**Retirement from the**

**Skidmore College Faculty**

**Spring 2015**

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**Faculty Meeting**

**April the Twenty-Fourth**

**Two Thousand and Fifteen**

Be It Resolved:

The faculty of Skidmore College expresses its profound appreciation and admiration for the following members of the Skidmore faculty who have this year expressed their determination to retire. The faculty further resolves that the following biographical highlights be included in the minutes of the faculty meeting of April 24, 2015 in recognition and celebration of their distinguished service and achievement.



L

isa Aronson came to Skidmore in 1984 after receiving a PhD from Indiana University in the history of African art and teaching for several years at the University of Wisconsin. Her courses have done much to further Skidmore’s commitment to intercultural and global understanding, enabling students to study not only a wide range of African creative practices, but also Latin American, Native American, and Oceanic traditions.

One former student recalls that “it is not uncommon to find Lisa toting in examples of textiles, pottery, woven baskets, or masks to share with her class.” Another describes Lisa’s courses as “the comprehensive study of how humans express themselves by responding to their environments and using various art forms to survive physically, spiritually and emotionally.”

Lisa has always been attuned to how technology can enhance teaching and learning. She updated her department’s slide projection system soon after arriving at Skidmore, and later was among the first to embrace digital images. Many of her field research photographs are now widely available to researchers through the ARTstor image database.

Lisa is an active, respected scholar in the field of African art. She has published many studies of how textiles, ceramics, and body adornment articulate spiritual beliefs and social identities. Her expertise in textiles has led to museum consultancies, an exhibition at the Hillwood Art Museum at Long Island University, and a term as President of the Textile Society of America. Long interested in issues of gender, she was the first Skidmore faculty member to publish in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Currently, she is completing work as an editor and contributor to a multi-authored book about Jonathan Adagogo Green, a late nineteenth-century Nigerian photographer whose practice has never been fully documented until now. Indeed, it was Lisa’s research that revealed Green’s African heritage, and his story adds an important dimension to our understanding of how photography shaped the modern world.

Lisa was one of the Tang Museum’s earliest supporters and has contributed to its mission in many ways. In 2001 she organized the first student-curated exhibition, and subsequent classes have produced a web resource on African body arts and an exhibition on African ceramics and gender. In 2011, Lisa co-curated *Environment and Object: Recent African Art* with the Tang’s then-director John Weber. It featured contemporary artists whose work responds to the devastating ecological impact of resource exploitation and socio-political struggle in Africa. Several of the artists visited Skidmore, and students collaborated with Bright Ugochukwu Eke to turn discarded water bottles into a compelling sculpture.

*New York Times* art critic, Holland Cotter, praised the exhibition, concluding that it upstaged current art-world trends in New York City. Art historian, Henry John Drewal, remembers it as “powerful, timely, and deeply engaging—its message is one we need to hear and act upon.” And John Weber recalls: “Working with Lisa…was one of the highlights of my time at Skidmore, a great learning experience for me, and a chance to make a unique exhibition that would never have happened at the Tang without her…Travel in Africa with Lisa opened up a whole new world for me personally as well as artistically, and I'll be forever grateful.”

We know that Lisa will remain involved with the Skidmore community and with her extensive professional network, even as she takes more time to enjoy cooking, gardening, and the dissemination of cat-related internet humor. In the words of an Ojibwe prayer, we wish her “blessings and balance” in this next phase of life and work.

U

na Bray earned a BA in Mathematics and Philosophy from the City College of New York and a Masters of Arts in Mathematics from the City University of New York in the mid-1970s. A decade later, in 1985, she earned a Ph.D. from the Polytechnic Institute of New York for a dissertation in *Zeros of Polynomials over a Division Ring*.

Una has always been interested in Mathematics Education and picked up 20 graduate credits in Math Education along the way to her Master’s degree. She had a variety teaching experiences before coming to Skidmore. She taught mathematics at the elementary, junior, and senior high school levels in New York City in the early 1970s. She was a teaching fellow at Brooklyn College, an instructor at Marymount Manhattan College, and an instructor at Smith College before coming to us in 1985. She also had visiting positions at UMASS Amherst, Mt. Holyoke College, Lewis & Clark College, and the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Una also had an early interest in promoting underrepresented groups in mathematics, as she worked for the CLP Program at Marymount College designed to introduce financially and educationally disadvantaged students to college-level courses, as well as for the Bridge program at Smith College, designed to introduce minority students to the College. She was also an active teacher in the University Without Walls prison program here at Skidmore.

This preparation made Una an ideal person for Skidmore to hire in 1985 to oversee and implement our Quantitative Reasoning (QR) program. For six years she was the QR Director, during which time she developed the MA 100 course, wrote instructional material for the course, and developed testing instruments, which have evolved to our current QR exam.

