

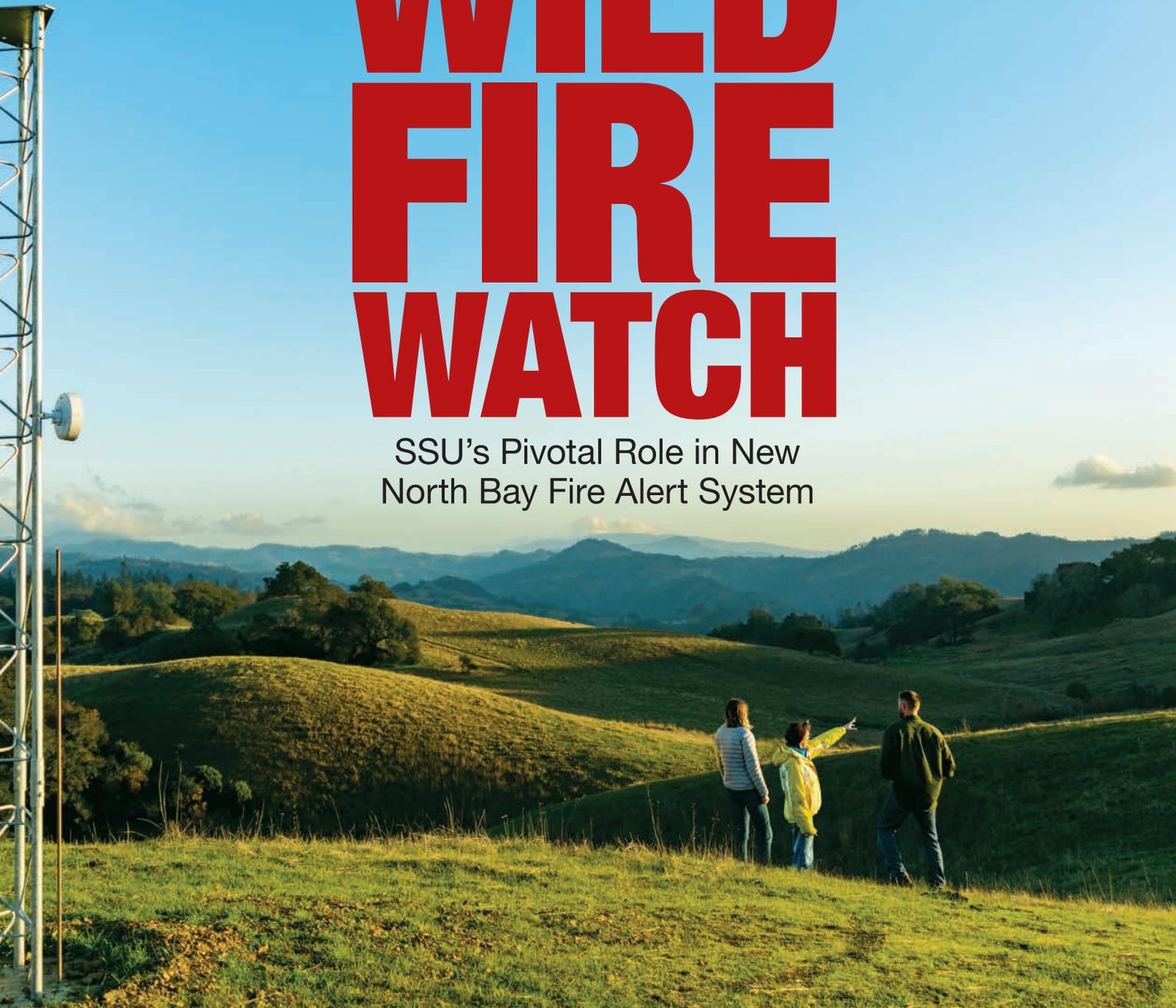
FALL/WINTER 2019

# insights

THE MAGAZINE OF SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

## WILD FIRE WATCH

SSU's Pivotal Role in New  
North Bay Fire Alert System





# insights

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## The Library's New Crabby Statue

With the beautiful landscaping that Sonoma State already boasts, there's no shortage of photo opportunities for campus residents and visitors alike. But now there is a new spot for selfies to be captured with Lucy of "Peanuts" fame.

The sometimes crabby but always loveable "Peanuts" cartoon strip's Lucy van Pelt joined the Sonoma State University family with the unveiling of a 5-foot, 500-pound statue in front of the Jean and Charles Schulz Information Center last spring. The statue was obtained by Lisa Clyde of the Schulz family and donated to the University. The restoration was made possible by the Jean and Charles Schulz endowment, with local artist Mary Vaughan restoring and "dressing" Lucy.

Library Dean Karen Schneider said, "Lucy will also be an important landmark for answering my favorite question: *'Which way is the library?'*"



# insights

Fall / Winter 2019

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## Greetings Sonoma State Alumni and Friends

As I write this message, our broader Northern California community is once again experiencing the devastating impacts of wildfires. November's Camp Fire in Butte County arose just a few months after the terrible Carr and Mendocino Complex Fires of this past summer and just a year after the fires that devastated our own beautiful North Bay.

At Sonoma State, we are filled with gratitude for the many first responders, law enforcement personnel and volunteers who have been hard at work across our state throughout this long, challenging fire season.

Our hearts go out to our Northern California neighbors who experienced a tragedy familiar to so many of us.

Unfortunately, these types of deadly blazes are happening all too often and may now be a part of our future. That's why we are thankful for our fellow North Bay community members who have dedicated themselves to developing new prevention measures for these types of fires.

**At Sonoma State, we are filled with gratitude for the many first responders, law enforcement personnel and volunteers who have been hard at work across our state throughout this long, challenging fire season.**

In this issue of *Insights*, you will read about Claudia Luke, who leads Sonoma State's Center for Environmental Inquiry. Through a partnership with many institutions including government agencies and universities, our Center for Environmental Inquiry team members



President Judy K. Sakaki, center, is joined during Move In Day 2018 by (from left) Skye Flores, Beaujolais Village resident advisor; Cookie Garrett, Beaujolais Village area coordinator; incoming freshmen, Johnny, Jimmy and Samantha Beglin; and Greg Sawyer, Vice President for Student Affairs.

are installing fire cameras at the university's Fairfield Osborn Preserve as part of an early-warning fire camera network throughout Sonoma County to help us prepare for future wildfires.

This is the kind of innovative thinking I sought out when we developed Sonoma State's new Strategic Plan this past year. Our Strategic Plan is the collaborative result of many Seawolf community members working together to identify the best path forward for Sonoma State – one that will allow us to best engage and educate our students as they work toward achieving dreams.

A number of the stories in this issue underscore the strategic plan priorities in action as we strive to give our students a strong, well-rounded education in the arts and sciences. For example, you will read about how our campus art gallery is celebrating its 40th anniversary and how some Sonoma State graduates are using the film-production skills they gained here on campus to work on movies such as "Black Panther" and "Spider-Man: Homecoming."

As you read through the pages, I hope you also will pause to enjoy the photo galleries and other features that capture the vibrancy of campus life.

**A number of the stories in this issue underscore the strategic plan priorities in action, as we strive to give our students a strong, well-rounded education in the arts and sciences.**

What's clear is that 2019 promises to be an even more exciting year for Sonoma State. I thank you for your many contributions to our university and wish you and your loved ones a healthy and happy new year.

With gratitude,

Judy K. Sakaki  
President



PHOTOS BY BRENNAN CHIN

Actress Bonnie Hunt, top right, and country artist Brad Paisley, opposite page, were headliners for an evening of stories and songs on Aug. 4. The night before featured an evening of storytelling from those who lost homes or battled the firestorm. The storytellers included SSU President Judy K. Sakaki, bottom right, who shared her tale of being rescued by two Santa Rosa firefighters including Tony Niel, to her right, who lost his Santa

Rosa home as well. Others who shared stories that evening included from left, (top row) Brandon Spars of Sonoma Academy, the host of the evening; Pat Kerrigan, KSRO radio host; (center row) Nancy Lasseter, co-owner of Lasseter Family Winery and co-sponsor of the event; Josh Weil, assistant physician-in-chief at Kaiser; (bottom row) Clare Mollard, veterinary acupuncturist, and Gaye LeBaron, *The Press Democrat* columnist and historian.

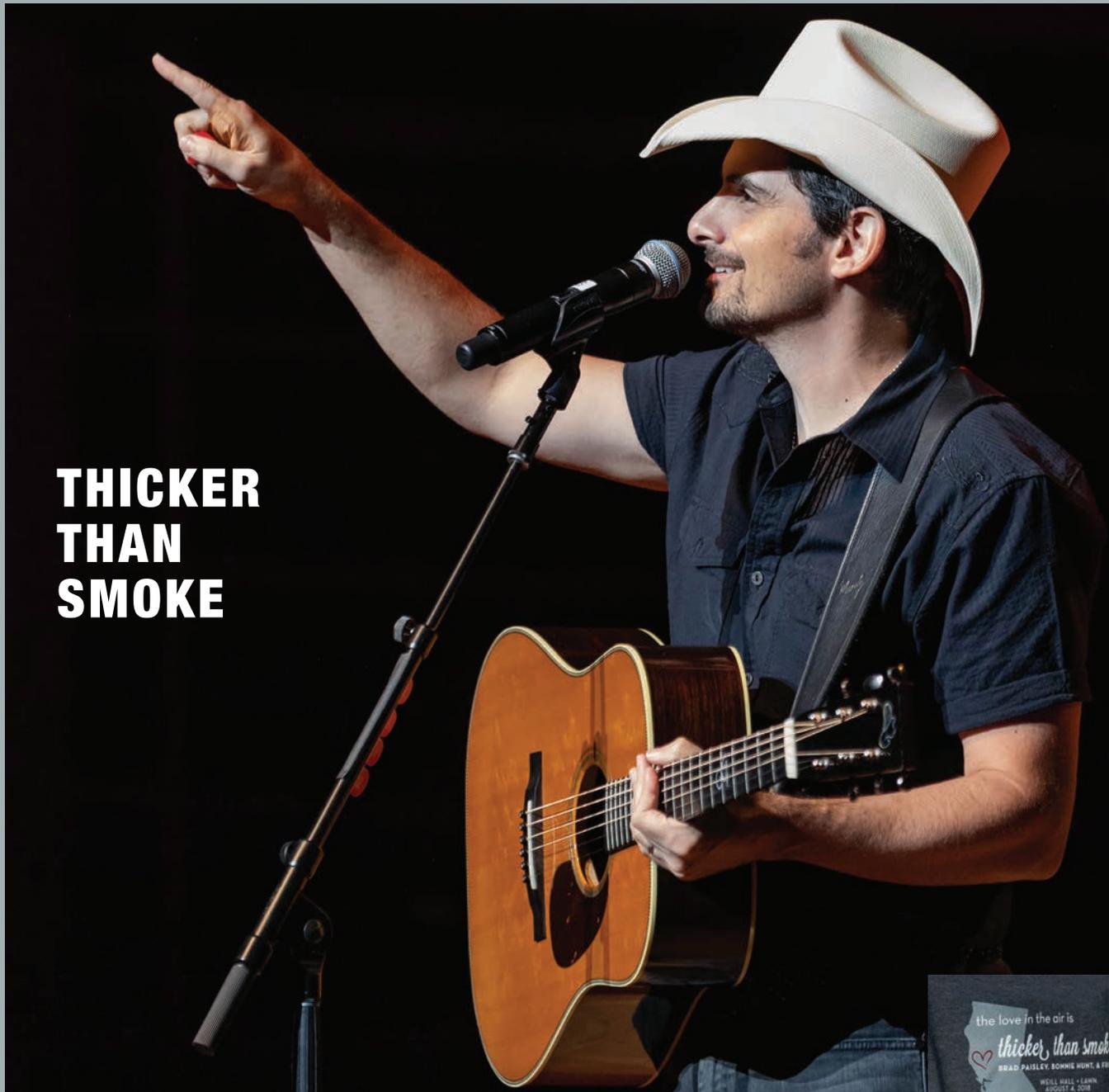
## Sonoma State hosts weekend of story-telling, music and gratitude

For two days in August, Sonoma State’s Green Music Center became a place where residents of the North Bay could laugh a little, sing a little and console one another a little as part of the “Thicker Than Smoke” fundraiser featuring country music superstar Brad Paisley and acclaimed actress Bonnie Hunt.

