

# Retirement from the Skidmore College Faculty

Spring 2019



Faculty Meeting  
April the Twenty-Sixth  
Two Thousand and Nineteen

## 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 26, 2019, in recognition and celebration of the retirees' distinguished service and achievement.



**A**rtist, scholar, writer, teacher, mentor, friend, Carolyn Anderson is taking her final curtain call after four decades of faithful service to her students, her colleagues, and her art. Armed with a BA in Theater and English from Middle Tennessee State University and an MA in Theater from the University of Illinois, Carolyn arrived at Skidmore in 1978 after having spent ten years teaching and directing at Emma Willard in Troy, New York. The William R. Kenan Professor of the Liberal Arts, the 2002 winner of the Ralph A. Ciancio Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the 1989 Edward M. Moseley Lecturer, Carolyn has distinguished herself in the classroom and in the studio, in the archives and on the stage. She is, in short, the very exemplar of creative thought.

In a career at Skidmore that has spanned over 40 years, Carolyn has put more than 25 plays on the Skidmore stage, including the classical (*The Burial at Thebes*, Seamus Heaney's translation of *Antigone*) and the re-imagining of the classical (Sarah Ruhl's *Euridyce* and Charles L. Mee's *Big Love*), the dramatic (Bertolt Brecht's *The Life of Galileo*) and the lyrical (Dylan Thomas's *Under the Milk Wood*), the dark play (*Beckettshorts*, a collection of short plays by Samuel Beckett) and the dark musical (Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*).

With designer and artistic partner-in-crime Garrett Wilson, Carolyn has also devised and produced several site-specific pieces for the Tang Museum, including her most recent work, *Off the Shelf*. Other devised works, many of which focus on the themes of human dignity, social welfare, and environmental awareness, have been performed in venues across the country, including the Actor's Alley Repertory Theater in Los Angeles, The Arizona State Theatre's Cabaret Theatre, the Theatre of the First Amendment at George Mason University, and The Women's Project in New York.

The hallmark of Carolyn's professional career, however, has been collaboration. Be it working with Debra Fernandez of the Dance Department, who composed the music for Carolyn's production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, or Anne Turner of the Music Department, who co-directed a production of three short operas (Tom Johnson's *Four Note Opera*, Samuel Barab's *The Game of Chance*, and Gian-Carlo Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief*), or

Will Bond, who co-directed the beautifully lyric production of Federico García Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, Carolyn has distinguished herself as a gifted and generous artist, who both recognizes the talent of others and understands how to use those talents to further the artistic process.

Perhaps Carolyn's most important collaborator, however, was Wilma Hall from Skidmore's own American Studies Department. Together Carolyn and Wilma brought to life *Faces: A Living Newspaper on AIDS*, a ten-year labor of love created in the style of the living newspaper from the 1930's Federal Theater Project. Produced in theaters across the country, including here at Skidmore in a production directed by Alma Becker, and the subject of a documentary produced by PBS / WMHT, *Faces* told the true stories of people living with HIV to an estimated 50,000 people across the country.

As a teacher Carolyn brings to the classroom the intellect of the scholar, the insight of the artist, and the discipline of the pedagogue. In classes as diverse as Directing, Site-Specific Theater, Street Theater, Women in American Theater, and LGBTQ Voices on Stage, Carolyn has introduced generations of students to new ways of seeing. "This is an important class," says one student, "one that has both inspired me and given me the tools to make a difference in the world." Since brevity is the soul of wit, no more need be said about the influence Carolyn has had on her students.

Those of us who have had the privilege of working with Carolyn over the years may have the impression that we know her well. And we may very well be wrong, for it turns out that Carolyn has some hidden talents. Some of us may be surprised to learn, for example, that Carolyn once owned a vineyard in the Finger Lakes. She is by training and by temperament a grower, who has tended her vines with the same loving hand that she has tended her students and her colleagues, coaxing the best out of the young—and the not so young—spirits in her care. So it is only fitting that we, the fruits of her labor, now stand and raise a glass to her as she takes her final bow. It has been a great show.

**W**ill Bond, Senior Artist-in-Residence, exits the Skidmore stage after 15 years teaching, performing, coaching, and creating at the College. Will earned an AB in English from Albright College and an MFA from the University of Pittsburgh. A member of Actors Equity, Will is a master teacher in the Suzuki Method of Actor Training, a rigorous physical and vocal discipline designed to develop the perceptive abilities and powers of the body that serve as the ground for theatrical expression.