Una developed other teaching interests over the years, including Mathematics History, and she became the department’s principal instructor for our History of math course, MA310, which was an enormously popular course under her leadership. She also has taught Abstract Algebra, Differential Equations, Calculus, and Statistics for the Department.

She also developed interests in the health sciences, and in particular, the history of food, and in epidemiology, and taught two separate liberal studies courses in these areas, *Food and Society* and *Epidemics and Society*.

Her professional presentations and publications reflected all of her scholarly interests. Selected publications on her algebraic interests include *On the Zeros of Polynomials with Coefficients from a Division Ring* (co-authored with George Whaples, in Canadian Journal of Math) and *A Simple Method for Extracting Roots of Quaternions* in Abstracts of the AMS. Publications related to her math education interests include *An Arithmetic Handbook* (co-authored with Dick Speers), a text for the new MA 100 course, and *Issue: Approach to Basic Mathematics, Quantitative Reasoning at Skidmore College* published in Issues in College Learning. Publications about her interests in public health include *Epidemics and Society – a Syllabus Outline*, in The New Liberal Arts News, and *New York Milk Culture*, submitted to Oxford Symposium Journal.

Una served the college and the community in many ways. In addition to her foundational work in QR, she had a strong record of committee service. Her colleagues will remember her for her strong sense of fairness and equity, which made her a valued member of committees such as the Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights and the Tenure Review Board, and she was also a very active member of the American Association of University Professors where she served as both the Treasurer, and later, the President of the Skidmore Chapter. Congratulations Una on your retirement!

R

uth Copans joined the Skidmore community in 1986, as an Admissions Interviewer, gaining first-hand knowledge of the College’s student body and starting a professional journey that would culminate in directing the “Heart of the Skidmore Campus”—the Lucy Scribner Library. During her early Skidmore years, she completed her MLS from the University at Albany, which complemented her BA in Honors English (Magna Cum Laude) and MA in English from UMass/Boston. In addition to her impressive educational background, Ruth brought to Skidmore her expertise in bookbinding and book conservation and a love and appreciation for the book as art, the English Language, and French Culture.

Ruth’s journey at Skidmore exemplifies the true sense of coming up through the ranks. While working in Admissions, Ruth also began her service to the library, drawing upon her professional experience as a Preservation Consultant. She joined the library full-time in 1991 as a Visiting Assistant Professor, and continued the following year as a Special Collections Consultant. In 1993, Ruth became the Assistant Humanities & Special Collections Librarian and was appointed Interim College Librarian in 1998. Ruth received the unanimous support of the Library faculty in 2001 as she was named College Librarian.

During her career at the library, Ruth was in involved in two major renovations. The first in 1994-95 increased the Lucy Scribner Library’s usable space by 50 percent to 75,000 square feet. This renovation included the expansion and renovation of the Pohndorff Room where Skidmore’s students, faculty, and staff could access the rare book collections and the college archives. As Special Collections Librarian, Ruth was instrumental in shaping these spaces, ensuring security and climate-control, as well as developing the Special Collections Department. Ruth’s book binding studio was located in the back office and she initiated and guided the acquisition of the superb collection of artists’ books that the library houses today. Through Ruth’s advocacy and promotion, and enhanced by her expertise in the *History of the Book* and in the *Artists Books* movement, the rare book collections are now regularly accessed by classes in many disciplines, from Art to English to Psychology.

The second Scribner Library renovation in 2012-2013 was a $50 million project that added 250 seats, including twelve new study carrels and thirteen new group study rooms, and relocated the department of Information Technology into the library. As College Librarian, Ruth was intimately involved in every phase of the project from development and design to construction. The library now boasts a room reservation system, a Media Viewing Room, flat-screen panels in the study rooms, and improved wireless and wired connectivity throughout. Needless to say the updated library is incredibly popular with students and faculty alike. It is testament to Ruth’s vision that the library is more heavily used than ever before—and it continues to evolve: the Documentary and Visual Literacy Lab opened in Library 113 in 2014.

Ruth’s impact on Scribner’s faculty and staff, and the services they provide to Skidmore’s learning community, is perhaps even more important than her influence upon the physical library. All but a handful of Scribner Library’s current personnel were hired during Ruth’s watch. Although Ruth clearly voiced her opinions and was decisive in action, she was open to the ideas of others and created an environment in which it was okay to try something new. Ruth treated all fairly and warmly. She expected and received excellence from her librarians and staff. The library holiday party and librarian retreats will not be the same without Ruth’s gracious hospitality. Ruth generously provided bagels at staff meetings so often that it became tradition. She worked hard at fostering a positive and courteous work environment—and she succeeded.

Student and faculty needs have always been the highest priorities while Ruth has been the College Librarian. Those priorities have been the drivers behind the technological evolution in the library. Thanks to Ruth’s leadership, Lucy Scribner Library is as good an electronic library as it is a wonderful library building as it is a close-knit group of library professionals.