Friday night, Aug. 3, featured powerful story-telling hosted by Sonoma County author, educator and noted storyteller Brandon Spars and included 13 speakers who shared their experiences of losing their homes or fighting

the horrendous fires of October 2017. The speakers included Sonoma State President Judy Sakaki who shared her own harrowing tale of fleeing her home along with her husband, Patrick McCallum, ultimately to be rescued by two Santa Rosa firefighters including Tony Niel, who also shared his story at the event. Niel was one of dozens of first responders including doctors, police officers and paramedics, who, despite losing their homes in the firestorm, went to the aid of others that night and early morning.

## THICKER THAN SMOKE



The following day, a crowd of more than 2,000 filled Weill Hall and the lawn outside to take in an evening of music and stories hosted by Paisley and Hunt. “I always feel helpless in these kinds of situations, and it’s nice to be able to do something to help,” Paisley told *The Press Democrat*. “It’s about gratitude for all of these people who have put their life on the line.”

“You will heal, you will triumph and you will live in honor of those you lost,” Hunt told the audience.

The two events, co-sponsored and organized by Nancy Lasseter, co-owner of Lasseter Family Winery, raised

\$134,330 in ticket sales, with sponsors donating another \$55,000 for a total of nearly \$190,000. The funds were to be distributed through the Sonoma County Resilience Fund, which is overseen by the Community Foundation Sonoma County.

“I could not be more proud of how our community came together for this event,” said Sakaki. “We all owe a sincere thank you to the first responders who fought, and are continuing to fight, the merciless fires that are tearing through our state.”



## A SEAWOLF GOES TO THE WORLD SERIES

For the first time in its 57-year history, Sonoma State was represented on Major League Baseball's highest stage. The World Series this fall featured former Seawolf Scott Alexander on the Los Angeles Dodgers' 25-man roster.

Playing in three games during the series, Alexander faced seven batters, striking out two, and giving up two runs. In the end, the Dodgers lost to the Boston Red Sox in five games. After being acquired by the Dodgers in a three-team swap this past offseason, the Windsor native appeared in 73 games – the most of any Dodger pitcher in 2018 – going 2-1 with a 3.68 ERA, picking up three saves along the way.

Alexander, who played one season at Sonoma State before being drafted by the Kansas City Royals with the 179th overall pick in the 2010 MLB draft, spent time at the major league level in each of the last four years, pitching to a 7-5 record with a 3.15 ERA in 160 innings of work. A junior in 2010, Alexander earned an All-CCAA Honorable Mention in his only



season with SSU, earning a team high in strikeouts. His mark of holding opponents to a batting average of .209 was, at the time, the fourth-best in school history. "Success always has a thousand fathers, and it's just nice to be part of his path," said longtime SSU baseball coach John Goelz. "It's inspirational to the players in our program and gives hope to those who have the same dream."



## SSU Opens Pantry for Students

A survey by the California State University system has found that an increasing number of CSU students are reporting some level of food insecurity.

As part of a recommendation from the CSU to develop strategies to address students who reported levels of food insecurity, Sonoma State last year launched Lobo's Pantry, a free food distribution service for SSU students in need. About 60 percent of the food for the pantry is supplied at cost by the Redwood Empire Food Bank and the remaining food will come from food drives or will be purchased with money raised through donations. The pantry carries nonperishable food items as well as a variety of hygiene and laundry products.

Any student enrolled at Sonoma State University is eligible to use the food pantry as often as once a week.

## \$4 Million for Learning by Making Grant

For the past five years, Sonoma State University's Education and Public Outreach Group has been working to create and fine-tune a 9th grade curriculum to transform STEM education. The result has been "Learning by Making," a curriculum that trains students to design and construct their own experiments.

Piloted in six Mendocino County high schools during the past three years, the curriculum will now expand to Sonoma and Lake counties thanks to a \$3.93 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The project fuses mathematical and computational learning by focusing on solving real-world scientific problems – with students and instructors working together.

According to an impact study conducted by WestEd, comparing student learning outcomes using the "Learning by Making" curriculum to other 9th grade students who were enrolled in traditional courses, the curriculum demonstrated significant gains in learning for both math and science. "Learning by Making has been our group's most challenging project, but it also has the potential to transform STEM education



nationally," said Director of SSU's Education and Public Outreach Group Lynn Cominsky. The "Learning by Making" project was specifically designed to benefit rural schools, which, according to Cominsky, are typically underserved in STEM education.

## Sakaki named President of the Year for 2018

**Sonoma State President Judy Sakaki was named 2018 President of the Year** for Region VI by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators this fall.



The President received her award at the NASPA Western Region Annual Awards Luncheon on Nov. 9 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel. The President's Award is a special recognition given to a university president who has, over a sustained period of time, "advanced the quality of student life on campus by supporting student affairs staff and programs."

Sakaki, who served as Vice President for Student Affairs for the UC system prior to becoming President of SSU in 2016, was nominated by Greg Sawyer, Sonoma State Vice President for Student Affairs, along with Michael D. Young, retired Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at UC Santa Barbara and former Interim Vice President for Student Affairs at SSU; and Harry Le Grande, retired Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at UC Berkeley and also a former Interim Vice President for Student Affairs at Sonoma State.

"(We) honestly cannot think of a university president more worthy and deserving of the NASPA Region VI President's Award than Dr. Judy Sakaki," they wrote. "Both in word and in deed, she has lived the criteria for this honor, being someone who not just recognizes but embraces the value and importance of student life in all that she does and has done as President of Sonoma State University."

## STAR Wins Top Award for California

Sonoma State may not have its own journalism program, but it has the top student newspaper among California campuses, at least according to the California Newspaper Publishers Association.



The *Sonoma State Star*, the student-run newspaper, won top honors for general excellence and for opinion writing at the CNPA awards ceremony in May. The judging for general excellence was based on two editions in 2017, one of which included the *Star's* coverage of the October 2017 fires, which claimed 24 lives, destroyed nearly

5,300 homes in Sonoma County and forced the closure of Sonoma State for nine days.

The judges for CNPA recognized the weekly newspaper for its "strong news coverage under tough conditions." The work of the students, most of whom are Communications majors, was evaluated along with entries from campus newspapers from four-year universities throughout California. Second place went to the *UCLA Daily Bruin*.

"This is a remarkable accomplishment for our student-run publication, and we are all so proud," said President Judy Sakaki as she celebrated with the *Star* staff. Just two weeks later, the staff also found out that it was recognized for being one of the "Most Outstanding College Newspapers for 2017-2018." from the American Scholastic Press Association. "We are still in shock," said *Star* Editor Shannon Brown when the awards were announced.

## Out of the Ashes: Artwork

More than a year has now passed since the North Bay firestorm of October 2017, but the recovery continues. Gregory Roberts, a sculptor, ceramicist and chair of the Department of Art and Art History, decided to make the healing process a bit easier by using ashes from victims' destroyed houses and property to create handcrafted porcelain pots.

Out of this effort came what is now known as the Sonoma Ash Project, a program that has been covered on everything from ABC News to *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*.

Roberts received more than 140 donations of ash for the project, which he used in creating pots modeled after the historic Fountaingrove Round Barn that burned in the fires. Roberts says he takes the ashes and mixes a deep red hued glaze into each one to make what he calls a "living vessel." Working in a 14-by-14-foot studio, Robert's process involves mixing a different set of ashes into each pot with various glazes and colors, each telling its own separate story. More than 100 pots were on display at the Art Museum of Sonoma County since last fall.

The pots includes one made from the ashes of the home of SSU President Judy Sakaki. "I hope the project and what the ashes turned into can give people hope and a sense of closure," said Roberts. "People can take these pieces of their old lives and homes and start to feel completion as they move into their new ones."





## WEILL HALL ECHOS WITH KOREAN MUSIC

Since its debut in 2012, the Green Music Center has closely followed its mission to present the most compelling artists of our time, to investigate ideas and to provide access to diverse artistic experiences that educate.

The mission of the GMC was fully embodied when students from Hanyang University, one of the leading private research universities of South Korea, came to Sonoma State in

August for a two-day visit to perform the time-honored musical traditions of their homeland for all of Sonoma County. This event was preceded by a visit by 10 Hanyang executives to Sonoma State in August 2017 where a partnership between the two universities was forged.

Hanyang University President Young Moo Lee said the event blended “the beauty of Korean music and Sonoma’s

wonderful nature” and provided an opportunity for “dreaming of a beautiful future” for the two universities.

The South Korean delegation included President Young Moo Lee, the dean and three professors from the university’s College of Music along with other faculty, administrators and 22 students from the Hanyang Department of Korean Traditional Music.



## New Dean of Arts and Humanities

Hollis Robbins considers arts and humanities programs at the very heart of higher education’s public mission. An educator deeply committed to the liberal arts and sciences, Robbins had served as Chair of the Humanities Department in the Peabody Conservatory and Director for African Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Now she has a new title, Dean of Arts and Humanities at Sonoma State University. Robbins, who has a B.A. from Johns Hopkins, a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University, an M.A. in English from the University of Colorado, and a Ph.D. in English from Princeton University, is an established scholar of 19th century African-American and American literature and specializes in women’s authors, having recently completed a year-long fellowship at the National Humanities Center.

“Dr. Robbins is a deeply experienced educator whose leadership will help raise the visibility of Sonoma State’s commitment to diversity, inclusion and excellence,” said Provost Lisa Vollendorf. Robbins joins Sonoma State just as the university has launched a new strategic plan emphasizing student success, academic excellence, leadership cultivation and transformative impact.

## It’s back to Future Day for 400 students

Sonoma State hosted 400 K-8 students from the Roberts Family Development Center over the summer for its annual “I am the Future Day” to give the next generation a taste of college life. The students were treated to lunch at The Kitchens, the student cafeteria, activities with faculty and staff, including dance battles, bounce houses and dodgeball, as well as a speech from Vice President of Student Affairs Greg Sawyer.

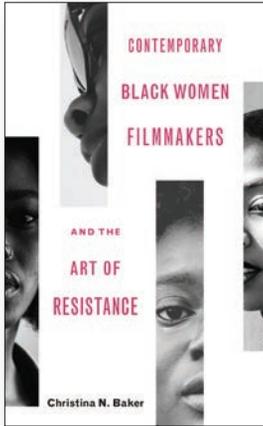


The RFDC serves mainly low-income families to help assure quality care and academic support for their children. According to the RFDC, most of the children in the program would be the first in their family to go to college, making the “I am the Future Day” all the more important in planting the idea of higher education within their future goals.

