1954, the program has morphed into something with a more global focus. As Rostankowski states, "We have become more diverse, especially in the past fifteen years. We are all part of the world. How do we see ourselves in that community?"

Debby Ng, a junior Liberal Studies major intending to enter the field of elementary education, echoes Rostankowski with her experiences. "The Honors program is the best part of my major because it gave me a broad sense of the world." Ng's favorite Humanities Honors course, Hum 1A, reflects the program's global-centric curriculum: "We went all around the world and learned about all of the ancient civilizations. It gave me a really good overall introduction to the beginning of humanity."

The Honors program coursework is not the only element that engages pupils. Because students in the program take the same classes, they begin to bond with each other, developing a close-knit group that can form friendships for life. In fact, Debby became roommates with one member of her Humanities Honors cohort. She cites the program for bringing the two of them together.

Not only do students form bonds with each other, they form them with their professors. Ng sings their praises, observing the expertise evident in each one's field of study: "All of the professors are experts. From literature to music to art history, they all know their stuff."

The Humanities Honors Program maintains a great balance between retaining tradition and growing to suit today's students. Just this year, the program rolled out a third-year experience that is open to transfer students as well as those who came to SJSU as freshmen.

With SJSU expanding every year, the Humanities Honors Program has proven to be a challenging yet comforting addition to the lives of the students, and it truly is a jewel in the crown of the university. So here's to sixty more years of rigorous study and a close-knit community that will produce great citizens for the future!

By Jessica Keaton

Profile: Anne Fountain



Found in Translation

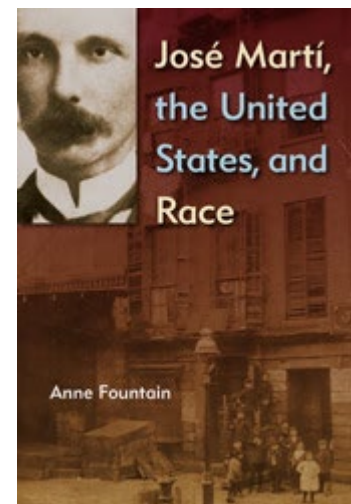
"I write about Cuba because it's so misunderstood," says Dr. Anne Fountain. She was originally guided to the shores of this island nation by one of her professors at Columbia. He was interested in José Martí, who is considered a national hero in Cuba. Fountain's interest in Martí culminated in the publication of her latest book, *José Martí, the United States, and Race* (University Press of Florida, Aug. 2014).

Dr. Fountain describes Martí as being the key to understanding race in the Americas. He lived in the United States during the last fifteen years of his life and wrote about the role of slavery, the Abolitionists, and the treatment of the Indians and Chinese in the States. His verse also inspired the classic song "Guantanamera," popularized by Pete Seeger. Martí's important essay "Our America" is a manifesto against racism and has been widely anthologized, and yet Fountain discovered that many English versions had distortions because the translators did not understand the lyric Spanish of Martí.

Dr. Fountain, who is a professor in World Languages and Literatures at SJSU, understands the challenges. She is not only a writer of her own texts; she also has translated several works from Spanish. She describes her approach to translation as "one of humility. I ask if there could be another nuance to the language. It's also essential to understand the context of the work." In this regard she read the complete works of Martí—no minor task considering that his collected oeuvre of letters, poems, essays, newspaper articles, a novel, and a children's magazine fill twenty-eight volumes in the most recent complete edition.

Other translations by Dr. Fountain include two books by Cuban author Nancy Alonso: *Closed for Repairs/Cerrado por Reparación* and *Disconnect/Desencuentro*. "I had taken a trip to Cuba for a translation conference and picked up her book, a short story collection," said Fountain. "When I started reading, I just fell in love with the writing. I knew instantly I wanted to translate it. I called Nancy Alonso and pitched my idea—but many people want to translate her work. In the background I could hear her partner saying, 'Do it! Do it!' because I had translated Martí." After much finagling with visas and immigration, Fountain brought her cohort to San José State this month, where Alonso is giving numerous talks around campus and throughout the Bay Area.

