



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018-2019

Distinguished Alumni Award winners 2018: Kristie Fleckenstein, Ron Stacker Thompson

By John Moody

During Homecoming Week the Department of English hosted its annual ceremony honoring two former students with the Distinguished Alumni Award. Honored this year were Kristie Fleckenstein, professor and director of Rhetoric and Composition at Florida State



University; and Ron Stacker Thompson, chair of Screenwriting at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. In its fifth year, the ceremony was held October 14 in the Founders Suite at the Bone Student Center. The occasion marked the first time either honoree had been back to campus since they were students here.

“The Department of English at ISU was thrilled to reconnect with this year’s Distinguished Alumni Award winners,” said Professor Christopher De Santis, department chair. “Kristie Fleckenstein and Ron Stacker Thompson exemplify the ways in which the education we provide in English Studies can make lasting, life-changing impacts. The many students who have benefited over the years from their teaching and mentoring are part of the proud legacy of this department.”

Kristie Fleckenstein

Kristie Fleckenstein, D.A. '89, a native of Grand Ledge, Michigan, chose Illinois State University for its Doctor of Arts program in English because it aligned with the professional goals she had at the time.

“In the mid-1980s when I returned to graduate school, I originally wanted to teach writing in a community college setting,” Fleckenstein said. “The department’s focus on pedagogy informed by scholarship was a perfect fit.”

By then she had already put in nearly a decade teaching high school English. From there, she taught for two years in community college settings before returning to graduate school to pursue her doctorate. She’s taught at Purdue University-Calumet, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Ball State University, and at Florida State University since 2006.

Over the years, Fleckenstein has earned awards for her teaching and writing. However, this Distinguished Alumni Award from Illinois State is pretty special.

“It is a tremendous honor, one that reminds me how much I learned while working with the faculty in the Department of English,” Fleckenstein said, adding that she gained more than content knowledge and protocols for conducting ethical research while here. “I learned how to think flexibly, and finally, I learned that effective teaching and effective scholarship must emerge from the union of heart and head.”

Fleckenstein said her teachers at Illinois State taught her lessons in humanity that have lasted throughout her career.

Message from the chair

By Christopher De Santis, chair,
Department of English

Over the past year, I had the pleasure of working with our associate chair, directors, and advisors on the 2018 self-study reports for our department’s undergraduate and graduate programs, a process of program



Department Chair
Chris De Santis

review required by the Illinois Board of Higher Education of all programs in the state every eight years. The program review process revealed that the Department of English at Illinois State University remains committed to a transdisciplinary model of the discipline known as “English Studies.” Unlike more traditional departments of English that focus primarily on the study of literature, in our department 10 distinct areas within the discipline—children’s literature, composition, creative writing, English education, linguistics, literary and cultural studies, publishing studies, rhetoric, technical communication, and TESOL—interact and inform one another in ways that enhance students’ understanding of English as a diverse field of inquiry. This model produces strong teachers, scholars, and informed citizens who can draw, as needed, on multiple perspectives to analyze contexts and create new knowledge. Our faculty and staff are deeply committed to the notion that research and teaching are fundamentally interrelated, that strong teaching depends on bringing new knowledge into the classroom, and we have been recognized nationally for our success in pursuing this model.

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In the context of skepticism in our society about the value of the humani-

ties and the persistent question—“What can you do with a major in English?”—we have much work to do to poise ourselves for continuing success, and we approach that work in the coming years from a position of strength. The faculty in ISU’s Department of English, together with the exceptional graduate and undergraduate students that we are so proud to teach and from whom we learn so much, will continue to make vital a department that is, in so many ways, a national model for effective English Studies education. It is a true pleasure to share with alumni and other friends of the Department of English some of the recent accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alumni. Readers of this year’s newsletter will note the multifaceted approach to the discipline we practice at ISU, the social justice implications of so much of our work, and the ways in which the department’s commitment to diversity—of languages and literatures, of modes of writing, of peoples and cultures—resonates in our teaching, learning, and communication of new knowledge to constituencies well beyond Stevenson Hall.

Department of English Newsletter

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Christopher C. De Santis, chair

Libby Lind, office manager

Hannah Kroonblawd, editorial assistant

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“The faculty inspired me to remember that students are more than a name on a roster, a paper in a pile to be graded, or a nuisance to be avoided,” she said. “They are people, and to forget that is a violation of our own personhood.”

Fleckenstein described her entire career as something of a surprise. She never imagined she’d be a full professor at a research university where her scholarship and teaching are so tightly linked. She has taken inspiration from her students’ energy and innovative thinking and has been “remarkably blessed by my career in and out of the classroom.”

All of it has been anchored, she said, by her preparation at ISU.

Ron Stacker Thompson

Ron Stacker Thompson ’64 grew up in Chicago and was motivated to further his education by two women he knew very well growing up. One was his mother, who instilled in him the notion that everyone in the family had a job to do.

“My mother said it was my job to go to school and do well,” Thompson said. “She would question me about any B’s I got, and C’s were unheard of.”

The second influential woman was a teacher, Mrs. Sams, at Chicago’s Farragut High School who totally inspired him to want to make people feel the way she made them feel. That’s how he picked Illinois State, because he looked up to a teacher.

“All I ever wanted to be was an English teacher, and Illinois State Normal had this great reputation for teaching teachers how to teach,” Thompson said.

From there his interests and talents developed further by exploring things he was curious about.