“Higher education levels the playing field for all of us,” said Sawyer. “But no matter what, you can always act better, be better and do better every day to make your family, school, or anywhere that you go for sanctuary, proud.” SSU continues to support initiatives and programs with the message that everyone has the potential to attend a four-year university.

# Uncovering Contemporary Black Women Filmmakers

## NEW BOOK SHEDS LIGHT ON UNDERREPRESENTED FILMMAKERS



By Francisco Carbajal, '17

Every semester Associate Professor Christina N. Baker-Foley asks her students to name a black film director.

Spike Lee and Tyler Perry come to mind to most. Some students more film savvy might say Ryan Coogler, director of Marvel's "Black Panther" or Barry Jenkins whose recent film "Moonlight" was an Academy Award Best Picture winner. But the names of black women filmmakers rarely, if ever, come up.

Baker-Foley is pulling the veil off that perception with her new book, *Contemporary Black Women Filmmakers and The Art of Resistance*, where not only does she shed some light on some of the best working black women filmmakers but got exclusive interviews with some too. The list includes Tanya Hamilton, Kasi Lemmons and the award-winning filmmaker Gina Prince-Bythewood, known for her 2000 smash hit "Love and Basketball" starring Sanaa Lathan and Omar Epps.

"It's important to bring up these underrepresented filmmakers. Some of my favorite films were created by black women filmmakers," says Baker-Foley. "It's a topic that needs to be shared because no one is aware of the craft that black women filmmakers bring to the table. There isn't an awareness of what they do."

Baker-Foley started writing the book three years ago when she realized that there haven't been any books on this specific group of filmmakers for more than 20 years. "The earlier books that focused on black women filmmakers focused more on documentary filmmakers and never on narrative black women filmmakers," says Baker-Foley. "I was surprised how open these award-winning filmmakers were to talk to me, considering how busy they are. But a part of being underrepresented in the film industry is having a desire to be heard and share the work that they are doing."

Baker-Foley's book dives into the idea of the narrative shift that can come from the inclusion of black women filmmakers in an industry that lacks diversity behind the camera. The book gives an example of how one-

dimensional stereotypes of black women are very common in the media, such as the angry black woman trope, which is even used by black male filmmakers. However, black women filmmakers tend to flesh out black women characters and present them as complex characters, rather than negative clichés.

**...no one is truly aware of the craft  
that black women filmmakers  
bring to the table...**

"Since this stereotype is so common, it becomes a real social idea that people have of black women in particular. When we have a film made by a black woman, they understand, of course, that black women are more complex human beings and they are," says Baker-Foley. "I believe that if we see more



films made by black women we will see more varied and complex narratives that are told about black women. There is a lot of room for change."

Baker-Foley hopes to use her book in some of the classes that she teaches here at Sonoma State such as her general education class of Ethnic Images in Film and Media.

Baker-Foley is also the chair of Department of American Multicultural Studies, which is working to bring a new faculty member for next fall that will focus on visual and popular culture in African-American studies. "The AMCS department at Sonoma State is a great place to find courses about African-American culture and film."

Baker-Foley's book *Contemporary Black Women Filmmakers and The Art of Resistance* can be found on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and the Ohio State University Press.

# Celebrating 40 Years of Artistic Expression at the University Art Gallery

By Shirley Melikian Armbruster

Photos by Francisco Carbajal, '17 and Nathaneal Galvan, '18

Forty years. Hundreds of exhibits. Thousands of visitors. As the University Art Gallery celebrates a milestone anniversary this academic year, the Sonoma State University gem is embraced both on the campus and in the community.



A patron at the opening of the “40 by 40” exhibit captures himself with former Gallery Director Inez Storer, right, in front of her work “Tea Ceremony.”

The art world has changed since the gallery first opened its doors on April 7, 1978 – a time that marked the end of the century-long Modernist project and the advent of Pluralism and Postmodernism.

Those changes have been reflected over the years in the gallery’s shows, but what has not changed is its ongoing

commitment to presenting the best examples of work by some of the most interesting and significant regional, national and internationally recognized contemporary visual artists, according to Michael Schwager, director of the University Art Gallery for 28 years and an SSU professor of Art History.

From the first exhibition, “Northern California Artists” to the most recent “40 by 40: The 40th Anniversary Exhibition,” the hallmarks of the gallery have been serving SSU art students and welcoming the public to the shows.

**“This is a teaching facility as well as a presenting facility,” said Schwager, who splits his time between running the gallery and teaching.** For 40 years, SSU students have shown their art and interned here to gain experience in museum and gallery work. Some have gone on to careers in the museum field.”

Student Alexa Bolton calls the Art Gallery “a home within our school” for many art students. “It provides us with the ability to experience and practice first-hand important creative processes and bringing big-name artists within the grasps of our reality,” she said. Bolton, who is from Angels Camp, is a senior majoring in studio arts with an emphasis in photography and minoring in art history.

The gallery enriches “a creative mindset” in all SSU students, she said, “that every student can integrate art into their study and carry such creative perceptions with them on whichever path of life they pursue.”

The gallery has always enjoyed a stellar reputation in the North Bay art community. The public supports the gallery with donations and with their attendance at the shows.

**“People understand and appreciate the gallery focus that brings the work of artists not often seen in the region into Sonoma County,” said Schwager.**

When SSU opened in 1966 with just two buildings, the Art Department was housed in the basement of Darwin Hall, according to research Schwager undertook for a catalog essay to mark the 40th anniversary. The lobby of the building served as the Art Department’s gallery and was used for displaying student and faculty art, as well as the work of regional and international artists. While an unlikely venue, the exhibitions were ambitious and well-received.



Artists and Art Gallery supporters tour the exhibit during a reception on Dec. 6, 2018 honoring the SSU Art Gallery’s 40th anniversary.



The 40th anniversary celebration included a panel discussion that explored the gallery's inception and its current place in the North Bay art world. Participating in the panel were, from left: University Art Gallery Director Michael Schwager, former Gallery Director Inez Storer, Professor Emeritus Susan Moulton and former Gallery Director Bob Nugent.

“The exhibitions were presented at a time when Sonoma County had a dearth of visual arts galleries and museums,” said Schwager. “Two legacy venues in Santa Rosa – the now-closed California Museum of Art at the Luther Burbank Center and the Sonoma County Museum (today the Museums of Sonoma County) – did not begin presenting exhibitions until the 1980s.”

While the gallery and the science departments that shared the Darwin Hall lobby were congenial partners, the lobby was a less-than-ideal place to display artwork. The concrete interior made for a challenging environment in which to exhibit art and necessitated the erection of portable walls throughout the space. And even more concerning, the gallery space was not guarded, resulting in vandalism and thefts.

By the early 1970s, faculty were publicly expressing frustrations about the lobby gallery and the cramped basement classrooms and studios in Darwin Hall. State funds were approved in late 1974 and a \$2.3 million, 46,400-square-foot art building with classrooms, studios and a gallery opened in January 1978.

The University Art Gallery was described at the time as perhaps the most spacious and best-equipped professional venue for visual art in the North Bay. It had 2,400 square feet of exhibition space with 23-foot high ceilings, designed to accommodate the monumental paintings and sculpture popular with many artists in that era. There also were office and storage rooms and an outdoor courtyard.

But one important element was missing – funding for a permanent director, a problem that was not resolved until the fall of 1979, when funding for a full-time director was secured, and the position was made permanent two years later. Since his appointment in 1991, Schwager has organized more than 60 exhibitions and published more than a dozen catalogs and brochures at the University Art Gallery.

The gallery staff has grown to three full-time employees plus student assistants. Funding comes from the School of Arts and Humanities, student body fees and the annual Art from the Heart party and silent auction. In 2018, more than 120 artists from Sonoma County and across the country were invited to create original works of art especially for the event, with proceeds going to the gallery.

## 40 by 40:

### THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION LIST OF EXHIBITORS

Seyed Alavi  
 Robert Arneson  
 Marilyn Bridges  
 Morrie Camhi  
 Squeak Carnwath  
 Enrique Chagoya  
 Lowell Darling  
 Manoel Fernandes  
 John Yoyogi Fortes  
 Viola Frey  
 Carmen Lomas Garza  
 Mineko Grimmer  
 Wally Hedrick  
 Mildred Howard  
 Robert Hudson  
 Judith Linhares  
 Hung Liu  
 Robert McCauley  
 Caitlin Mitchell-Dayton  
 William Morehouse  
 Bob Nugent  
 Jennifer Nuss  
 Joan Perlman  
 Mark Perlman  
 Favianna Rodriguez  
 John Roloff  
 Susan Rothenberg  
 Yoshitomo Saito  
 Cornelia Schulz  
 Mark Sheinkman  
 Joan Snyder  
 Inez Storer  
 Masami Teraoka  
 Tomas Vu  
 Howard Warshaw  
 Shane Weare  
 Carrie Mae Weems  
 William Wegman  
 Cate White  
 Wanxin Zhang



## Wine Spectator Learning Center's Opening Bash

HUNDREDS GATHER TO TOAST UNVEILING OF NEW HOME FOR SSU WINE BUSINESS INSTITUTE

By Paul Gullixson

With more than 600 alumni, faculty and leaders of the North Coast wine industry in attendance, Sonoma State University christened the Wine Spectator Learning Center in May with sparkling wine, a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony – and at least one memorable fist bump.

The latter occurred between two of the central figures responsible for bringing the \$11 million, 15,000-square-foot center to life – Gary Heck, president and owner of Korbel Champagne Cellars, and *Wine Spectator* editor and publisher Marvin R. Shanken.

The state-of-the-art facility now serves as headquarters for the University's Wine Business Institute, home to a unique public-private partnership between the School of Business and Economics at SSU and the wine industry.



*Top: Gary Heck, president and owner of Korbel Champagne Cellars, bumps fists with Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of Wine Spectator Magazine, while Congressman Mike Thompson looks on.*

*Above: The ribbon cutting on May 29 included, from left, Congressman Mike Thompson, Provost Lisa Vollendorf, Marvin Shanken, SSU President Judy K. Sakaki, Karen Thompson, interim dean of the School of Business and Economics, Gary Heck, Ray Johnson, executive director of the Wine Business Institute, and Logan Pitts, field representative for State Sen. Bill Dodd and SSU Alumni Association board member.*

“Sonoma County along with Napa are the two most important wine centers in California,” said Shanken. “Sonoma State University in recent years has become a primary learning center for people pursuing careers in the wine business. It seemed like a perfect match to affiliate the *Wine Spectator* Scholarship Foundation with the university.”

Dozens of donors, community members and Wine Business Institute faculty, staff and board members were in attendance at the opening, celebrating the many contributions that made the transformation of the former Student Commons building possible. The facility includes three classrooms, a student common area, collaborative spaces for faculty and business leaders, garden areas and the already-popular Stomping Grounds café.

*Right: Liz Thach, right, SSU Distinguished Professor of Wine, greets a Wine Business Institute graduate during the opening reception.*

*Below: A large group of Wine Business Institute alumni joined the festivities at the opening of the Wine Spectator Learning Institute.*

The success of the Wine Business programs along with growing interest from potential partners in countries such as France, Australia and South Korea were the prime motivations for creating the Learning Center.

**“Sonoma County along with Napa are the two most important wine centers in California,” said Shanken.**

Programs such as the wine entrepreneurship laboratory and the recently created Wine Industry Scholars Program offering scholarships to children of the local wine industry, many of whom are first generation college students, also will be housed in the new building.