A founding member of the SITI Company, whose Artistic Director, Anne Bogart, received an honorary degree from Skidmore in 2011, Will has toured nationally and internationally to critical acclaim, appearing in venues from Maastricht to Melbourne and from Singapore to Saratoga in roles as far-reaching as John Cage in *Chess Match # 5*, Marshall McLuhan in *The Medium*, Duncan / MacDuff in *Radio Macbeth*, and William in *Orestes*. The critic Attilio Favorini, for example, praised Will for the “intense energy and relentless concentration” with which he played Marshall McLuhan, while Les Gutman gushed that Will’s portrait of a farmer whose wife has died too young in Johannes von Saaz’s *Death and the Ploughman* “is extraordinarily effective. The brilliance of von Saaz’s choice of character is underscored by the humanity evident in Bond’s portrayal: an unsophisticated man voicing common sense and human nature rather than intellectual argument.” In 1999 Will also received the acclaim of his colleagues, garnering a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Solo Performance for *Bob*. Will’s impressive artistic range also extends into the world of dance, whereas author and collaborator he has created numerous original works informed by an interdisciplinary approach to artistic production, including *Floating Worlds*, a dance created in response to the artwork of Japanese woodcut artist Ukiyo-E Sin Hanga and *The Perfect Human V2.0*, a dance-theater duet created in collaboration with dancer and videographer Marianne M. Kim.

As a teacher Will brings the Suzuki Method into the studio, where, as one student puts it, “Will takes his students on a path of discovery,” as they learn to connect both to [their] surroundings and to [their] bodies.” He has also taught advanced courses in acting, including “Practicing Stanislavski” and a special studies course in which students develop an

original 20-minute solo-performance piece based on the life of a single individual. A thinker as well as an artist, Will has also devised an innovative Scribner Seminar called “Digital Acting,” which asks students to consider acting as a discipline at the intersection of the arts, the humanities and the sciences.

Theater is a collaborative art form; and it has been that spirit of collaboration that has defined Will’s tenure at the College. Will instinctively extends himself to others, bringing his talents to such places as Debra Fernandez’s dance studio and to the Center for Humanistic Inquiry’s Symposium on metamorphosis, adapting sections of Ovid’s poem of the same name for the contemporary audience. But Will also allows others to extend themselves to him. Nowhere is this more evident than in his work with Carolyn Anderson to bring Federico García Lorca’s haunting *Blood Wedding* to the stage, a project Will would never have undertaken on his own. “Carolyn thought to take me under her wing and make me a director,” writes Will, grateful to have had the chance to work so closely with “a compassionate and inspiring mentor and a beautiful friend.”

It is his students, however, who have proved to be Will’s most important muses, for it is they who have inspired him to be a better teacher in the studio and a better person in the world. Standing with his students on The Green either in protest or remembrance is where Will has felt himself his best person, for, he says, it is in those moments when “the ideals of the College-- those of compassion, empathy, and human dignity--are at their best and highest.” These are the insightful words of the consummate artist, words that beautifully capture the “humanity evident” in Will’s art and in his soul.

**S**arah Webster Goodwin graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in 1975 with degrees in English and French, and received a doctorate in comparative literature from Brown University in 1983, after also studying for one year at the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and for two years in Freiburg, Germany. She came to Skidmore in 1983, and from the beginning received praised for her vibrant, generous involvement in the community: for the range and “high seriousness” of her courses, for the theoretical sophistication of her scholarship, for her

“supernumerary contributions” to department and college life. “Supernumerary” is the sort of word you can imagine Sarah herself using, perhaps in a class on literature and the law, or on the “apocalyptic” visionary William Blake—classes that students have described as rearranging their very brain patterns with the sheer force of learning and leaving them awash in the sensation of feeling “smarter and more confused at the same time.” Other words recur in Sarah’s teaching evaluations and personnel letters of support over the years, words like *energy*, *vitality*, *exemplary*, and *forthright*, which define Sarah’s courageous devotion to dialogue as well as her model of service; and also *companionship*, because none of that intellectual work matters without the solace, the bedrock, of friendship.