Ruth has been an active citizen of Skidmore College through her regular contributions to Faculty Governance and she has been elected or appointed to a host of committees over her years at Skidmore. Most notably she served on Academic Freedom and Rights, University Without Walls, Information Resources Managers, Information Resources Council, Honors Forum Council, Academic Festival Committee, Information Task Force II, Adler Committee, Admissions Committee, and MALS Committee. In 2001 Ruth received the President’s Award. In 2005 she co-led the London Program and co-taught the Scribner Seminar, “Detective Fictions, Dark Designs.”

In addition to book binding and conservation, Ruth’s scholarly interests have included book arts, American women illustrators, and nineteenth-century undergraduate women’s reading habits. She has presented at SHARP (the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing) Conferences in Edinburgh, London, Oxford, and Mainz, Germany. Ruth curated exhibitions at the Hyde Collection, Cornell University, and the Crandell Public Library. She lectured at Swathmore College, Mansfield University, and, of course, Skidmore. She was also a contributor to ABELL (Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature) for six years.

Ruth looks forward to an active retirement. She will be in London in Fall 2015 with her husband, John Anzalone, and then relocating to the West Coast to be closer to her daughters, Becca and Annie, and their families. They will no-doubt appreciate being close enough to be the beneficiaries of Ruth’s fine cooking, decorating skills, enthusiasm for the Arts, and, most of all, her love and devotion.

J

oanne Devine joined the Skidmore faculty in 1982. In the thirty three years that followed, Joanne brought a remarkable range of interests and expertise to the service of the College and its students. Most significant, perhaps, has been her role in the development of our new Media and Film Studies minor, an initiative that stretches back almost fifteen years, and that survived a long and uphill battle, in part, through Joanne’s vision and leadership. Always looking ahead, always pushing the new idea, Joanne has helped to shape the College for its long-term good, even as she has remained a transformative figure for her students.

After completing her BA at Trinity College, Joanne earned her MA and PhD from Michigan State University, where she wrote her dissertation on “Developmental Patterns in Native and Non-Native Reading Acquisition.” This work led to Joanne’s career-long interest in Language Studies, Psycholinguistics, and Second Language Acquisition, as well as a long list of articles and presentations on metacognition in second language reading and writing, literacy as a sociocultural practice, cognitive models in L1 and L2 writing, and interactive approaches to second language reading.

Joanne’s interest in the social and cultural politics of language segued naturally into an interest in media and communication, particularly in a global context. As part of her efforts to launch a program in Media and Film Studies, she received a grant from Skidmore to participate in a “Global Media” seminar at the University of Oslo, and she received a US Department of Education grant to develop a course on Global Media. She’s published on “Global Media and Communication: New Time, New Space, New Social Relationships,” and she and a Skidmore alum presented a paper on “Performing Cybergender” at the Multidisciplinary Conference of the Journal of Arts and Sciences in Aix en Provence, France. Joanne explored these new areas because they interested her, but also because of great student demand for courses in Media Studies.

In fact, Joanne’s research interests have always gone hand-in-hand with her teaching, and with our students’ needs. Over the years, Joanne has offered a wide range of courses, including “Global Media,” “Communications and Media,” “Language, Gender, and Media,” “Sociolinguistics,” “Literacy,” “Psycholinguistics,” “Introductory Language Studies, “Nature of Language,” “Language and Gender,” “Introduction to Media Studies,” “Media and National Identity,” and her ever-popular “Dirty Words.” In addition to her courses in the English department, she has offered courses for both Sociology and Psychology, as well as Liberal Studies and the First-Year Experience. An inspiring force in the classroom, Joanne has been called “fascinating” and “a fantastic educator.” One student described her as “one of the most knowledgeable and inspiring professors I have had at Skidmore,” and another wrote, “Professor Devine is a great professor who really cares about her students.” It’s this sense of care—of real connection to her students as people—that has insured Joanne’s legacy as a teacher.

That legacy exists alongside a more programmatic legacy, for it is in her founding role in the creation of the Media and Film Studies minor that Joanne will have her longest-lasting impact on the College. As Chair of the Communications and Media Studies at Skidmore College Group, which launched almost fifteen years ago, Joanne set in motion a vision that would eventually lead to this moment, when our Media and Film Studies minor is now a fact. From her teaching “Introduction to Media Studies” for the past several years, to her participation in the Project VIZ Steering Committee, to her service (with Tom Lewis) as inaugural co-Director of Media and Film Studies, Joanne has devoted her expertise and countless hours to the creation of this already-vital program, one that has captured student interest in a way that insures long-term success. Knowing that Skidmore College couldn’t remain on the forefront of liberal arts education without a serious commitment to media and film studies, Joanne did the hard work necessary to imagine and implement a rich, interdisciplinary, and forward-thinking program.