Anne Fountain's own gift with the Spanish language comes naturally. She was born in Buenos Aires and later lived and studied around the globe, including Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Mexico, and finally the United States.



In fact, the thread of bilingualism runs through Fountain's home life as well. Her husband, Dr. Michael Conniff, is an expert on Latin American history and is also a professor at SJSU. Coincidentally, Fountain has one daughter who is a Spanish professor, and her other daughter, an actress in New York, is fluent as well. Even grandson Owen speaks español like a native.

It is doubtful that, in this family, much is lost in translation.

By Cathleen Miller

Profile: Gerard Furbershaw



L'Americain

"In France they called me 'L'Americain,' and when we moved to Los Angeles, the kids called me 'Frenchie.'" Young Gerard glumly determined: "I'm a kid without a country!"

This scenario would be the early foundation of award-winning product designer Gerard Furbershaw's ability to see the world with fresh eyes, as preconceived notions had to be quickly abandoned to make room for more stimuli. Born in New York City, he moved to Grenoble at age nine when his father took a job there. In France, he found himself

thrown into the deep end of the cultural pool. "I spoke no French, but after two years I was fluent."

After high school, Furbershaw enrolled in architecture school at USC, in a program focused on theory. However, he noticed a pattern: the students who were already working in the field were much more advanced in the quality of their classroom projects and presentations. The student architect realized he needed more practical skills.

During his first term in the architecture program, he encountered a professor who would leave a marked impact on him. Bob Inlow was an industrial designer who discussed ideas like systems and modularity; he inspired in his pupil a fascination with mass production.

Furbershaw graduated from USC in 1974 to discover an anemic job market for architecture grads. To make ends meet, he took a job in a mountaineering shop, utilizing his passion for mountaineering. He immediately began designing outdoor clothing and making prototypes.

After a couple of years, he made his way to the Bay Area. The reason for relocation is one his *amis français* would understand: *cherchez la femme*. He was chasing his girlfriend who was enrolled at Stanford.

Once in the Bay Area, he enrolled in San José State's Industrial Design Program and received a second bachelor's degree. At SJSU, Furbershaw mastered the practical skills absent from his USC education, and by the time he graduated he could sketch, create product renderings, and get products manufactured. He also took advantage of his observations at USC and, while still a student at SJSU, accepted a job at an industrial design consultancy.

This path led him to co-found his own design firm LUNAR [\[read our feature story\]](#), which after thirty years of cutting-edge work won the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum [National Design Award for Product Design](#).

Decades after graduation, Gerard Furbershaw is back on San José State's campus, now teaching an Industrial Design course. "I derive a great deal of inspiration being around

the students. They have a lot of energy and haven't been beaten down by life's travails." Being around students energizes him in his work and his life.

Another is a passion he took up when he abandoned mountaineering. "After my daughter was born, I thought it would be important for her to have a dad who was alive." A fairly traditional notion for such a creative thinker, but he did find a workable alternative. The designer took up cross-country skiing, a sport whose repetitive motion and *whish-whish* sound of skis on snow produce a meditative effect on him.

It is in this Zen-like notion of circularity that Gerard Furbershaw clears his mind and recharges his spiritual energy, which, in turn, feeds his design work. This same pattern of circularity is present in his return to feed the minds of students at the place where he learned the tools of his trade.

By Cathleen Miller

Gerard Furbershaw: Scholarship Reception Address



Gerard Furbershaw, Industrial Design alumnus and donor, speaks on the enormous impact his education at SJSU has had on his life, and on the importance of continuing the legacy. [Learn more about Gerard.](#)

It's a Dean's Life Vol. 4



I am thrilled to say that we are in full events season again in the College of Humanities and the Arts. My evenings and weekends are packed with excitement as I go from performance to concert to poetry reading.