To give a full account of Sarah’s activities and enterprises in her 36 years at Skidmore would in itself exhaust this citation’s maximum word count. Early in her career here, Sarah was co-coordinator of Women’s Studies and a member of the Admissions Committee. She was a founding member, with Terry Diggory, of a monthly faculty theory discussion group, which many of her colleagues credited with reinvigorating their teaching. She served as Chair of the English Department for five years, as Associate Dean of the Faculty for four years, and as acting Dean in the summer of 2006. She was the Inaugural London Program director in fall of 2001. In a single three-year period, she served on two department search committees, served twice as Coordinator of Human Dilemmas, participated in several grant and fellowship initiatives related to Intergroup Relations and the recruitment of students of color, coordinated “Leave Your Car at Home” week, and served on the committee to review the Offices of the Registrar *and* Institutional Research. She has been a Teagle Scholar, held the Kenan Professor of Liberal Arts endowed chair for five years, twice received a Skidmore College President’s Award, and co-created a Tang Museum webinar segment. She’s been on the English Department Personnel Committee and Curriculum Committee; on CEPP and the Diversity Task Force. She’s been on MLA committees and three different Middle States Reaccreditation teams and interviewed college presidents at town hall meetings. And of course, she was our indefatigable Assessment Coordinator for a decade.

In recent years, Sarah has turned her writerly energies to matters of both assessment and intragroup dialogue. A paper called “Fearful Symmetries: Rubrics and

Assessment” (because Sarah will always be a Blakean at heart) was described in 2010 by then-VP for Academic Affairs Susan Kress as “one of the smartest, most nuanced, and most engaging essays” she had ever read. A specialist in British and European Romanticism, Sarah also spent many years teaching and writing about such literary luminaries as Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Flaubert, and Edgar Allan Poe; about female vocality and utopianism and the trope of the dance of death; about wills and testaments, ballerinas, kitsch, and new historicism. You could say that Sarah is “interested in many things,” as one of her colleagues once laconically wrote, “marvelously appreciative of many subjects,” a true comparatist; another put it more boldly, citing an “intellectual activism” that galvanized the department to stay on their toes. It’s that restless curiosity that has brought Sarah most lately to sugar, the subject of Research Colloquium and Humanistic Inquiry Symposium talks, of a work-in-progress on the Charlotte Brontë novel *Villette*, and of the exhilarating Tang show “Like Sugar,” an exhibit that perfectly coalesces Sarah’s interest in history, her fluency in both text and image, and her abiding commitment to social justice.

But as impressive as all of this is, as admiring as we must be of the accolades rightly bestowed upon this distinguished academic, none of it fully captures what it means to have Sarah as a colleague, what Sarah brings to the work we do—what she *means* to us. A typical email from Sarah goes something like this: *I’m in meetings all day; I’m traveling this week; I’m up to my ears in Middle States. What can I do to help?* For she is always at the ready. She has that broad institutional savvy that keeps us alert to consequences. She will press us to ask another question before we rush to conclude, to probe more diligently the implications of our choices. She is a rigorous and principled thinker. She has integrity. She embodies the good humor of disagreement and reminds us of the growth that happens when we re-examine the familiar in light of what is new. She is awed by the possibilities of imagination and wonder, conveying a sense, in the words of a colleague, “of genuinely delighting in every interchange.” She is quick to laugh, a fantastic cook, the consummate host of a party.

The late Phyllis Roth wrote to Sarah thirty years ago that “One hears occasionally in relation to a colleague of a ‘presence’ that the person has established in a community. This is most certainly the case with you.” Phyllis herself had such a presence, and there have

been others on campus in the intervening years, colleagues with distinctive ways of shaping and directing the nature of our collective. Colleagues with ... *vitality*, to invoke that quality so uniquely Sarah's, whose unflinching enthusiasm for the tasks at hand is vital to their success. We'll be poorer for the loss of Sarah's particular presence, her determination and spirit, but we know that wherever the wind takes her—that's not just a metaphor, by the way: Sarah's become a fierce windsurfer—she holds infinity in the palm of her hand.

**I**n 2012, when Holley Hodgins began her term as Chair of Psychology, she faced a dizzying array of challenges. She was tasked with implementing a newly approved departmental curriculum at a time when the department faced a shortage of faculty due to retirements and other departures. Consequently, she oversaw the hiring of seven Assistant Professors in four years. Shortly thereafter, department faculty started having children - lots of them. In fact, during her term, seven-plus-or-minus-two psychology babies were born (we lost count after a while). Staffing courses became a Herculean task, and Holley scrambled to hire enough visiting faculty to plug the holes. Any one of these challenges, in isolation, would have raised the blood pressure of the most seasoned Chair (and perhaps sent her/him running toward the exit). Yet Holley rose to the challenge and masterfully guided the department during this time of enormous transition and transformation. By the time she finished her term, the Psychology department was stronger and more vibrant than ever. Moreover, she has been an incredibly generous mentor to her successor.