Her initiative in this area speaks to her career-long alignment with the values that Skidmore holds dear: putting students first, embracing change, seeking the new. For thirty three years, Joanne has remained a steadfast advocate for our students, insisting that we equip them with the tools they will need for a productive and critical relation with the life to come. She has done so with a wit and a humor that made hard work easier, and that turned difficulty into possibility. She has been a friend to us in challenging times, both hers and ours, and we are much the better for it.

Her colleagues in the English department and across the College thank her for her service, and extend to her our best wishes for all that comes next.

H

ugh Foley's central focus across his entire career has been a deep and fundamental commitment to undergraduate liberal arts education. He is one of those brave souls who gave up tenure elsewhere to come to Skidmore: Hugh was at Union College for nine years before being *lured* to Skidmore in 1993. He quickly became known in Psychology for always, *always* considering undergraduates first and foremost. This apparently also was true at Union, as confidential sources inform us that his colleagues referred to Hugh as a “mensch,” an apt description of this generous colleague who never, or rarely, turns down an opportunity to contribute to the good of the community. An important part of Hugh's community is junior colleagues, who are constant beneficiaries of his generous mentoring.

Hugh’s scholarship centers on how context influences object perception. He tests theories about the finding that humans *see* partial or fragmented objects, but *perceive* them as whole, and later remember them as whole. In other words, we humans *believe* that we see things that we do not see! His interest in this counter-intuitive finding led Hugh to conduct many studies on the effects of occlusion (or partial obstruction) on object memory, including studies on the effects of disguises on face identification. Hugh's expertise in perception is very evident in his textbook, *Sensation & Perception*, now in the 5th edition, which creatively conveys his love of the field, and is a rich resource for undergraduates and faculty far beyond Skidmore.

His devotion to teaching enlivens Hugh's classes on perception, statistics, and experimental methods. Students say things like “he really made the material come alive,” “his love and understanding of the field inspires me,” and even “I look forward to every day…who would have *thought* (from a class like this)?” In addition to sharing the discipline he loves, Hugh, simply put, is *available* to students, reflecting his central priority. The priority on undergraduate teaching also informs Hugh's grant activities. He twice secured funding as a Principle Investigator from the National Science Foundation’s Instrumentation Program, providing equipment for classes and research, and collaborated on three additional grants with Mary Ann Foley under the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates program. The latter grants supported student-faculty collaborative research for five summers, including undergraduates from other institutions. This broad outreach enhanced Skidmore's national reputation, but more importantly to Hugh, created rich opportunities for diverse undergraduates to conduct psychological science at Skidmore, which fortuitously also supported his junior colleagues' research.

In the midst of teaching and research, Hugh served the college in numerous ways, including as the Mellon Fellow for First-Year Students, on the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning, the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee, the Curriculum Committee, Periclean Award, and Porter Scholar committees, as well as the CUPID Committee, a committee whose long-forgotten function supposedly was computer-related.

Hugh has an uncanny ability to create networks and maintain connections, which led to unique and wonderful service. As a matter of course, Hugh mentored students and facilitated post-graduate opportunities, but he also kept track of alumni -- forever! Hugh used his network to single-handedly organize Psychology Alumni Panels for *seven* of the past eleven years, inviting to campus alumni involved in graduate programs, postdocs, and psychology-related work. The panels provided vision and inspiration to generations of Skidmore students. We have relied on Hugh's networking for so long that we are scrambling to find a way to maintain it.

Across more than three decades, as a teacher, mentor, research advisor, and colleague, Hugh Foley's work has converged, with laser focus, on providing the best possible opportunities for liberal arts undergraduates. He has succeeded famously in that goal, and we wish him every happiness in his well-earned, new liberated life.

T

om Lewis joined the Skidmore faculty in 1968. This year marks his forty-seventh year of service to the College. As impressive as that number is, it only hints at the level of love and commitment Tom has demonstrated as scholar, teacher, and citizen. His has been a truly remarkable career, one that speaks not only to Tom’s many virtues, but to Skidmore’s admirable ability to make space for, and to encourage, a scholar whose range of interests and accomplishments defies borders and boundaries.

After completing a BA in English at the University of New Brunswick (Canada), Tom earned his MA and PhD from Columbia University, where he wrote his dissertation on Hart Crane. As impressive as that work surely was, there’s no way it could have predicted what would follow: a series of books and films that range across subjects as various as Virginia Woolf and the interstate highway system, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Shakers.

Tom will soon publish his seventh book, *Washington, DC: A History* (Basic Books, 2015). The title alone tells the story of Tom’s ambition, and of his skills as both a historian and a storyteller. He brought the same expansive imagination to *The Hudson: A History* (Yale, 2005), *Divided Highways: The Interstate Highway System and the Transformation of American Life* (Viking, 1997), and *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio* (Harper Collins, 1991). Reviewing *The Hudson* for the *New York Post*, Robert Richman wrote, "No book I know so beautifully interweaves history, art, writing, and commerce." Kenneth T. Jackson called *Divided Highways* “the best and most important book yet published about how asphalt and concrete have changed the United States.” *Publishers Weekly* called *Empire of the Air* “well-researched and superbly written,” adjectives that describe all of Tom’s work.