“Our entire campus community and all of our students will benefit from having the Wine Spectator Learning Center,” said President Judy Sakaki during the opening on May 29.





*The renovated space includes three classrooms, a student commons area, collaborative spaces for faculty and business leaders, garden areas and a café.*



WSLC PHOTOS BY DAVID WAKELY PHOTOGRAPHY

“Knowledge will be transmitted here. New knowledge will be created here. Partnerships will be formed here. Community members will gather here. And, lives will be enriched and changed here.”

**“From 8 a.m. through late into the evening, the building is abuzz with students, faculty and staff.”**

According to Ray Johnson, executive director of the Wine Business Institute, the center has been in continual use since its opening.

“After the hard work of so many of our friends and colleagues who made this building possible, it is most gratifying to see it come to life with the annual return of the students during the fall semester,” Johnson said. “From 8 a.m. through late into the evening, the building is abuzz with students, faculty and staff.”

But as with wine-making, it’s the final product that will determine success, supporters of the WBI agree. “It is my hope that over the years Sonoma State University will produce many of the business leaders in the wine industry around the world,” said Shanken.

As for that fist bump with Gary Heck, “If my memory serves me well, we were saying to each other ‘We did it,’” said Shanken.

And did it well.

# A Q&A with Dr. Greg Sawyer

## VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

By Katie Beermann '15

In April 2018, Dr. Greg Sawyer, a seasoned higher education professional whose work has impacted thousands of students, was appointed Vice President for Student Affairs at Sonoma State. Before joining Noma Nation, Sawyer served as VP for Student Affairs at CSU Channel Islands where he established a nationally recognized division. Leading with a student-centric philosophy, Dr. Sawyer is focused on enhancing the student affairs division at SSU.

We sat down with Dr. Sawyer to learn more about what inspired him to work in student affairs and what motivates him.

### What do you love about Sonoma State?

One of the things that I really appreciate, besides the actual beauty of the campus, is the good feeling that you get from faculty, staff and students. There's really a sense of family, that everybody wants every person to be successful and feel at home.

### What was it that first inspired you to want to work in higher education and directly with students?

I come from a family of interrupters. Both my mom and my dad got a college education in a time that you would not have thought that most people would. Both have an undergraduate degree and my dad had three years of graduate school. He went to Morehouse College for undergrad, which is where Dr. Martin Luther King went, and he was working on his M.D. degree at Howard University when the Army pulled him out to be a medic because [the army] was not integrated, and they needed black medics. So that's what he did.

There's another piece that I found out later that made me know that I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. And that was my great, great grandfather — his name was George Dickinson — was an enslaved person. His father was the plantation owner. George was a kind of “mocha latte” looking kid, and I think his father's wife became quite suspicious that he was the only enslaved kid looking like a latte with cream. And I believe, from what we've read in the papers, is that he was afraid that she was going to have George taken away. So I think his dad then took [George] through the Underground Railroad where he stayed with a Mennonite family.

George later went to Oberlin University, which was the first school to allow women and blacks, in 1869. When he was done with higher education, he became a Buffalo Soldier, which was an all-black troop. He trained and educated individuals because most of them were enslaved people. He also demanded that he deserved the same pension as any other soldier. People didn't do that back then, but he did.

So it fills my heart knowing that I come from a family of interrupters. I come from a family of individuals who said, “We're going to use our education... (and) share that privilege with others.” So that's the reason why I knew I had to be an educator.

### Looking back, what would you tell 18-year-old Greg as he was entering college?

Stay focused and be true to yourself. Be honest with others. And while you're in that short journey, try to make a difference.



*SSU Vice President for Student Affairs Greg Sawyer with Associated Students president Carley Chatterley, left, and Christina Gamboa, AS vice president of finance.*

### Do you have a favorite spot on campus to go to when you need to get out of your office?

One of our former colleagues Janet Henker, used to spend time out at the Butterfly Garden. I was going to take Janet to lunch for one of her last days on campus and she said, “Hey Doc, instead of us going to lunch, I'm going to take you for a walk to the Butterfly Garden.” She wanted to take me there because that's where she found peace. And last May, when we lost our colleague Hollie Pruden in a tragic car accident, we held her memorial presentation in the Butterfly Garden. So when I think of peace and tranquility and the goodness of people, my mind goes to the Butterfly Garden.

### What are you most proud of in your long-standing career?

I've always tried to be the best person I can be. I know I've failed at things in a lot of ways, but I've always tried to be a good person. And if God gave me something, I simply wanted to give it back to somebody else because I believe I need to pass it on. And that's what I hope I have done in my career. Hopefully that will be my greatest accomplishment. That on my headstone, or ashes, or whatever my family decides, they will simply say he tried to help somebody while he was here. He tried to make a difference.

# Wildfire Watch:

## SSU'S PIVOTAL ROLE IN NEW NORTH BAY FIRE ALERT SYSTEM



*Pepperwood Preserve's Ryan Ferrell, left, and Tosha Comendant, center, with SSU's Claudia Luke survey the vista atop one of the highest peaks of the 3,200-acre preserve. Luke stands next*

*to the structure that will hold one of two Pepperwood fire-alert network cameras that will soon go online, as will the cameras in the university's Fairfield Osborn Preserve.*

**By Paul Gullixson**

As Claudia Luke and her hiking party rose above the oak trees to a clearing just below the ridgeline of Sonoma Mountain a funnel of dark smoke came into view far to the southwest toward Point Reyes.

Given the purpose of the outing, the timing was extraordinary. “That’s amazing,” said Luke, director of the Center for Environmental Inquiry at Sonoma State, pointing toward the slim column of smoke rising behind a panoramic view of the Santa Rosa Plain. Given the devastating fires of October 2017, it’s the kind of scene that would strike fear in the heart of any North Bay resident.

“But here’s the thing,” said Luke. “In just a few weeks we won’t have to climb all the way up here to see that smoke. We will be able to see it and zoom in on it from my office.” Better still, so will fire crews.

In fact, the smoke will be visible from just about any home or office by

logging onto [alertwildfire.org](http://alertwildfire.org), a website operated by the University of Nevada, Reno Seismological Laboratory in partnership with a number of universities and government agencies. The site features scenes from high-definition cameras sprinkled around California, primarily near Lake Tahoe and high-risk parts of the San Diego area.

Seventeen cameras are now being added to that network in the North Bay, a part of the state that has suddenly become synonymous with devastating wildfires.

Two of these high-definition, near-infrared cameras will soon be installed atop the university’s 450-acre Fairfield Osborn Preserve, located on the northwest flank of Sonoma Mountain, where the cameras will command an expansive view of the region, from Petaluma to Santa Rosa and from Valley of the Moon to Mt. St. Helena.

With the equipment’s pan-tilt-zoom features, fire officials will be able to

zoom in on plumes like this one in the distance – and get a reading on its direction, Luke said. Having multiple cameras will then allow fire crews to triangulate the readings and get an exact location on the source of the smoke.

According to Jay Jaspers, chief engineer for the Sonoma County Water Agency – now known simply as Sonoma Water – which is spearheading the pilot project, the cameras “will help firefighters and emergency responders see, locate and confirm fires, quickly scale fire resources up or down to respond appropriately, to study how the fire behaves until it ultimately is contained and to help conduct evacuations.”

The network will start with 17 cameras on eight towers atop ridges throughout the North Bay. Two, for example, have been installed in nearby Pepperwood Preserve. But officials hope to eventually have as many as 28 camera towers as part of the ALERT-NorthBay Network, covering Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Mendocino and Lake counties.

In fact, PG&E this fall agreed to pay for the installation of nine additional high-definition camera towers at a cost of roughly \$700,000. “It’s good for them and it’s good for us,” Sonoma County Supervisor David Rabbitt told *The Press Democrat* in response to PG&E’s decision. “I think it’s a wise move on their part.”

## “This is anything but normal”

On this particular afternoon, after the smoke plume in the distance dissipated into a haze, Luke led hikers to a clearing where a 10-foot tower housing the cameras will be erected in a field of yellow star-thistle at the crown of Taylor Mountain. “It’s like being on top of the world,” said Luke. “Such a gorgeous view.”

From here, the cameras will serve two critical functions, Luke said. First they will be the southern-most eyes of the eight-tower fire alert camera-system that will span, at least at the outset, from the Lake Sonoma Watershed to southern Sonoma County. Moreover, the SSU tower will serve as the lynchpin for feeding the data from the fire alert network into the CENIC network, a high-speed internet microwave system

shared by colleges and universities. This will allow the information to be quickly and easily shared with researchers at UC San Diego, Cal Fire and elsewhere. And much more.

“One of the additional benefits of this network, which is going to be so important for Sonoma State, is the way that it can boost the educational opportunities for our students,” said Luke. In addition to streaming data from the towers, the University will be able to transmit information collected from other sensors in the preserve – everything from microphones, seismographic sensors to microclimate sensors. The result is that “we are going to be able to bring our SSU preserves into classrooms on campus,” said Luke.

But fire protection is the primary purpose for the cameras – and the most urgent need. This was driven home once again by the fires in Butte County in November, which claimed 85 lives and destroyed some 14,000 homes including the entire community of Paradise. The Camp Fire now ranks as the deadliest and most devastating fire in California history.

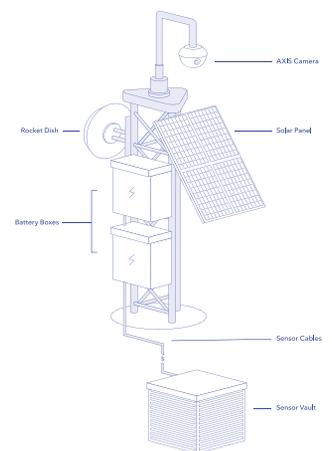
The majority of climatologists and fire science experts agree that the public

needs to be prepared for more of these kinds of devastating events in the future.

“The governor calls this the new normal. But I would like you to think about this as anything but normal,” Neal Driscoll, professor in Geosciences Division at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, told the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in August when the board approved the initial funding for the fire camera pilot program. “The planet’s temperature is not normal. The extended droughts are not normal.”

Longer periods of drought have contributed to an increased likelihood of devastating wildfires with “tornado-like” tendencies that allow fires to jump large rivers, highways and other traditional fire barriers, he said. “We call this the escalating fire threat,” he said. “It’s not normal... It’s not going to be the same this year as it is next year. We are watching things escalate and change.”

Shortly after Driscoll’s testimony, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the \$475,000 initial funding for the pilot project. “We cannot get those cameras up fast enough, as far as I’m concerned,” said Supervisor Shirlee Zane.