Holley's journey from first-generation college student to Professor and Chair of Psychology at Skidmore has been remarkable. She obtained a B.S. in nursing from Wesleyan College and worked as a registered nurse for seven years. Psychology became her passion when she enrolled in a general experimental psychology master's program at St. Bonaventure University. In 1992, after obtaining a PhD in social psychology from the University of Rochester, Holley joined the Skidmore faculty.

Holley's arrival at Skidmore helped to usher in a new era of scholarly productivity in the Psychology department. Her research was theoretically based, programmatic, and experimentally rigorous. She

relished the intellectual challenge of designing experiments and analyzing data in order to advance scientific knowledge about social cognition and motivation. In 1999, she was among a select group of researchers invited to attend the first conference on Self-Determination Theory in Rochester, NY. At the conference, she presented an innovative theory to explain how different types of motivation impact defensiveness. Her theory and the motivation priming task she subsequently developed were widely cited and utilized by other researchers. More recently, inspired by her own meditation practice, Holley studied how meditation impacts visual attention processing. She also explored the cognitive processes underlying the human tendency to divide people into the categories of "us" and "them."

Holley presented her work at national and international conferences and published in the most prestigious journals in her field. She received a large individual research grant from the National Science Foundation, which was an impressive accomplishment for a psychologist working at a small liberal arts school that did not yet have a full-time Director of Sponsored Research. Holley used her grant funds to support students to work in her lab for four summers. Holley's dedication to mentoring students in research throughout her career has been exemplary and she has always been deeply grateful for the contributions that they made to her research. Impressively, many of Holley's articles and conference presentations were coauthored by her students. Holley also helped Skidmore obtain and implement another large National Science Foundation grant, which was focused on supporting women in STEM fields at liberal arts colleges.

As an instructor, Holley offered a wide range of courses and significantly expanded departmental course offerings. She was not afraid to take risks in the classroom. For her Social Psychology course, she created an innovative lab component. When developing a course on Sleep and Dreams, she collaborated with the Neuroscience program to create a makeshift sleep lab, complete with EEG equipment and comfortable mattresses. Instead of shifting into automatic pilot mode as she approached retirement, Holley developed three new courses including a Scribner Seminar for the London program, a course on mindfulness and attention, and a course exploring theories of consciousness and unconsciousness. Students routinely emphasized how much they learned

in her courses. They appreciated her passion and knowledge of the subject matter, her creative assignments, and her skill at facilitating meaningful classroom discussions.

The College, the community, and the psychology profession benefited from Holley's generous service in a variety of ways. She chaired the Institutional Review Board and the now defunct Benefits Committee. She served on CAFR twice, and CEPP once. She advised countless MALS and UWW students. For 20 years, people at Skidmore knew her as the organizer of the local Red Cross blood drives. She led community members in Zen meditation to help calm our nerves and clear our minds. She served on the editorial boards for several journals and reviewed research proposals for the National Science Foundation.

For the past 27 years, Holley has been a pillar of the Psychology department and she will be missed. Her colleagues have appreciated her generosity as a mentor, her intellectual curiosity, her willingness to provide her honest opinion, and her courage to make difficult decisions when they were necessary. Fortunately, retirement will give her more time to devote to her children and granddaughter, her many hobbies, and her varied intellectual interests. We wish Holley nothing but happiness and meaningful experiences as she begins this exciting new chapter in her life.

**W**e have had ample time to prepare for this moment since Penny announced her intention to begin phased retirement. Yet many of us may feel unequal to the charge of commemorating what one of her students calls "the institution of Penny."

Penny discovered art history as an undergraduate at Oberlin College, graduating with high honors and Phi Beta Kappa membership. Proceeding directly to the University of Pennsylvania, she completed M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and cultivated an interest in the arts of the middle ages and northern European renaissance—undervalued subjects in a discipline that, in those days, favored the classical world and its revivals. When Assistant Professor Jolly arrived at Skidmore in the fall of 1976, the fact that she was eight months pregnant elicited no comment from colleagues and the College had no provisions for parental leave or child care. She

gave birth after her last class on a Friday and resumed teaching the following Monday. Taken together, these elements of her early career signal qualities that have long shaped her professional journey: steadfast commitment, the ability to see things from new perspectives, and resilience in the face of challenges.