But Tom was not content to remain between hard covers. In 1983, he began a long collaboration with filmmaker Ken Burns, serving as Director of Research and scriptwriter for Burns’ Academy-Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge*. Tom also served as scriptwriter, producer, or consultant for subsequent Burns films on the Shakers, the Civil War, baseball, the automobile in America, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Burns adapted two of Tom’s books for the big screen, *Empire of the Air* and *Divided Highways*, the latter earning Tom both a Peabody Award for Broadcasting Excellence and an Emmy Award.

Tom brought an equally promiscuous sensibility to his teaching. From courses on the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad* to the Bloomsbury group; from “Western Literature of the Classical World” to Yeats; from “Fiction and Truth in Biography and Memoir” to “The Living Hudson in Art, Object, and Science,” Tom exposed his students to the best of our traditions, without ever being held captive to those traditions. In addition, he provided a rare resource for those students interested in documentary filmmaking, patiently leading them through the process of conceiving, writing, and ultimately making their own films, many of which were screened at Academic Festival over the years.

Throughout, Tom never lost his touch in the classroom, always challenging, always inspiring, always teaching. A student in his “Introduction to Fiction” called him “one of the most inspiring and brilliant professors that I have ever encountered.” About his “Telling Lives: Telling Lies,” a student wrote, “this class has inspired me and made me think about my life and writing in ways no other class has.”

Tom will be especially remembered for the senior seminar he regularly taught on James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, in which he gave his students a gift that would last them a lifetime. One student called this course “challenging but very rewarding. One of the best courses I have taken at Skidmore.” Another wrote that Tom’s “seminar paper has forced me to work harder in the writing process than I ever have before, and I feel that it will be well worth it.” Several students spoke to the long-term impact this class will have on their lives. As one wrote, “I include *Ulysses* among the many gifts Professor Lewis has given me. I will always remember him and look to him as a model professor and learner.” Another wrote, “It is not a stretch to suggest that this course has altered the way I will look at the world.”

Tom’s care for his students extended beyond the classroom, beyond the curricular. He took an interest in them as individuals; he remained attuned to their struggles and their triumphs. He was always available, inviting his seminar students to his house for last-minute sessions on *Ulysses*, helping them push the mighty rock of the capstone up a forbiddingly steep hill. As one student wrote, “I have never met a teacher so sensitive to the personal struggles of his students, and, in my case, I am extremely grateful to know him as an instructor and a person.”

Such generosity inevitably overflowed the confines of the campus. Tom is, at heart, a civic-minded person, a quality reflected in his holding the Harry F. Quadracci Professor of Social Responsibility Chair from 1999 until 2004. Tom has been a member of the Board of Directors of WAMC since 1996, serving as Chair for six of those years. He was the founding member and President of the Board of Trustees for the University Preservation Hall in Saratoga Springs, helping to give this community a gift that it will enjoy for decades to come.

During all of this, Tom found the time to serve the campus community in ways that are still being felt. His list of departmental and College service is lengthy, his dedication to the day-to-day work of the College legion. But it’s in a collaboration he began some fifteen years ago that his influence will, perhaps, be most lastingly felt. The fact that we’ve recently inaugurated a new minor in Media and Film Studies owes a great deal to Tom’s vision and persistence. Working with Joanne Devine and others, Tom put together a proposal for a minor that has, many years later, launched in most promising fashion, student interest attesting to Tom’s prescient awareness that such a program was a natural fit for the creative interdisciplinarity that has long characterized Skidmore College. Such work was difficult, often frustrating, but Tom never gave up, and the College is the better for it.

When Tom applied for the job at Skidmore, back in 1967, he was recommended by Thomas J. Condon, who taught Tom as an undergraduate at the University of New Brunswick. In Mr. Condon’s letter of recommendation, he writes, simply, “Tom is, in short, the kind of man one would value as a friend and colleague.”

Mr. Condon got it exactly right. As friend, as colleague, Tom has given forty seven years to Skidmore College. He will be especially missed, because he can never be replaced. Those of us carrying forward the work of the College would do well to carry his example with us, in the hope that we might have a tenth of the impact that he has had.

P

atricia Rubio received her degree of “Profesora de Castellano” from the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile and her PhD from University of Alberta, Canada. She came to Skidmore College with her husband, the late Juan Carlos Lértora, who was also a valued member of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Paty started at Skidmore College as a lecturer of Spanish during the fall of 1983. Thirty-two years later, she is finishing her tenure at the college as Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity and one of the most respected members of our community. Some might think that she “made it,” others that she went over to the “dark side”! Either way, what is undeniable is that when she joined the Dean’s office seven years ago, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures lost an inspiring teacher, a respected scholar, and a wonderful colleague and mentor. It is both a pleasure and an honor to celebrate today the career of one of a truly influential colleague.