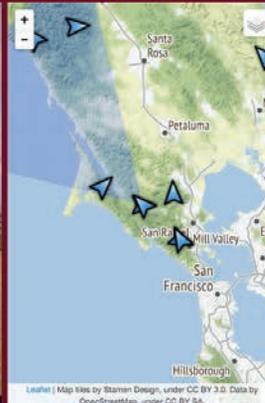
*Left: A plume of smoke is visible from the location where two high-definition, near-infrared cameras are being installed atop the university’s Fairfield Osborn Preserve. The cameras, detailed center and right, will monitor an expansive view of the region from Petaluma to Santa Rosa and from the Valley of the Moon to Mt. St. Helena.*



North Bay Cameras Current View Fullscreen

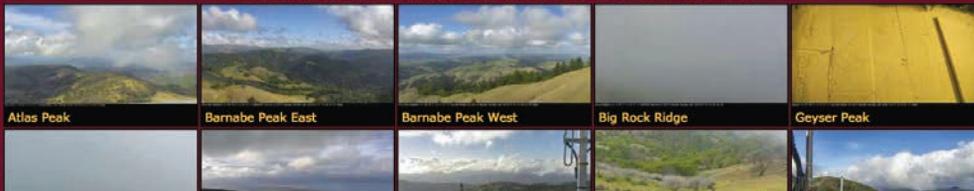


Axis-BarrabeWest X:-44.99 Y:-0.71 Z:1.0 System:Ready:62.91d © Nevada Seismo Lab 2019/01/10 13:20:38.25 Home



Leaflet | Map data by OpenStreetMap contributors, Imagery © Mapbox

Tahoe Cams | BLM-NV Cams | OR-ID-WA Cams | SDG&E Cams | SCE Cams



At the website [www.alertwildfire.org](http://www.alertwildfire.org), the public can view real-time images and time-lapse video from all of the cameras in the North Bay network, as well as those from other networks in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho and Washington. The website is operated by the University of Nevada, Reno Seismological Laboratory in partnership with other universities and government agencies.

## Eyes in the sky

Sonoma County is known for many things: oak-studded hills, agriculture and a majestic coast line to name but a few. But since October 2017, the region has also become synonymous with one other natural element: wildfire.

During the 50-year span from 1964 to 2015, Sonoma County experienced 18 major wildfires that destroyed nearly 2,286 structures. The biggest of these was the 1964 Hanley Fire. But even that historic blaze was nothing compared to the ferocity and swiftness of the Tubbs, Nuns and Pocket fires that swept through the region beginning on Oct. 8, 2017, fueled by winds up to 80 mph.

By the time the fires were contained weeks later, 44 lives had been lost, more than 7,000 structures, including 5,334 homes in Sonoma County alone, were destroyed and more than 110,000 acres of land had been burned.

If there was a common theme to the many stories of those who were forced to flee or fight through the heat and

smoke to save lives, it was this: chaos. Everything happened so quickly, no one could get a handle on how best to allocate resources to either fight the flames or to evacuate homes. Experts say what would have helped would have been to have eyes in the sky showing them what was happening.

“Cameras during the 2017 firestorm would have enabled a quick determination of the number and size (of the fires) and their locations,” said Graham Kent, director of the Nevada Seismological Laboratory at University of Nevada, Reno and overall manager of the camera network.

“The speed of the fires would have been recognized early on. The public could have also watched it all unfold on the AlertWildfire website, providing more public situational awareness.” The result is that early identification “might have led to a victory or two” in stopping some fires early, he said.

Local firefighters uniformly agree about the benefit of the system. “It all comes down to information,” said Jason Boaz, fire chief for the city of Healdsburg and

vice president of the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association. “The quicker we get information on where the fire is and what size it is, we can triangulate and we can look right at it (and) know what the access is.”

As an example of the system’s efficiency, Driscoll said that thanks to the assistance of San Diego Gas and Electric in setting up 15 cameras in a fire-prone region of San Diego, firefighters there were able to swiftly respond to the Lilac Fire that erupted in northern San Diego County on a red flag warning day in December 2017. How long after ignition did it take for firefighters to spot the fire and begin their response? Thirty-one seconds, according to Driscoll.

Although the fire still burned 157 structures, no lives were lost – and the blaze was contained to 4,100 acres.

In terms of battling the kind of the firestorms that are becoming all too common in California, that is what a victory looks like.

# So who exactly will use these cameras?

THE LIST IS LONG. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES.

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## REDCOM FIRE DISPATCH

REDCOM Dispatch, based in Santa Rosa, is a joint powers authority that is responsible for dispatching more than 40 fire agencies in Sonoma County.

Dispatchers say the cameras will help them get a quicker reading on the exact locations of fires.

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## NORTH BAY FIREFIGHTERS

The cameras will not only help response times, but the information gathered will help them predict how the fire will behave, where it is spreading and how to allocate resources.

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## THE PUBLIC

Anyone can see what these cameras are showing at any time of day by logging on to [alertwildlife.org](http://alertwildlife.org). In the case of a fire, the public can see for themselves how it is progressing and make their own decisions about how to respond. A camera on Mount Konocti in Lake County reportedly helped ease public concerns that the Ranch fire, which burned for seven weeks this summer, was going to spread to the community of Lucerne. It did not.

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## UTILITIES

PG&E and Sonoma State already have a working relationship given that power lines run across the western side of Fairfield Osborn Preserve. The university has partnered in research into the utility's fire management practices and what impact they are having on natural systems. With its decision to pay for the addition of nine more cameras to the North Bay network, it will create more opportunity for such research and contribute more data to use to mitigate wildfire threats.

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## STUDENTS

This high-capacity connection that will transmit the information from the cameras opens the door to all kinds of other research and instructional opportunities, Claudia Luke said. The University will be able to stream data from the towers and other sensors in the preserve – everything from microphones, seismographic sensors to weather stations – and beam it back to a two-foot receiver that will be erected atop Darwin Hall where the information will be sent to computers at collaborating universities where it will be collected, analyzed and shared. The result is that “suddenly we will have a really quick connection to campus,” said Luke. “That means we can lecture at the preserve and talk to students who are sitting in the classroom.”

## CLAUDIA LUKE: Growing an Environmentally Ready Society

Among Claudia Luke's numerous recognitions for her work on behalf of the environment, she can now add “Leader of the North Bay” to the list.



With her work in establishing the SSU Center for Environmental Inquiry, which engages students with regional environmental projects using the university's 4,200 acres of preserves, Luke was recognized by the North Bay Leadership Council for her “environmental stewardship.” The council noted her “inspiring leadership” in being “enthusiastically dedicated to growing an environmentally ready society.”

“This award is really about a community – staff, faculty, students, community partners and administrators – who

believe in putting our best foot forward to address environmental challenges,” said Luke, director of the Center for Environmental Inquiry. “None of us knows the answers right now, but we can give humanity the skills, knowledge and creativity to them figure out.”

Since its creation in 2016, the center has worked with students on projects such as developing sensors and software for climate change, studying asthma-related air quality conditions and looking into how to protect biodiversity from invasive species.

“We need to come together to make an extraordinary investment in preparing ourselves to face the future,” said Luke. “I hope this award encourages more people from all backgrounds to get involved in teaching the next generation of professionals, which is needed across all disciplines, all sectors and all perspectives in order to find viable solutions.”



# SSU's Maturing Hollywood Connection

ALUMNI BUILDING SOLID RESUMÉS WITH WORK ON “SPIDER-MAN HOMECOMING,” “BLACK PANTHER,” “SMALLFOOT” AND “HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3”

By Francisco A. Carbajal, '17

Since the beginning of the film franchise with the 2008 surprise blockbuster hit “Iron Man,” the Marvel Cinematic Universe has amassed more than \$17 billion in box office revenue. And it shows no signs of slowing down.

What started out as a lower budget superhero film with Robert Downey Jr. portraying Tony Stark, the billionaire, munitions-funded playboy who has a kidnapping experience that alters his world view in heroic proportions, has become a booming business with income equivalent to North Korea's GDP.

And although it has yet to appear in the closing credits of any of the 20 films (and counting) the franchise has created to date, Sonoma State University is certainly deserving of a mention for its contributions to Marvel's success – contributions such as Anna Luna.

Luna, class of 2016, has been part of the effort to build the franchise by working on the two biggest

blockbusters in the last two years: Marvel's “Black Panther” and “Spider-Man: Homecoming.”

Before working on these films, and while still a student at Sonoma State, Luna was part of a special group of Seawolves that attended the Cannes Film Festival twice – once in 2015 and again in 2016 – to showcase her work on the films “Rampage” and “Bobby,” her directorial debut.

She says the experience encouraged her to continue her path and join Sony Pictures after graduation.

“My college career at Sonoma State was an incredible time,” says Luna, a San Diego native, who now lives in Encino.

“I got involved with programs within the Communications Department, such as Studio Blue, that gave me valuable exposure to the filmmaking process and the opportunity to explore my talents.”

Associate Professor Edward Beebout has seen Luna's talents first hand as the campus facilitator for Studio Blue, SSU's video production media house. “When she got first involved

with Studio Blue, she really blossomed, and it became apparent really quickly that she had found her niche,” said Beebout. “Almost immediately she went from student to group leader to then general manager [of the media house]. You can just tell she lived and breathed video production.”

**“I got involved with programs within the Communications Department such as Studio Blue that gave me valuable exposure to the filmmaking process and the opportunity to explore my talents.”**

Luna credits her networking experience with landing her first job at Sony Pictures in Hollywood shortly after she graduated in 2016.

“Being a post production-assistant on both ‘Spider-Man’ and ‘Black Panther’ was an amazing time,” she said. “A majority of my responsibilities were keeping the editors, director and producers and post team all on schedule, healthy



Anna Luna, '16 (above), was a member of the Marvel Studios' teams that created two of its most recent hits: "Spider-Man: Homecoming" (opposite page) and "Black Panther" (below). Photos courtesy Marvel Studios.



and happy. I was responsible for updating the movie's continuity with each new cut and setting up meetings between the editors and the studio executives," she said. "Both movies had very tight delivery schedules, and it was my job to make sure we were hitting our deadlines in the best way possible."

Luna said she also helped to organize re-shoots and "pick-up" shoots where actors were called back to redo a scene "or add a line that the director didn't get the first time shooting."

**She credits her ability to join various teams and practice her film relationships to her experience at SSU.**

Luna compares her post production department as the "relief pitchers" of the filmmaking business. But it's not quick work. "Post [production] is also usually the longest part of the process, so often I spend eight months

to a year with these teams," she said. "We're the last people to 'fix' the film before it is released to the world, and we either make or break the film."

Through her connections in these teams, Luna is now a post-production assistant in an as-yet-untitled Netflix movie.

She credits her ability to join various teams and practice her film relationships to her experience at SSU.

"During my time at Sonoma State, I also met other students with similar passions and started building a network of fellow student filmmakers, which led to creating short films and going to Cannes," she said. "I still am connected to those friendships and connections I made at Sonoma, and we continue to help each other grow in our filmmaking careers."

One of those friendships is with Sean Tadlock, another 2016 graduate who also is now part of the Sonoma State-Hollywood connection. He was part of Luna's team that went to Cannes and joined Sony Pictures Animation as a production assistant after graduation.

Tadlock credits his time on campus for helping him find his career path. "I thought I wanted to be an editor for film and television and through my internship experience at a small production house during my time at Sonoma," said Tadlock. But he learned otherwise.

"I learned a lot from that internship, but the main takeaway was that video editing and being on set for long hours were not experiences I was passionate about pursuing further. I'm so grateful I learned that in school rather than trying to pursue it in Los Angeles after graduation."





Tadlock, who is roommates with Luna in Encino, has been part of the team at Sony Animation and has worked on films such as “Hotel Transylvania 3” and “Smallfoot” since graduation.

**“Studio Blue helped me figure out what kind of short films I wanted to make,” he said.**

“My favorite part of my job as a production assistant was getting to sit in on reviews with the director and visual effects supervisor and see the process of building an animated film,” said Tadlock. “My supervisors at Sony always encourage me to sit in on meetings and learn about the technical side of animation and all the different techniques and processes used to turn a simple mold

on a computer into a fully moving, simulated character on screen.”