Penny developed as an art historian during a time of profound shifts in the discipline. In addition to her embrace of medieval and northern renaissance styles, she participated in our field's transformative engagement with feminist theory and the more recent emergence of dress history as an area of rigorous inquiry. Her scholarship explores how images encode ideas about bodies and gender, marriage and childbearing, power and faith. This entails extensive interdisciplinary study, travel to museums and monuments across Europe, and an inclusive approach to many types of material objects as active agents in the production of social meaning. In recognition of her expansive and impactful work, Penny held the William R. Kenan Chair of Liberal Arts from 2001 to 2007.

For over forty years, Penny's courses covered thirteen centuries of visual culture in the west, with occasional forays into even earlier or later periods. She taught surveys of key phases in the history of late antique, medieval, and renaissance art as well as specialized courses on topics related to gender, fashion, domestic interiors, and illustrated books. She also co-directed two iterations of the First-Year Experience program in London.

Penny's students learn to look closely at artworks, to interpret sophisticated forms of symbolism, and to discern the historically and culturally specific concerns of patrons, artists, and viewers. As one student notes, they learn "to savor every detail in a painting and to question what exactly it might mean." Another reports: "I have been told to back away from paintings in various galleries across Europe, and it's all her fault." Some describe veritable conversion experiences. A current senior recalls an enrollment decision intended "to rule out once and for all my interest in actually learning about art history." Her skepticism gave way to a declaration of the major, a senior thesis on witchcraft imagery, and the first step of a career in the museum world. A nine-year-old boy once accompanied a parent to one of Penny's public lectures, became entranced by her approach to decoding pictorial cues, announced that he was going

to become an art historian, and ended up doing just that.

And then there is the long list of publications, including articles in major journals and two monographs: *Made in God's Image? Eve and Adam in the Genesis Mosaics at San Marco, Venice* (1997) and *Picturing the 'Pregnant' Magdalene in Northern Art, 1430-1550: Addressing and Undressing the Sinner-Saint* (2014). The rhetorical question, inverted commas, and wordplay in these titles say much about Penny's investment in questioning assumptions, searching for patterns, and choosing language carefully. A longstanding interest took a distinctively Skidmorean turn in 2004 when she organized the exhibition *Hair: Untangling a Social History* at the relatively new Tang Teaching Museum. With its dazzling variety of objects and a catalogue of essays by faculty members in different disciplines, the project was, as one admirer remembers, "so adventurous and so thrilling...a paradigm of the faculty-curated show."

Penny has shared her research through conference papers and invited lectures at numerous scholarly venues from Kalamazoo, Michigan to Antwerp, Belgium. She also has reached broader audiences through the Art History Lecture series, the Skidmore Encore program for adult learners, and numerous alumni events. She addresses all listeners with equal enthusiasm and interpretative care, regardless of whether the task is to explicate the iconography of Mary Magdalene in a keynote address at the Warburg Institute in London, a renowned center for the study of art history, or to pose the question "Why is Medieval Art So Flat?" to group of Family Weekend visitors. Her capacity for compelling explanation is such that one fan, when asked how she wanted to celebrate a milestone birthday, requested a day at a museum with Penny.

A colleague observes that Penny's service record "reminds us of the goals and values we share." She played a key role in the growth of Art History from a program within the Art Department to a flourishing independent entity. She provided curricular contributions and leadership during formative periods for the Classical Studies Program (precursor to the Classics Department) and for the Women's Studies Program (now Gender Studies). She participated in the creation of the Liberal Studies curriculum during the mid-1980s and helped to sustain it for many years. She served on the Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct

Panel; the Faculty Advisory Board; the Tenure Review Board; the Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights; the Committee on Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure; the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning; and the Curriculum Committee. Her CV teems with acronyms.

When asked to describe Penny, students and colleagues mention her intellect and high standards, her passion and dedication, her generosity as a mentor and friend. They say things like "the epitome of professionalism," "always a good example of how to do something," and "her mind never really stops." These qualities are perhaps best summarized by fact that Penny has been awarded the Edwin M. Moseley Faculty Lectureship (2002), the Ralph A. Ciancio Award for Excellence in Teaching (2006), and the Phyllis A. Roth Faculty Distinguished Service Award (2018). This Skidmore trifecta epitomizes our cherished ideal of the seamlessly integrated teacher-scholar-citizen.

In conclusion, and quoting another colleague, "Penny's contributions to the development and maturation of the College are too many to count. But perhaps her greatest present to us was her faith that we, as a faculty, are capable of something extraordinary." She is certainly leaving Skidmore far better than she found it, and many of our achievements bear traces of her presence. Let us celebrate Penny's many gifts, thank her for all that she has given us, and wish her delight in her ongoing adventures as a thinker, traveler, and avid observer.