As a scholar, Paty’s lengthy bibliography testifies to her keen awareness of crucial topics. She is the author and editor of several books and articles regarding some of the most important authors in Spanish-American Literature. Her critical bibliographies of canonical writers like Gabriela Mistral, Alejo Carpentier, and José Donoso are required reference sources for anyone engaged in the serious study of those authors. In an early sign of her future commitments, her interest in promoting female writers made her an important, acknowledged voice of feminist criticism of Chilean literature. But in general, significant contributions like *Gabriela Mistral ante la crítica*, *Carpentier ante la crítica: bibliografía comentada, Bibliografía anotada de José Donoso, Entre mujeres: colaboraciones, influencias e intertextualidades en la literature y el arte latinoamericanos* contributed to a remapping of the literary landscape of Latin-American writers.Being the curious and unstoppable researcher she is, Paty is currently exploring the particularities of the memoire genre in Latin America.

As a teacher, Paty won praise for her generosity, dedication, and the unselfish interest she always showed for her students. When she moved to the Dean’s office we little suspected that her teaching evaluations would be the last in her career, but to look at them now is to see again what a rigorous, caring, and effective teacher she has always been. One of her students wrote a glowing evaluation of Paty’s “Writing in Spanish” class describing every detail of the course and saying about her instructor: “I am, at the same time, terrified and in love with Professor Rubio. She is hilarious, sarcastic, brilliant, witty, and demanding. I learned more Spanish in one semester with her than I ever did in four years of high school.”

But leaving the classroom didn’t mean that Paty abandoned her interest in mentoring, she just redirected it to a different needy constituency: her colleagues! In her role as Associate Dean, Paty has guided many faculty members in a variety of capacities, always with wisdom, and with that special kindness that refuses to sugar coat hard facts. To run into Paty in the hallways of Palamountain Hall means, among many other things, talking about our classes, what we are teaching, and hearing ideas to put in practice. Her colleagues recognize in her voice the sounds of experience, and we listen.

Paty has been always on the vanguard of teaching topics on diversity in our classrooms. For her it was a priority to make our students appreciate Latin America for its uniqueness and not simply through a diminishing, comparative lens. It has been also her core commitment to promote the awareness and understanding of women’s rights in the United States and Latin America. Her work with other Skidmore women in creating and consolidating the Women Studies (today Gender Studies) major is undoubtedly an important part of her legacy.

Paty’s service to the college has been impeccable. She has served one time or another on almost every committee or subcommittee within memory. She served five years as Chair of Foreign Languages and Literatures and is completing her seventh year as Associate Dean. It is undeniable that her leadership has been decisive in many different matters for the college. She is leaving with two major recent accomplishments: she has played an important role in pushing for the formalization of the status of faculty in non-tenure-track ranks and, in the great preoccupation of her late career, she has pushed relentlessly and with demonstrable success to make this college a more diverse learning environment at every level.

Paty leaves Skidmore College a stronger, more vibrant, and diverse institution than the institution she entered thirty-two years ago. The contributions she has made to its transformation have been many and they are lasting ones. She has not been content to imagine a different, stronger Skidmore; she has worked tirelessly and energetically to make it a reality. We wish her well in her retirement, in her beautiful family, and her many friends. We will miss her commitment and strength of character but we will long feel her presence in our common purpose to build and maintain the greatness of the College.

A

fter graduating from Hamilton College with a BA in Mathematics, Pierre von Kaenel worked as a research mathematician for the Department of Defense at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, where he developed computer simulations of missile guidance systems.

Pierre left the Department of Defense after three years and returned to school. Although he had developed a deep interest in computers during his time at the Department of Defense, he chose to study mathematics because “he felt math was more respectable.” He received a PhD in Mathematics from Syracuse University. His dissertation was in Coding Theory, a field that lies at the intersection of Computer Science and Mathematics. His advisor, in fact, was a computer scientist.

After graduating from Syracuse, he joined the faculty at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. After being granted tenure at Omaha, Pierre and his wife Carol (whom he met in third grade) returned to New York, where Pierre finally fulfilled his destiny in becoming a computer scientist by joining the Mathematics and Computer Science department at Skidmore.

At Skidmore, Pierre has been instrumental in creating and sustaining the Computer Science major. He has had an enormous impact on our department. For a long time he managed all of the computers in our lab; he developed and administered our assessment procedures; he developed and maintained the web site for the math placement exam; and he served as department chair from 2005 until 2010.

Although Pierre contributed to our department in numerous ways, his greatest contribution was teaching. The number and breadth of courses he developed from scratch is mind-boggling. PVONK, as he is known to his students, was a master at creating fun and relevant student projects. Pierre is always working on one project or another himself – always learning something new. He even developed his own simulation tool for the students to use in his Computer Organization course.