Tadlock is currently working in the marketing department as a marketing production assistant for the just released animated movie “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse.”

“In my new position I’m helping to build all the promotional media, such as posters, billboards, and other advertising pieces for the movie,” said Tadlock. “It’s been a nice change of pace and I’ve been able to learn more about the industry from a new perspective.”

Tadlock eventually wants to be a writer for a television show. During his time writing and being a group leader for a short film group at Studio Blue he discovered what genre he wants to continue to work in. “Studio Blue helped me figure out what kind of



*Sean Tadlock, '16, above center, works as a production assistant with Sony Pictures Animation. Projects he has participated on include “Smallfoot,” “Hotel Transylvania 3” below, and “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,” top. Photos courtesy Sony Pictures Animation.*

short films I wanted to make,” he said. “I had the opportunity to be creative and produce short films in genres I was interested in, such as drama and horror. Turns out, I’m better suited at comedies because my more dramatic pieces always ended up making people laugh instead of cry.”

As the short film leader, Tadlock raised his group to new heights, according to Beebout. “The reason why that happened was because his passion for film was just so infectious. You would listen in to their group’s meeting and hear them be so into it, and they were into it because Sean



was just so into it,” said Beebout. “He really led by example.”

Tadlock, who is originally from Loomis, recently directed his first comedy short and hopes to shop it around local film festivals in Los Angeles.

Sonoma State has alums working in other parts of Hollywood. Alex Bretow, one of the original Campus Movie Fest winners at SSU, works as a producer for Mammoth Pictures, and award-winning film producer Laurie Macdonald has worked on such Academy Award-winning films as “Gladiator,” “Catch Me If You Can” and the “Men in Black” franchise with her production company, Parkes/Macdonald.

For anyone interested in a following a similar path in movies, Tadlock and Luna have some advice. “Besides taking all the film-related courses at Sonoma State, start making short films with your friends, classmates, theater majors, or anyone with a pulse,” says Tadlock. “Get a summer internship even if you don't get school credit for it. Experience not only is helpful on a resume but will also help you understand yourself better and what you really want to do on a film production.”

“Try to learn as much as you can about each role whether its directing, producing, editing, lighting, sound, financing, etc,” Luna adds. “Build your network. Find opportunities at Sonoma and beyond. Connections

are extremely important in this industry so start reaching out to people now. But overall just start making (films).”

Luna’s favorite part of her job? It goes back to her time at Sonoma State – “seeing the director, editor, sound editor, VFX teams all work together to create one vision,” she said.

“It’s pretty amazing to see it all come together and even more rewarding when it’s a huge success like ‘Black Panther.’ This reminds me of all the work we did at SSU where all my friends and I were throwing around ideas and collaborating together.”

Sort of like “The Avengers,” she adds with a laugh.

## Path from SSU to Hollywood ran through Cannes

Anna Luna and Sean Tadlock have worked for some of the biggest names in filmmaking, but their love for making movies began during their time at Sonoma State.

The two came together through the Communications and Media Studies Department’s Studio Blue program and were invited to the 2016 Cannes Film Festival to screen two of their short films produced for the annual Campus Movie Fest hosted at SSU months earlier.

Campus Movie Fest challenges students at colleges nationwide to make a five-minute film, start to finish, in one week for which the best ones are invited to Cannes.

Luna won Best Director and Jury Award prizes at the festival for her



*These SSU Studio Blue filmmakers were invited to the 2016 Cannes Film Festival to screen their two short films. They are, from left: standing, Sam Houser, Sean Tadlock, Anna Luna, Charlie Baker and Alex Bretow; seated, Mary-Madison Baldo, Jason Nathan M. Weiss and Kayley Kemp.*

directorial debut “Bobby,” a story based off of her cousin’s struggle with acceptance by his parents for being homosexual and the emotional weight that carries when he contracts HIV.

Tadlock was recognized for his role as an actor in the studio’s film “Slut Man Friends,” for which he

was nominated for the Golden Tripod Best Actor as a comedic administrative wingman for his roommate’s late night rendezvous.

After the two films were shown at a red carpet event on campus, they were chosen to be screened at the world renowned Cannes Film Festival in France later that year.



*President Judy K. Sakaki, far right, welcomes the Beglin family to campus including, from left, Jimmy, mother Sandi Beglin, Samantha and Johnny.*

## Three is the Lucky Number FOR New Wave of Seawolves

By Paul Gullixson

The Book of Ecclesiastes says “A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” Neither, it turns out, are some of the historic “threes” that are to be found in this year’s class of Seawolves.

When campus opened this fall, Sonoma State welcomed a first-time freshman class of 1,793 students in addition to 821 transfer students. However, among these newcomers, three was by far the most intriguing number.

For example, in what appears to be a first for the university, this year’s crop of transfer students included a set of triplets: Jimmy, Johnny and Samantha Beglin, who come to Sonoma County from Sunnyvale.

“We all have very different majors,” said Samantha Beglin, 20, a biochemistry major. “But we all visited Sonoma State, and we just liked how warm it is and how friendly everyone is. It just so happened that it

worked best for all of us. We were like, ‘Yeah, this is home.’”

Her brother Johnny, who now plays for the Sonoma State lacrosse team along with their sibling Jimmy, said he was the first in the family to apply and be accepted as a transfer student from De Anza College in Cupertino. Later on, as they were all going over paperwork and deciding on what schools to attend, “We said, ‘you know it would be pretty cool if we all went to school together,’” he said.

**This year’s crop of transfer students included a set of triplets: Jimmy, Johnny and Samantha Beglin.**

They laughed about it at the time, but eight months later they were packing up and bound for SSU where Johnny is majoring in business while Jimmy, also a transfer from De Anza,

is majoring in sociology. All three are living in Beaujolais Village in separate units.

Samantha, a transfer from Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, said she was surprised at first that they all decided to come to the same university. “But it kind of fits, because that’s normally what happens for us,” she said. “These two are my best friends.”

**“We said, ‘you know it would be pretty cool if we all went to school together.’”**

Coming to the same school also provided no small measure of relief to their parents, said Johnny. “I mean just the packing alone,” he said. “I can’t imagine how we would have done it if we went to three different schools.”

Meanwhile, there is another grouping of three that stands out this fall. When freshman Leila Dodson, a liberal studies major from Concord,

enrolled this fall, she became the third generation of Sonoma State students in her family.

In fact, she is already known by some on campus as she was a central figure in a well-known SSU photo from 2000 when her father, Justin Dodson, carried her across the stage when he received his diploma from Sonoma State. Leila was just a few months old at the time.

**When freshman Leila Dodson, a liberal studies major from Concord, enrolled this fall, she became the third generation of Sonoma State students in her family.**

“It was 100 percent spontaneous,” said Justin Dodson who said he just took Leila from his wife’s arms as the procession was passing by and cradled her across the stage. “She was definitely a hit,” he added. “They weren’t cheering for *me*.”

When Justin’s mother, Mary Francina Dodson, graduated in 1969 with

a degree in political science, Carl Rogers, the famous American psychologist, was the commencement speaker and Bob Dylan’s “The Times They Are a-Changin’” was the processional, she said.

The institution was still known then as Sonoma State College. “The campus was surrounded by farms, fields all around with a long driveway, several parking lots, and three concrete buildings,” she said. “I am proud to be an alumni of SSU and so proud of both my son and my granddaughter for attending SSU.”

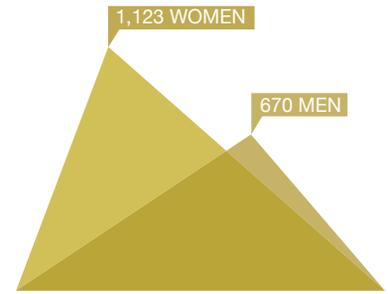
Justin, who graduated with a degree in business with an emphasis on finance, said he didn’t “over-promote” the idea of his daughter going to Sonoma State when she was deciding among several universities that had accepted her. “But I certainly encouraged her because I had a great experience there.”

Ultimately, all it took was a visit to the campus and a tour, he said. “She hit the ‘accept’ button in the parking lot on the way home,” he said. “She really saw herself there.”

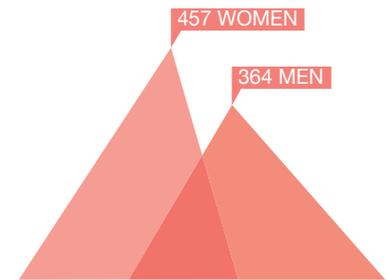


*Leila Dodson’s earliest visit to the SSU campus was 18 years ago in the arms of her father Justin, as he received his business degree. The two were back on campus this fall when Leila began her own academic journey at the university.*

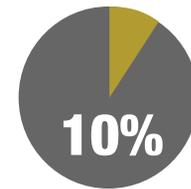
PROFILE OF SSU FALL CLASS 2018-19



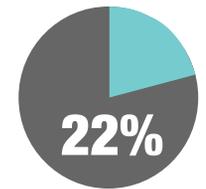
2018 TRANSFER STUDENTS



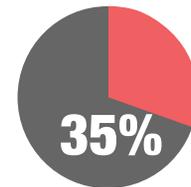
FRESHMEN FROM SONOMA COUNTY



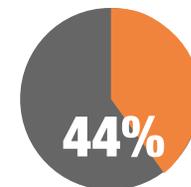
OVERALL FROM SONOMA COUNTY



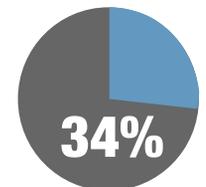
STUDENTS FROM LAKE, MARIN, MENDOCINO, NAPA, SOLANO AND SONOMA COUNTIES



CAUCASIAN FRESHMEN



LATINO FRESHMEN



First in the family to attend college

439 Students in 2014  
473 Students in 2016  
606 Students in 2018

## Alumni Association Board of Directors 2018-2019

### President

#### Joseph Huang

BS Business Administration, 2002;  
BA International Economics, 2004

### Immediate Past President

#### David Felte

BA Economics &  
BS Business Administration, 2001

### Vice President/Administration

#### Renan Young

BA Political Science, 2014;  
MPA Public Administration, 2017

### Vice President/Finance

#### James Elliott

BS Business Administration, 2000

### Directors

#### Vincent Cortese

BA Communications, 2000

#### Randy Ferino

BS Business Administration  
(HR Management), 2001; MBA 2006

#### Michelle Fielder

BA Sociology, 2012

#### Vanessa Johns

BA Communications, 2013

#### Patrick Maloney

BA Political Science, 2014

#### Jim Manly

MBA, 1999

#### Elizabeth "Libby" Payan

BA Environmental Studies and Planning  
& BA Economics, 2014

#### Logan Pitts

BA Political Science, 2017

#### Annette Powell

BA Business Administration-Marketing  
& Psychology, 2005

#### Travis Saracco

BA Communications, 2012

#### Frank Scalercio

BS Psychology, 1983, UC Davis

#### Shari Shamsavari

MA Psychology, 1994

### Alumni Association Director

#### Laurie Ogg

BS Kinesiology, 1994; MA Kinesiology, 1999

## Greetings from your Alumni Association

Over the past year, the SSU Alumni Association participated in Sonoma State's strategic planning process. Thanks to all of you who completed the alumni survey, we now have very important information to guide our collaboration with and adoption of the university's newly completed strategic plan.