**F**or thirty-seven years, Doretta Miller's characteristic warmth, cheerfulness, and enthusiasm have graced the Department of Art. A devoted teacher, leader, and thoughtful colleague, her energy, attention to detail, and delightful sense of humor are legendary.

A native of Chicago, and long-time summer resident of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, Doretta arrived on campus in the fall of 1982 to assume the position of the Director of Art Education in the Department of Art and Art History. Her undergraduate degree is from Ripon College, and she had recently completed a Doctor of Education degree followed by a Master of Fine Arts degree from Northern Illinois University—exemplifying her strong belief in the model of the



Artist Teacher. She quickly established herself as a strong teacher and mentor. She served as Director of Art Education from 1982 to 1999—a period of significant growth and change at Skidmore. She developed the Art Education program into a rigorous curriculum that required students to complete a BS degree in Art Education, satisfying all requirements in studio art as well as teacher certification in Art Education. Across nearly two decades, she effectively launched strong artist/teachers into public and private schools, creating a wonderful ripple effect as these enthusiastic new teachers introduced the creative process to young learners.

While serving as Director of Art Education, Doretta was active in her field, making presentations at numerous professional conferences, including the National Art Education Association Convention, the National College Art Association Conference, and the Art and Science Conference at the Cooper Union School for the Advancement of Science and Art. Her interest in innovation was integral to her research, as exemplified by her 1985 presentation ‘Electronic Sketchpads in Foundation Level Courses’ at Skidmore’s *College Artists and the Computer Symposium*.

Doretta’s impact as a teacher extends to courses in the Drawing and Painting area in Studio Art, where she focused on Color Theory and Foundational Principles of Drawing and Design, as well as introductory and intermediate level Oil Painting courses. Doretta’s Color course has long been a favorite of Majors and Non-Majors alike, who comment that she is a perceptive observer, a careful listener, and a clear, effective critiquer. They praise her as an accepting and patient professor who always finds a way to bring out the best in her students. For her commitment to teaching and to her own creative practice, Doretta was awarded the Robert Davidson Chair in Art in 2004.

Doretta has always maintained an active studio practice, and her paintings and drawings are a visual treasure trove for viewers to explore. She draws inspiration directly from her lived experiences, designing series of paintings that capture her experiences in China, Italy, the heart of Saratoga Springs, and most recently, at Skidmore College itself. Her delicately detailed gouache paintings not only capture essential elements of place, they juxtapose comparisons that enliven the experience of ‘reading’ the paintings. It is not hard to imagine a

twinkle in her eye as she plans an alignment of elements to elicit a knowing smile or an outright belly laugh. Her series “Garden Stories” - meticulously layered oil paintings of gardens populated with miniature figurines - rewards the viewer who takes the time to read the many associations the paintings weave. From fire engines hastily assembled at the scene of red hot pepper plants to spacemen tenuously exploring an unreal garden environment while the planet earth hangs precariously in the background, we in turn smile in wonder and take heed of a gentle warning as we navigate these compelling visual narratives.

Doretta also turned her attention to art history and material culture, creating sophisticated portraits of chairs—pairing objects and paintings to gently reinforce each other’s personality and mood. Engagingly relevant to the art world, her painting titled “Portrait of Chair with Hibiscus and Andy Warhol’s ‘Flowers (1964)’,” was selected for a purchase prize in the 2015 Artists of the Mohawk Hudson Region Juried Exhibition. A notable commission is the official portrait painting of Honorable Judge Evan J. Wallach for his service at the U.S. Court of International Trade in New York City, before his appointment to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. She also has recently been honored by curator Jonathan Canning’s selection of one of her colored pencil drawings for inclusion in the exhibition “Women Modernists: Selections from the Permanent Collection,” at The Hyde Collection—an exhibition celebrating women artists who break with traditions of the past to embrace abstraction and experimentation.

Given her love of teaching, it is no surprise that Doretta was the first studio faculty member in the department to develop a Scribner Seminar—called “The Painter’s Canon”—and that she served as a Faculty Mentor for Service Learning Internships, Educational Leadership Corps, and a wide variety of Independent Study Students. She was a Faculty Advisor for Skidmore’s University Without Walls students, and Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (known as MALS) students.