One alum had this to say about Pierre, “He was so much more than a professor and advisor, he embodied the true spirit of Skidmore where faculty are deeply committed to working with students. Even during non-office hours, his door was open. Beyond the countless hours he spent with me in independent studies and explaining objects and classes, it was the time he helped me translate a French passage that forever endeared Professor von Kaenel to me. I was struggling with a French verse that I needed translated -- it was later in the day and my French professor must have already gone. I remember going to Professor von Kaenel, a little timid yet completely desperate for help. Without hesitation he walked me through the verse as if we were going over code, line by line. I was so thankful then, but reflecting on it as an adult I can only hope that I am that dedicated to someone else’s success.”

Another alum, who has himself gone into teaching, said Pierre's lectures were so clear that “it was like the material was just washing over you.” He went on to say, “The first class I took with Pierre stands to this day as the most enjoyable and challenging class I've taken. I remember on the first day, sitting there a nervous first-semester freshman, as Pierre walked into the room wearing a white lab coat. That was so unusual! And he just took it off, put it on the table, and started teaching class. From that point on, Pierre became a mysterious, yet highly revered character in the minds of his students. We made up fantastic pvonk legends. We always pronounced his email address (synonymous with his name) "pee-vonk", while Pierre would always say "puhvonk". I always liked it when we had Tuesday-Thursday classes, because that gave Pierre the time to really get deep into a problem. It was like we all together went into some sort of trance and came back to earth 80 minutes later. Today, when I get into a crazy spot in the classroom, I often find myself thinking "What would pvonk do?" because he handled chaos with the right balance of contemplation and detachment. I'm still learning from his teaching fifteen years on...”

All of us in Computer Science, students and faculty alike, will be forever indebted to Pierre von Kaenel and we will miss him. Thank you, Pierre, and congratulations.

M

arc-André Wiesmann came to Skidmore College to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures as an Assistant Professor of French in 1993. He arrived with a PhD in Comparative Literature with a specialization in French Renaissance literature from UCLA. Before coming to Skidmore, he taught at Furman University in South Carolina and at Berry College in Georgia.

I am sure we would all agree that Marc-André is one of the most fascinating professors at this college. Even a casual conversation with him reveals his impressive erudition, for Marc-André’s scholarship is distinguished not only by the wide range of periods, writers, and subjects it embraces but also its depth. A case in point is his work on the French Renaissance writer and thinker Michel Montaigne which, by all estimation, stands out as a tour de force. It not only reveals his superb command of his subject matter but also his amazing talent for rendering complex ideas and concepts into a vivid, concrete and readable style.

Aside from his many excellent scholarly contributions and his intellectual engagement with faculty and students across disciplines, Marc-André rendered a selfless and often thankless task to his colleagues in the profession by serving as a reader evaluator or assistant editor for several journals. He has been a regular editor at CELAAN, the journal of the Center For the Study of North African Francophone Literature, and is one of the most respected members of its editorial team. In many respects, Marc-André embodies the figure of the Renaissance man, a true heir to Montaigne, for his versatile, rich, and diverse cultural inquiries. All of us in the department have benefited from his encyclopedic knowledge, and will treasure the often humorous and witty but always-generous spirit in which he has shared his knowledge.

Colleagues across campus admire Marc-André’s erudition and have invariably sought him out for information and advice. Jeff Segrave, for example, has had recourse to Marc-André’s storehouse of information on several topics relating to his own research on sports and the Olympic games. Over the years Marc-André was a regular guest lecturer in several classes, where he gave memorable presentations on *ekphrasis* and similar topics, in particular for the Classical World class. We will miss that extraordinary knowledge and especially the humble joy with which it was offered to us and to our students.

Our students have been fortunate to have Marc-André’s intellect showcased in the classroom. On French literature of any and all periods he is of course a master. But his grasp on a host of topics ranging across many fields with enviable specificity and depth is something to witness. His extraordinary intellect is presented without overpowering his audience because for Marc-André knowledge can only be obtained by conversing, learning about the other person, debating points of view and, above all, by listening. He is curious to hear to what his students and his colleagues have to say so respectful listening has always been part of this makeup. From the basic language course to our most demanding 300-level classes in French, Marc-André has always been a kind instructor who has put students interests before his own. In one of his latest evaluations, a clearly wide-eyed student refers to his experience in Marc-André’s class as “an intellectual trip from which you don’t want to come back. Professor Wiesmann is amazing.”

On the fourth floor of Palamountain Hall, home of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Marc-André’s sense of humor, wittiness, and camaraderie will be missed. Our French section says goodbye this spring to one of our most special members. Our wish for Marc-André is to encounter countless fascinating books to read, interesting people to talk to, and the fulfillment in his many plans for travel and discovery.