I was pleased to learn that the majority of you, like me, view your decision to attend SSU as good or excellent and like what we are doing. Your responses also told us that while 90 percent of you view SSU positively, we could improve your experiences as alumni, specifically around career preparedness. The Alumni Association is committed to serving you to best meet your needs. I am excited to share with you our enhanced partnership with Career Services. Through this partnership, our goal is to improve our support of amenities and activities that provide employment and mentoring opportunities to both alumni and students, who are, after all, "alumni in residence."

At our annual Alumni Association Retreat in August, we discussed our collaborative plan to expand and enrich both the student and alumni experiences. Over the next year, we will be rolling out opportunities for you to reengage with SSU through mentoring, networking and other professional development events and activities. Watch your inbox for these special invitations. Not getting our emails? Update your email and mailing address and we'll send you a Seawolf alumni pin!

I also want to thank those of you who have contributed to the Heart of SSU Alumni Scholarship endowment. Because of your investment, we selected the very first Heart of SSU Alumni Scholarship recipient this fall. You can read more about this outstanding young lady on the following pages.

Yours for Sonoma,  
Joseph Huang,  
President, Alumni Association  
[www.ssualumni.org](http://www.ssualumni.org)



SSU Alumni Association Board members and MBA Alumni Affinity Group members pose for a photo before packing hundreds of pounds of apples during their volunteer session at the Redwood Empire Food Bank at their annual Board retreat in August 2018. Pictured left to right, MBA Affinity Group liaisons Mary Jane Stolte and Jorge Morellon, Board member Logan Pitts, Board President Joe Huang, Board member Vanessa Taylor Johns, Director of Alumni Association Laurie Ogg, Board member Renan Young. Back row, left to right, Board members Randy Ferino and Travis Saracco, Associate Vice President of Strategic Communications Paul Gullixson, Board members Libby Payan, Annette Powell, Michelle Fielder and James Elliott. Not pictured Patrick Maloney, Shari Shamsavari and Jim Manly.

## Representing SSU...



Wilson Hall, right, Associated Students President, represents SSU at the annual CSU New York City alumni reception in March 2018.



Board members pose with Lobo and President Judy K. Sakaki at the Toast of the Town/Senior Send Off 2018. Pictured from left to right, Director of Alumni Association Laurie Ogg, Board member Frank Scalerio, President Sakaki, Lobo Seawolf, Board President Joe Huang and Board members Randy Ferino, Vanessa Taylor Johns and Travis Saracco.

## Upcoming Events

### February 23, 2019

CSU Alumni Reception  
Taipei, Taiwan  
Grand Hyatt Taipei

### February 27, 2019

CSU Alumni Reception  
Hong Kong  
Renaissance Hong Kong  
Harbour View Hotel

### March 1, 2019

CSU Alumni Reception  
Tokyo, Japan  
Hotel New Otani Tokyo

### March 26, 2019

CSU Alumni Reception  
Washington, D.C.  
Hyatt Washington, D.C.

### March 28, 2019

CSU Alumni Reception  
New York City  
Rubin Museum of Art

To register for any of these receptions visit [www.calstate.edu/alumni/events/](http://www.calstate.edu/alumni/events/)

## Take Me Out to the Ball Game!



SSU Alumni cheered on the Oakland Athletics in August at a pre-game tailgate followed by an A's win and Harry Potter-themed fireworks.

In the stands are, from left to right, Ann Lucero, Manthan Gajjar, Paul Maytorena, Brian Wedderburn, Vanessa Taylor Johns, Aaron Wadler, Annette Powell, Joe Huang, Renan Young, Stephen Kent, Rob Payan, Libby Payan, Bob U'ren, Jim Wilder.

## Searching for Stories from SSU Athletes

Don Vachini, '66, BA kinesiology, and three-sport student-athlete from '64 to '66, in conjunction with SSU Athletics has embarked upon a research project to compile an accurate history of intercollegiate athletics at Sonoma State University.

The project focuses on the 1962–1974 period, the true infancy era of intercollegiate sports at SSU. Student-athletes of that time are referred to as “pioneer athletes.”

If you were a student-athlete or cheerleader at Sonoma State during these formative years, please contact Vachini. “Any tiny bit of information, short anecdote or any professor or coach who made an impact on you during time here would be welcome. Actually, just hearing from a former Cossack would be great,” says Vachini.

The ultimate plan is to house these chronicles of the university's intercollegiate sports history in the digital historic annals in the University Library. You may contact Vachini at [dvachini@aol.com](mailto:dvachini@aol.com) or contact the SSU Alumni Association at [alumni@sonoma.edu](mailto:alumni@sonoma.edu).

Submit your news for Classnotes at [www.ssualumni.org](http://www.ssualumni.org).  
Click on "Alumni Update Page."

## Tell Us About Your Professional Accomplishments

As *Insights* grows so does our Classnotes section. We want to know what you've done with your degree and where it has taken you. Here's a way to tell us about the new job, promotion, awards, recently published book, change of career, etc. Think of it as a wonderful vehicle for networking. We are proud of all our alumni and want to share your professional news. We would love for you to include photos (the bigger the better) so please submit them at the same time. Visit [ssualumni.org/alumniupdate](http://ssualumni.org/alumniupdate) to share your milestones with us!

## 1980s

**John Bast, '80, MBA**, recently joined Homebridge Financial Services, Inc. in Napa as a reverse mortgage specialist.

**Wynette (Herrero) Hilton, '85, BA Psychology**, earned a multiple subject teaching credential, an administrative credential and a master's degree in educational leadership and has spent 22 years working in education, teaching students from pre-K to adult. This year she is expanding her role from principal at Tenaya Elementary School to superintendent-principal for the Big Oak Flat-Groveland Unified School District.

**Stephen McGreevy, '88, BA Economics**, is the sole proprietor of SP McGreevy Productions, researching and recording Earth's "natural ELF-VLF radio" emissions from the magnetosphere as well as terrestrial sources such as lightning storms. He also does professional-level audio-recording work of live bands and other field-audio-recording.

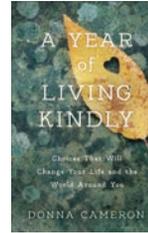
**Surani Hayre Kwan, '88, BA India Studies, '02, MS Nursing, '14, MBA**, was recently inducted into the Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. The FAANP

recognizes nurse practitioner leaders who have made outstanding contributions to health care through clinical practice, research, education or policy, and provides a forum to extend and enhance such efforts.



**After 35 years, this group of graduates from the Geology Department reunited Sept. 20-23, 2018, at Grandview Campground, just outside the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in the White-Inyo Mountains of California.**

**Pictured from left are Stephan Bork, Mark Egbert, Greg Bartow, Dana Willis, Gary Barker, Joe Montoya, Steve Fischbein, Greg Johnson and Dave Van Horsen. All graduated between 1983 and 1985, and all were or still are practicing geologists in various fields.**



**Donna Cameron, '74 English**, is the author of the recently published book *A Year of Living Kindly*. Cameron has spent her career working with nonprofit organizations and causes as an executive, consultant, trainer and volunteer. She has seen kindness in action and been awed by its power to transform.

## 1990s

**Brian Ross, '90, BA Spanish**, is a conference interpreter of Spanish and Portuguese.

**Tom Martin '92, BA Music**, was a recipient of the Golden Bell Award in 2012. The Golden Bell Awards celebrate public education in Marin County by bringing the community together to recognize fantastic certificated teachers and faculty, exceptional classified and confidential staff, outstanding community partners and student programs.

**Stephanie Graham, '95, BA Spanish**, has been in Pharmaceutical sales for 18 years with a specialty in Ophthalmology the last 11 years.

**Paul Dunaway, '95, BA Psychology, '99, MA Counseling**, is the new Adult and Aging Division director for the Sonoma County Human Services Department. He has been with the department since 1999 serving several positions with the Family, Youth and Children's Division.

**Colleen Keirn '96, CRED**, recently earned her Doctorate of Education degree through Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Her dissertation study considered the effects of institutional racism on faculty of color in the university and examined how the structure of American higher education impacts

the current state of academia. Currently, Keirn works at Saint Mary's College of California in Moraga and is actively involved in statewide accreditation and credentialing.

**Panteha E. Saban, '96, BA Political Science**, was appointed to a judgeship in the Santa Clara County Superior Court.

**Erik Shearer, '96, BA Art**, is the new assistant superintendent and vice president of Academic Affairs for Napa Valley College.

**Kelly Back, '97, BS Business Marketing**, has been hired as the vice president and manager of the Sebastopol office of Exchange Bank. Back joins Exchange Bank with 13 years of banking experience, having worked previously for Chase in Santa Rosa.

**Nate Campbell, '98, BA Communications, '02, MA Interdisciplinary Studies**, has been named program director of KVON 1440 AM and KVYN 99.3 FM stations, as well as music director of KVYN 99.3 FM "The Vine." He will also deliver news on-air for the stations.

## 2000s

**Andrew D. Fuller, '02, BS Business Administration**, has been hired as executive vice president, chief financial officer and chief risk officer of Santa Rosa's Poppy Bank.

**Aaron Lucey, '03, BA Economics, '15, MBA**, has been appointed vice president and information and security risk management officer for Summit State Bank.

## 2010s

**Shawna Hettrich, '11, BA Hutchins**, was employed by Novato Unified School District 2011-2018 where she taught sixth grade at San Jose Middle school. She is the 2016-2017 Golden Bell Award site recipient in Marin County for her work in advocating positive change through a leadership program. She has now started working as the new vice principal of Sonoma Valley High School.

**Jon Anger, '13, CRED**, was a recipient of the Golden Bell Award in 2013. The Golden Bell Awards celebrate public education in Marin County by bringing the community together to recognize fantastic certificated teachers and faculty, exceptional classified and confidential staff, outstanding community partners and student programs.

**Tim Zahner, '11, MBA** has been named the new executive director of Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau. Prior to his new position, Zahner was the chief operating officer of Sonoma County Tourism for 11 years.

**Emily (Sparks) Johnson, '12, BA Sociology** became a licensed social worker in January 2018 and gave birth to her first child in September 2018.

**Brittany Johnson, '13, BA Sociology**, graduated from McGeorge School of Law, May 2017 and passed the July 2017 California Bar Exam. She recently became an associate attorney at McNamara, Ney, Beatty, Slattery, Borges & Ambacher in Fairfield, CA.

**Jessica Edmundson, '13, BA Sociology** graduated with her master's in public administration from University of San Francisco on May 19, 2018.

**Amanda Lewis '13, BA Biology**, studied desert and marine landscapes through ecological and social field methods in Baja during the summer of 2018. Lewis, an avian propagation keeper at Freeport McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, lives in New Orleans, LA and is a graduate student in Miami University's Global Field Program.

**Vanessa Johns '13, BA Communications**, is now the community engagement coordinator at the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

**Elena Traboulsi, '15, BS Business** began a new job as a homeowner consultant with Homebound in May of 2018. She also married the love of her life last year whom she met as a freshman at SSU.

**Taylor Stowe, '15, BA Communications**, has joined the Sonoma-based 3 Badge Beverage Corporation and will be conducting marketing activities and initiatives specific to 3 Badge Beverage Corporation's growing ecology portfolios.

**Brennan Chin, '18, BS Biology, MS Biology**, started a teaching position for the Santa Rosa Junior College biology department in the fall of 2018.

**Cherlene Griffith, '19, MBA**, was recently hired as CannaCraft's new vice president of production. Previously she specialized in food safety and quality control for big companies like Crystal Geyser Water and Smuckers. She also proudly served in the United States Navy for four years.