Doretta actively engaged in other challenging teaching assignments as well, serving as Visiting Professor of Western-Style Oil Painting at Qufu Teachers University in the People’s Republic of China, as well as Visiting Professor at Studio Art Center International in Italy. As an extension of her teaching experience at Qufu Teachers University, Doretta curated two special

exhibitions, “Beijing Now: Oil Paintings by Twelve Chinese Artists” (2008), at First Street Gallery in New York and as faculty curator for “Brushing the Present: Contemporary Academy Painting from China” (2003), at the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. The Tang exhibition brought 35 paintings by 27 Chinese artists to campus, following Doretta’s return trip to China for studio visits and artists’ interviews.

A discussion of Doretta’s professional work would not be complete without mentioning her role as a team member at the accrediting body the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. Beginning in 1992, Doretta chaired the steering committee for writing the departmental ten-year review at Skidmore, and also traveled extensively to review other member schools across the country. Over many years, Doretta has provided valuable assessments to safeguard the quality of numerous Art and Design programs.

From 1991 to 1998, Doretta served as chair of the large and complex Department of Art and Art History. In this role, using her great strengths as a mentor, Doretta nurtured several faculty members. Her impulse to encourage, support, and develop the members of the department unified the department. Her insightful planning and careful attention to detail kept the department functioning smoothly. Her love of research and long-time interest in history has enabled her to preserve a rich department historical archive. To this day, she remains a trusted voice of reason in the department meetings and a wonderful resource to the department.

Doretta’s mighty influence for good in the department will be sorely missed. She has quietly and consistently done an exceptional job with everything that she has been assigned and has fortified the department through her clear-eyed assessment that the future looks bright. We happily look forward to seeing you at openings and lectures, and we offer our support to you as you embrace future adventures.

“**T**wo PhDs--what sort of lunatic does that?” So writes emeritus professor Tom Denny about our dear colleague Debby Rohr, who has taught with distinction in the Skidmore Music Department for 26 years. Although one would stop short of questioning Debby’s sanity,

those words do point to two of her remarkable characteristics: her astounding and broad intellect, and her inclination to do things a little differently. Those PhDs by this graduate of humble Bennington College--the one in History from the University of Pennsylvania, and the next in Music Theory from the Eastman School of Music--represent venerable but often opposed and scarcely reconciled approaches within the academic study of music. Her command of both of those disciplinary poles has positioned her as a uniquely valuable teacher, thinker, and colleague. Her first dissertation ultimately developed into a book, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), a rigorous piece of social history that made a significant impact on both sides of the Atlantic. Her second dissertation, “Brahms’ Metrical Dramas: Rhythm, Text Expression, and Form in the Solo Lieder” attacked that all-important but largely elusive goal of music scholars: uncovering the connections between musical structure and musical meaning. It also heralded a teaching career centered squarely on theory and analysis, a subdiscipline that has traditionally been unwelcoming to women scholars.

Such a super-human intellect, alas, doesn’t always bode well for a teaching career. But in Debby’s case, teaching was always an unparalleled passion, and her pedagogical skills and devotion were legendary. Debby designed and taught all levels of music theory, including an innovative four-semester historically informed sequence concerning theory and style. She also taught general education courses and advanced seminars on topics ranging from the sociology of music, to tonal counterpoint, to women and music, to musical form, to music of the Middle Ages, to Romanticism. Faculty recalled that one could always count on her former students to be the best prepared among the students in any class. Alumni remember Debby with striking consistency, again and again celebrating three things: her intelligence, her dedication to students, and her humane, generous heart. (And speaking of her heart, another admirable and profoundly defining aspect of Debby is as devoted mother to her wonderful Patty, to whom she has dedicated untold time, energy, and love.)

For all her commitment to such sophisticated, technical matters as late-19th-century metrical displacement or the finer points of the *nota cambiata*, and as brilliant a pianist as Debby reportedly was, Debby’s pedagogy is ultimately grounded in old-fashioned academic

priorities--thinking, reading, writing--and as such she epitomizes the very best of the liberal-arts tradition. Former Music Chair and Dean of the Faculty Chuck Joseph writes, "Precise and rigorous, Debby demanded that her students think and write clearly. No matter the course topic, those who entered her classroom left with a solid foundation as well as a freshly expanded horizon. Her exacting knowledge not only of the internal mechanics of music, but of the art of music within the broader context of the liberal arts was impressive." Concerning her abilities as editor and writing coach, one student marveled, "She could always take one of my five-minute rants and turn it into one brief sentence that perfectly summed up everything I felt. It was like magic."