S

usan Zappen came to Skidmore College in 1995 as our Head of Technical Services, having had 24 years of professional library experience. After getting her BA in French and MA in Library and Informational Science from the University of Missouri, Columbia, she worked in a variety of positions at University of Wisconsin, University of Detroit, University of Missouri, and University of Michigan, and from 1990 – 1995 at RPI. A mid-Westerner by birth and education, she brought to Skidmore a strong work ethic, an undying commitment to libraries, and that certain wide-eyed optimism and innate kindness that often exist in folks who are deeply rooted in the Midwest. Susan is first and foremost a devoted professional whose personal commitment to service and excellence has defined everything she has done at Scribner Library. She has, over the course of her twenty years at Skidmore, worn several hats and shouldered a vast array of responsibilities, and all of this she has done with skill, intelligence, and amazing grace.

For her first six years at Skidmore, Susan was Head of Technical Services. In this position she helped move her department into the newly-renovated library in 1995. She worked hard to train staff as we changed library systems, always encouraging those who reported to her to embrace new challenges. As Associate College Librarian for Collections, Susan has proved an extraordinary negotiator with publishers big and small. She has a lawyer’s ability to read contracts with an eye for detail that is unmatched. Her memory has allowed her to hold publishers to promises for stable pricing or minimal increases they would prefer to deny. Her clever negotiations with vendors and consortia to get the best pricing for our traditional and electronic resources has enabled us to make a vast array of materials available to our patrons which we might not otherwise have been able to afford.

Susan has joyfully worked at the reference desk every week, done all sorts of outreach and PR work, and given a record number of library tours to any visiting, interested group that comes our way. In this sense, Susan has been our “cheerleader.” She takes pride in our work and our building and is always the first to make sure the rest of the world is informed of our endeavors and accomplishments.

Susan has engaged in liaison work with a variety of departments in her time at Skidmore. This is best exemplified by Mary Ann Foley who says when speaking of Susan’s work with the Psychology Department: “For many years, my days have been enriched by Susan’s presence—by way of her expertise, her close eye on what’s hot off the press in the sciences, her generous response to my calls for help, and her friendship*.* To be sure, she has also brought many gifts to students in my classes and labs. Whether helping fledgling students in my Scribner Seminar realize that they might hone their questions before searching madly, supporting other students in my research methods course as they navigated their way through unfamiliar databases, or bringing relief to thesis students and others in my lab mired in capstone projects, Susan has always gone the extra mile (and then some) for all of us.  In the process, she has encouraged students to stretch intellectually while providing a model for engaged, collaborative learning at its best. Although Susan’s contributions along these lines may have been less visible to many in the community, they were no less enriching or magnanimous for students and this faculty member alike.”

Susan’s research has been a perfect reflection of her daily work and professional preoccupations. It demonstrates her pragmatic approach to many of the critical issues facing us in academic libraries, from the terrifying price increases of our serials to the importance of consortial agreements. Her presentations are wonderful examples of Susan’s direct style and lively wit. Her articles are lucid, concise, and thoroughly informative about the evolving world of serials and the economic pressure on academic libraries. It is clear that the participants at the Charleston Conference, the preeminent professional meeting focused on collection development, depend on her annual presentation. As Katrina Strauch, the Charleston conference founder asserts: “Her astute comments regarding the organization and analysis of library collections have helped all of us to be more effective collection developers.”

Susan has also been very involved in local professional organizations, including Eastern New York Association of College & Research Libraries. She he has served in almost every conceivable capacity, including Treasurer for six years, President 2008 - 2009; and in 2006 she received their *Librarian of the Year Award*. Susan’s involvement with the Capital District Library Council has also been longstanding and highly valued. She has served on several committees and since 2009 has been on their Board of Trustees. As Jean Sheviak, the former Executive Director attests: “One of the best things CDLC did during the time I was Executive Director was to invite [Susan] to be a member of the Board of Trustees.”

Nationally, Susan’s service on several Advisory councils and boards from such disparate entities as the Institute of Physics to the Haworth Press is further evidence of how respected her pragmatic and strategic thinking has been to the profession. She has also worked closely with the Center for Research Libraries as both the Voting Representative and on the Human Resources and Compensation Committee. Bernie Reilly, CRL President, has commented: “We at CRL are very, very grateful to [Susan] for the knowledge and sound judgment born of experience that [she] brought to the work of the Human Resources and Compensation Committee. “

On the home front, Susan has served on many library and campus wide committees and advisory and working groups. Over the years, she has done mini-colleges, attended more events than most of the library faculty combined, and has been an absolute devotee of music, lectures, and miscellaneous events on this campus. For Susan, these have not been obligations but opportunities. As one of her colleagues notes in a letter written for her promotion: “My impression of Susan is that she is prouder and happier to be a member of the Skidmore community, and the library in particular, than anyone else I know.” This attitude prevails in all that Susan does and is part of what made her such a joy to have as a colleague. She combines the best qualities of librarianship with a profound sense of service to the community, a generous heart, an admirable intelligence along with a passion for opera, ball room dancing, chocolate, and champagne.