I attended an appropriately terrifying "Poe Fest" the night before Halloween, and also an inspirational poetry reading by Tracy K. Smith sponsored by the College's [Center for Literary Arts](#). I have been to numerous concerts, including a hot night of Puerto Rican salsa performed by our [Latin Jazz Ensemble](#) in honor of Supreme Court Justice [Sonia Sotomayor's](#) inspirational visit to campus in October. Generosity and grace are two

hallmark characteristics of this incredible woman, who visited with students throughout the afternoon, including a meeting with six from [Rita Manning's](#) Philosophy of Law course, during which she chatted warmly with the students about legal careers.

Justice Sotomayor indisputably is an inspirational force, as was our amazing [Third Annual H&A Student Showcase](#). With more than one hundred performers and participants, this was our most sophisticated Student Showcase yet. If you missed it, you can watch the showcase [video](#) or visit our [Facebook photo album](#).

Our students and faculty continue to garner extraordinary recognition for their talents.

The [Theatre Bay Area](#) nominations featured two of our talented lecturers. TV, Radio, Film, and Theatre designer [York Kennedy](#) was nominated for a Lighting Design Award for the American premiere of The Cutting Ball Theater's new translation of Samuel Gallet's *Communiqué N° 10*. The department's [Michael Locher](#) was also nominated for Outstanding Scenic Design for his work on Anthony Shaffer's *Sleuth* at Center REPeratory Company. [Learn more](#).

The [University Scholar Series](#) features two of our faculty this semester. In October, [Aaron Lington](#) gave a rousing talk about music composition and the path to his recent Grammy Award. On November 19 at 12pm in Martin Luther King, Jr., Library 225, [Jo Farb Hernández](#) will speak about her book *Singular Spaces*. [Alice Carter](#) also gave an inspiring talk at MLK Library, this one in the provocative series "What Should the Future of Our University Be?"

On September 19, the 9th Annual U.S.-Japan Future Forum took place on campus with a focus on the future of high-speed rail. The program included keynote addresses by Dan Richard, chair of the board of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, and Masaki Ogata, vice chair of the East Japan Railway Company. SJSU speakers included [Chris Jochim](#) and Emeritus Executive Director of the Mineta Transportation Institute, [Rod Diridon](#).

Incredibly, six (!) of our faculty members were featured at the annual Author Celebration. Honorees hail from different fields and departments, and all share a commitment to

scholarship and creative activity that has yielded impressive results. Please join me in applauding: [Anne Fountain](#), for *José Martí, the United States, and Race*; [Rosemary Henze](#), for *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture and Biology, 2nd Edition*; [Alison McKee](#), for *The Woman's Film of the 1940s: Gender, Narrative, and History*; [Manjari Ohala](#), for *Sound Patterns of Hindi*; [Scott Sublett](#), for *Screenwriting for Neurotics*; and [Nick Taylor](#), for *The Setup Man*.

The intellectual, civic, and creative activity of students in H&A is truly astounding. Philosophy's [Janet Giddings](#) recently helped the Medical Ethics students provide consultation about advance health care directives on campus. The [School of Music and Dance](#) hosted "Be a Music Major for a Day" in October, welcoming 100 high school students to campus to learn more about our amazing programs.

SJSU students made a strong showing at the 2014 CSU Media Arts Festival. We swept the Feature Screenplay category with three SJSU students: Cassia Homann (nominated for "EM"), Chau Nyuyen (nominated for "Porcelain"), and Michael Quintana (nominated for "White Rabbit"). In the Animation category, Megan Hart and Megan Lawton were nominated for "End of the Vine." [Learn more](#).

I also have some sad news to share. On October 30, beloved French professor [Dominique van Hooff](#) passed away. A model of elegance, kindness, and warm intelligence, Professor van Hooff will be missed by colleagues, students, and loved ones alike. Her passing serves as a reminder to us all that a life of service in education has impact beyond measure.

As we head into the season of giving thanks, I wish everyone a productive and healthy end to the semester and the calendar year. I also take the opportunity to remind readers that the work done in the [College of Humanities and the Arts](#) is something society and employers continue to reward and be thankful for. A recent article on "[Why Employers Love Liberal Arts Graduates](#)" says it all!

With warm regards,



Lisa Vollendorf
Dean, College of Humanities and the Arts