As a colleague, Debby is truly a gift. Her thinking--always penetrating and imaginative--takes shape with impeccable eloquence and grace in her speaking just as in her writing. And so a conversation with Debby is an inevitable joy, whether the conversation concerns pedagogical theory, enharmonic modulation, institutional history, or sundry matters both more and less weighty, and whether personal or professional. As charming and generous as Debby is, she also possesses a finely tuned "BS meter" and a refreshing commitment to reality and to sensibility, sometimes in the face of professorial arrogance. Her manner of confronting a colleague's folly--with blithe bemusement, a gentle smile, and an elegantly understated retort--is priceless. It is a testament that we, having gotten used to her absence these last two years still find ourselves in bitter mourning at the loss that her retirement represents. Her wisdom, her strength, her good humor, her generosity, her keen intellect, will be missed by colleagues and students alike.

One student fondly remembers an aphorism that Debby offered in Senior Seminar: "The music never ends in your life." May that be so for you too, Debby, as we now send you off into your retirement with all our love, admiration, appreciation, and best wishes.

**A**ldo Vacs began his education at the National University of Cuyo in Argentina, studying political sociology. He served as president of the school senate and held a position on the electoral board. In 1976 the military dictatorship expelled anyone at the university who was involved in politics. Aldo once recalled, "It was not a good time in Argentina. People

were disappearing." And, so, Aldo fled to Brazil, which was undergoing democratization, and began studying political science at the University of San Paulo. Following graduation Aldo worked at the United Nations in Chile. He spent two years researching political economy and economic planning before deciding to pursue a doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh. He was particularly interested in the role that the Soviet Union played in the relations between the United States and Latin American governments. Aldo's first book, *Discreet Partners: Argentina and the USSR since 1917*, was published in 1984 in both English and Spanish even before he earned his degree.

Eventually, the political circumstances in Argentina improved and in 1985 the students, who had been expelled, were invited to return to take their exams. Although Aldo was on the verge of earning his doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh, he took his two final exams as an undergraduate and earned his degree in political sociology. A year later he accepted a position at Skidmore College.

Aldo began teaching at Skidmore in 1986. He has offered a range of courses in international relations, political economy, globalization, and, of course, Latin American politics. Students have described Aldo as "very affable" "warm", "friendly," and "extremely agreeable." With his characteristic good cheer and instinct to expand the mind, Aldo explained that "Had I not been pushed out of [Argentina], then I wouldn't have thought about living in all of the countries that I have lived in. It forced me to become more Latin American than Argentinian." Aldo's breadth and depth of knowledge is also appreciated by students. "Professor Vacs is not only one of the nicest professors I have ever had, he is also one of the smartest." Students consistently emphasize Aldo's "insightfulness," "deep knowledge", and "mastery of the smallest details." They recognize Aldo's gift of explaining complex theories, politics, and economics in a manner tailored to the knowledge and experience of particular students.

Throughout his time at Skidmore, Aldo has maintained a vibrant research agenda. He has written scores of book chapters, articles, and opinion pieces. Aldo's talents as both a scholar and a teacher were recognized with a Fulbright Award in 1996. He spent a year analyzing the relationship between democratic consolidation and economic liberalization in Brazil. He also taught courses on U.S.-Latin American

relations and international political economy. Aldo has continued to make research trips—albeit shorter—to South America. Aldo's current research examines the consolidation of democratization in five countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay. His work abroad has continued to inform his work at home, exemplifying the teacher-scholar model we prize. Relieved of the daily preoccupations of teaching, Aldo will be able to devote all of his energies and attention to writing.

Aldo will long be remembered by his colleagues for his fair-mindedness. Aldo practices it in even the seemingly smallest ways. As a junior faculty member Aldo was an easy victim of the scheduling committee, comprised by senior colleagues who had preferences for class times. Later Aldo moved through the ranks, became chair, and headed the scheduling committee, but he did not reserve the best times for himself. Instead, he established the practice of alternating schedules among us. After thirty-three years of teaching and in his last year at the College Aldo cheerfully taught in the eight o'clock hour simply because it was his turn. Aldo has always set the example of equality and good will. As Aldo's time at Skidmore draws to a close, we can affirm the judgement of the Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh who wrote to recommend Aldo for the position at Skidmore thirty-three years ago: "Aldo is a truly high quality person. Over his years here has won the respect and affection of all who have worked with him."

The digital age has made it possible to get a glimpse of Aldo while he is traveling in Brazil or Argentina. The most recent edition of our department's newsletter include pictures of Aldo sitting on a patio in his hometown of Mendoza, Argentina, enjoying the sun and a book. It warms our hearts to imagine Aldo's bright future.