[www.facebook.com/ssualumni](https://www.facebook.com/ssualumni)



Barbara and Ralph Jaeck



Mahnke-Watters



Baby McDowell



Baby Savitch and dad

## Anniversaries

**Barbara and Ralph Jaeck, '67**, who met while students at SSU, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last June. Barbara is a retired librarian and Ralph is a retired city manager. They have resided in Reno for more than 25 years.

## Weddings

**Sean Curley, '05, BA Sociology** married **Colleen Bryson, '14, BA History**, in Maui during the month of June 2018.

**Nick Mahnke, '15, BS Computer Science** married **Kayleigh Watters, '14, BA Psychology** at Sonoma State University on June 2, 2018.

## Births

**Brent McDowell, '12, BA Environmental Studies and Planning** and **Ellen Hill, '12, BA Environmental Studies and Planning**, married on Aug. 1, 2015 and had their first baby girl, Avery Louise McDowell in Sonoma County on Jan. 1, 2018.

**Tyler Savitch '13, BA Communications**, and his wife welcomed their son, Clark Ripken Savitch, on June 2, 2018.

## In Memoriam

**Thomas Oleari '74, Business Management.** Oleari was born in New Orleans, LA on July 14, 1948. His family later moved to San Rafael. He graduated from San Rafael High School in June of 1966. After high school, Oleari enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He studied music and business management at College of Marin and Sonoma State University. Through the '70s and '80s he played guitar and composed rock, blues and country western music professionally in two bands that he founded: Flyer and Smokin'.

**Wally Lowry, Emeritus Professor of Business Accounting, founder of the Accounting Forum and co-founder of SSU's Wine Business Program** passed away on Sept. 14, 2017. Professor Lowry joined the faculty in 1969 and taught at SSU for 32 years. While at SSU, Lowry developed and maintained career contact with the major international accounting firms and mentored hundreds of students in the accounting and wine business fields.

## We Want to Hear All About You

Do you have a special event to share with your fellow SSU alumni? We are ramping up this new section of Classnotes dedicated to weddings, births and in memoriam. Please send photos of your recent nuptials and family additions, or if we can help remember an SSU alum who has passed on, please let us know.

Visit [www.ssualumni.org/alumniupdate](http://www.ssualumni.org/alumniupdate) to submit photos and to share your milestones.

## 2018-2019 Alumni Scholarship Recipients

### Jaimie Ramirez Receives Inaugural Heart of SSU Alumni Scholarship



The perception of “rise and shine” has special meaning for Jaimie Ramirez. While most college students are tasked with resisting the temptation to snooze a little longer, Ramirez faces a morning ritual of inventorying two major illnesses that would sideline even the strongest of wills. She is clearly cut from a different fabric because quitting is never an option.

Life was not easy early on. Her parents stressed the importance of education and hard work, but they separated when she was six years old, forcing her mother to become a single parent of two children. The physical demands of working three jobs took their toll on her mother, so Ramirez assumed the responsibility of caring for her autistic brother.

Then came the diagnosis of hyperthyroidism at the age of 12, followed by juvenile fibromyalgia 18 months later. Her father’s health insurance covered most of her medical expenses, and she found ways of adapting to the physical challenges. Through it all, she could hear her mother say, “Actions speak louder than words.” Ramirez has been employed in some capacity since the age of 14.

Giving back to her community was also part of the equation. “I volunteered on Saturday mornings, making 1,000 burritos for homeless neighborhoods in Los Angeles,” she said. Ramirez took a senior class trip to the Dominican Republic where she assisted in building a community center.

After graduation, Ramirez would like to parlay her double major of pre-nursing and Spanish with a linguistics minor into a U.S. Navy nursing career where she can reach underdeveloped countries and expand her medical knowledge.

#### About the Heart of SSU Alumni Scholarship

The Alumni Association established the Heart of SSU Alumni Scholarship endowment in 2015 to fund a complete year of tuition for a Sonoma State student who wouldn’t otherwise be able to attend college. The scholarship recognizes students who embody the spirit of Sonoma State, have a strong academic performance, and demonstrate a commitment to the campus and community.

Current Sonoma State students with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and at least 24 completed units at SSU are eligible to apply. Candidates are identified through the University Scholarship Program.

### Jennifer Juarez Yoc Earns Prestigious Nichols Scholar Recognition



A difficult home environment thrust the responsibilities of adulthood upon Jennifer Juarez Yoc earlier in life than most college students. Both parents experienced serious illness; three young siblings need her co-parenting; and she is the only English speaker in the home capable of family advocacy.

Despite these and other challenges, she continues to pursue her goal of becoming a physician and healthcare leader of underserved individuals in urban communities.

Now a senior biology and Spanish major, Juarez Yoc has made headway into her career by participating in internships and volunteer opportunities that have positively influenced the global community.

She interned at UCSF as a high school senior and helped create a summit for 300 young women. “We provided them with tools to value themselves, graduate from high school, avoid drugs and alcohol, and to live with purpose,” she said.

She interned at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine’s Summer Medical and Dental Education Program during the summer of 2016, examining a variety of healthcare issues affecting medically underserved communities.

As a junior studying abroad in Spain, Juarez Yoc expanded her perspective by volunteering at a hospital and nursing home. She has also been a peer health leader at the wellness center in her neighborhood, one of San Francisco’s most degraded public housing sectors, since December 2017.

Her academic achievements include the CSU Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation and SSU’s McNair Scholars Program. She is currently in the process of co-founding a pre-health club for minorities in affiliation with the Math Engineering Science and Achievement program.

Her plans include attending UCSF School of Medicine, becoming a U.S. Air Force officer and assistant clinical professor at UCSF Department of Family Community Medicine, and establishing an organization called “Mission SHINE” (Support Healing International Needs in Excellence).

## 2018 Distinguished Alumni Honorees

### Delphine Metcalf-Foster: Pioneering Female and Veterans Advocate



Like the motto of the Disabled American Veterans, 1st Sgt. Delphine Metcalf-Foster (ret. 1996) is committed to “fulfilling promises to the men and women who served.” This Vallejo native and disabled Gulf War veteran spent 21 years in the U.S. Army and now supports disabled veterans via the DAV and as a member of the First Data Military Advisory Council. “I was inspired to participate in the good work of the

Disabled American Veterans after they explained the benefits to myself and my company,” said Metcalf-Foster.

“I am committed to advocating for others and giving back to our well-deserved veterans... It makes me feel complete.”

Her work with DAV has included positions as the 2017-2018 national commander (the first female to hold that title in the organization’s 96-year history), 2004 Department of California commander, chairman of the Department of California Resolution Committee, District 1 commander, and national commander’s aide. In 2003, she joined a Veterans Advisory Board organized by former Congressional members Gary Miller and Ellen Tauscher. Metcalf-Foster

was also a board member of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Her volunteer work overlapped with a second career as a quality assurance specialist at the Alameda Naval Air Station where she retired after 20 years. Her service awards include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (10c), National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, and the Bronze Star.

Metcalf-Foster also volunteers at the Martinez Community Living Center, is a mentor for teenage mothers and occasionally appears as a guest panelist or speaker.

She says one of her greatest lessons learned is that “each of us has a personal calling that’s as unique as a fingerprint, and it’s important while we are here to offer it to others in the form of service as we work together to make a difference.”

A devoted mother, grandmother and great grandmother, she earned a BA in Liberal Studies at SSU after achieving an AA in Psychology at Solano Community College.

### Jong Lee: A Champion of Social Justice



It began with a vision – build an accounting firm that fulfills the financial needs of individuals, nonprofits and small- and medium-sized businesses in the Oakland community. That dream became a reality in 1977 when Jong Lee, CPA EA DBA CFF, established the J.H. Lee Accountancy Corporation after working at other companies for several years. Today, his role at The Lee

Accountancy Group is more advisor than accountant as displayed by his commitment to helping clients with their entire financial well-being.

Lee, who prefers “Jong” in conversation, believes small businesses have an obligation to their communities as demonstrated by his work with the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, City of Oakland Economic Development Commission and as commissioner for the California State Office of Economic Opportunity.

“I follow the philosophy of John Wesley,” Lee said. “Make all you can; save all you can; give all you can.”

For 24 years, he headed Oakland’s annual Thanksgiving Day dinner, feeding up to 2,500 people from underserved communities by organizing donations, volunteers and entertainment. He also sponsored an April Easter egg hunt and has been very active in Hispanic and Asian social justice issues as well as the Korean United Methodist Church in Oakland.

Former Mayor Jerry Brown proclaimed March 5, 2004 as “Dr. Jong Lee Day” for his contributions to the Oakland community.

His positive outlook on life stands in stark contrast to his days as a 9-year-old refugee in South Korea where he lost his parents and siblings in the civil war.

He is currently a business coach, adjunct professor at Argosy University, seminar leader in cross-cultural business training and instructor of certified programs such as “Running a Profitable Small Business” at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Lee, who credits his career success to SSU, where he earned a BA in management in 1971. He has established a scholarship in the School of Business and Economics for accounting majors and supports the SBE Career Center.

# Life-changing.

Your donations make a lasting impact on SSU students. Here are some examples:



## Individual Donors

SSU students benefit from donors such as Chuck and Cathy Williamson, who support the School of Science and Technology. *"The school is providing the personal attention and curriculum support needed for students pursuing science and technology careers and helping to make STEM less intimidating and more accessible to a much broader group of students,"* says Chuck Williamson. *"We are pleased to support their successes."*



## Foundations

As an example, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation provides critical support to SSU's Green Music Center in its efforts to present the most compelling artists of our time, to investigate ideas and to provide access to diverse artistic experiences that educate, connect and inspire our campus and surrounding North Bay communities.



## Corporations & Organizations

Students also benefit from businesses and community organizations such as The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Tribal Council, which, through the City of Rohnert Park, donated more than \$1 million to SSU last year, funds that supported the Summer Bridge Program, the Talking Circle Project at Fairfield Osborn Preserve and the Joan Baez "Mischief Makers" art exhibit.

**\$13**  
million

Total gifts in 2017-18

**\$49**  
million

Total SSU Endowment

## Ways to Give:

- Estate Gifts
- Programmatic Support
- Student Scholarships
- Endowment
- Gifts in Kind

**Support the  
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Go to: [www.sonoma.edu/give](http://www.sonoma.edu/give)  
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at 707.664.2712 to discuss  
options for giving.



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## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

### SSU's new Learning and Academic Resource Center

Sonoma State's new Learning and Academic Resource Center located on the first floor of the University Library in the Jean and Charles Schulz Information Center and Library is now open for business.

LARC hours are Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Writing Center helps students, faculty and staff with developing their writing skills and producing documents. Writing Center Staff also assist faculty with improving their writing for instructional purposes, supporting Writing Intensive Course curricula and promoting writing across the curriculum.

The Tutorial Program offers free peer tutoring in more than 50 courses each semester and provides weekly drop-in math tutors. Students can easily schedule appointments online through [WiseGuy.com/SSU](http://WiseGuy.com/SSU).

The Supplemental Instruction Program is a peer-led academic assistance program that helps students succeed in specific course sections. Study sessions are led by trained SI Leaders who have mastered the course content. Students can voluntarily attend these SI sessions to increase their understanding of topics and materials from the courses and improve their grades.

LARC Administrative Director Loriann Negri extends this invitation, "We welcome you to come visit LARC and use all of the free services. LARC is primarily a place for students – to be writers, scholars, learners – a space for students to be valued, supported and empowered."