“Everything I am and became comes from Illinois State,” he said. “Everything I wanted to try, I did here. I discovered that I had a speaking voice and a singing voice. I learned I could dance and that I could act. And, I learned gymnastics by joining Gamma Phi.”

Thompson said he put all these talents to use in his career as an actor, director, and writer—all of which became part of his life’s work. For 20 years he’s been an associate professor and chair at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. He’s won numerous awards for his work and has worked alongside many celebrities, but this award from Illinois State holds a prominent place in his office and in his heart.

“When Chris De Santis sent me this letter back in April I couldn’t believe it,” he said. “I cried; I was really tearful. It was so unexpected. Even now when I think of that moment, I get emotional.”

Thompson said he’s always felt connected to Illinois State, even though he hadn’t actually set foot on campus in 53 years.

“I wasn’t a donor or anything, so this award is coming from a real place,” he said. “I’m honored. This is an award for all that I am. That school made me who I am. It gave me the confidence to be me, to try things, and to never doubt myself.”

His feeling for Illinois State was cemented, he said, way back when the school honored him as a top 10 senior.

“As a black man that meant so much to me, and this was in the early 1960s,” he said.

Robert Bone, the University’s ninth president, had a lasting influence on him.

“I worked in his office, and he was so kind,” Thompson said. “I have been in a leadership position many times in my life. He was smart, witty, caring, and he let you know that you were as important as he was and not less because he was the top man.”

Thompson also has fond memories of Bone’s secretary, Dorothy Richardson. “She had an influence on me as well because I did a lot of work directly for her,” Thompson said. “She had this way of being stern in what she expected from you, but loving in how she dealt with you.”

Thompson takes pride in his accomplishments, but he has perspective on what truly matters... family. He’s proud of his nearly 50-year marriage to his wife Cle, whom he met when both were young teachers in Chicago, and their daughter Ashley, and the two grandsons she has blessed them with.

Undergraduate spotlight

Sydney Velez, Fulbright Student Award Recipient

I was an ISU student from 2014 to 2018. I came in as a communication studies major, did some soul-searching, and then transitioned to a public relations major. I later fell in love with my English classes and added it as my second major. The two majors complemented each other well; I was able to apply communication and persuasion theories that I learned in my



PR classes to the way in which language shapes the world that I was studying in my English classes. I focused more on linguistics in the English Department. I love to see its organs, how it grows, changes and shapes thought processes.

A very influential class I took was Growth and Structure of the English Language with Professor Susan Kim. First of all, she is an excellent teacher. She is able to take complex ideas and make them understandable without the student having any prior concrete frame of reference. I did not study Old English or German before taking her class, so the grammatical terminology that went along with that unit was extremely confusing for me. She backpedaled and

re-explained in a few ways until it made sense. She cared about our grasping the material fully. In my capstone course, Professor Chris Breu gave us the framework to understand the underlying structures in media, in its various forms, then allowed us the space to dive deep into discussions. These courses were impactful for me because they challenged me to look at something I thought was familiar in a new way, which always surprised and delighted me.

Throughout my time at ISU, I was very involved in RSOs. A large chunk of my time was serving as a member and then in various leadership roles with Public Relations Student Society of America, where I got excellent real-work experience in my field. I was also a part of Highrise, which is akin to TED Talks but interactive. In terms of other activities, I worked and interned every semester after my first year. I worked with University College Academic Advising, CollegeFashionista, ISU Forensics, Palace Events, Special Olympics, YWCA, YMCA and COUNTRY Financial. Each internship further developed the skills I learned in class. They were the critical aspect of my education because I learned practical skills, what I like in a job, and what I don't.

I was always looking for ways, scholarships or grants, etc., to pay for school. My junior year, my dad, who is a professor at another university, sent me a link to the general Fulbright page because he thought I might be a good fit, although he believes I am a good fit for anything. I've always secretly loved the idea of continuing school (even though in agency PR it's not quite necessary), and the travel aspect seemed intriguing. I did some digging in the tiny sliver of degree-seeking Fulbright Grants and discovered the Spanish communication-focused master's. It felt perfect for me, exactly the type of degree I had wanted. The application process was lengthy, challenging, and caused a lot of growth for me. I was astounded, ecstatic, and humbled to have been chosen.

In the future, I hope to work at a large PR agency in their corporate and/or crisis departments. I love the fast-paced environment, variety of clients, and creative challenges in agency life.

Euphemism Literary Journal

Undergraduate students in the Department of English have been publishing a literary journal for nearly 50 years. Early print iterations include *The Triangle* (published in the early 1970s) and *Druid's Cave* (late 1970s to early 2000s). Now published biannually in an online format, the 2017-2018 school year welcomed Issues 13.1 and 13.2 of *Euphemism*.

The spring 2018 *Euphemism* reading took place at the University Galleries, where students had the chance to read their work before a full audience of peers, professors, family,

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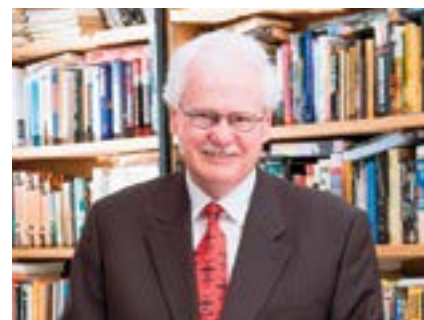
Retiring faculty

Professor Bob McLaughlin

Professor Robert McLaughlin retired on May 31, 2018, concluding 30 years of teaching in the English Department. During his tenure at ISU, he served as associate chair and as director of Undergraduate Studies. He also served as co-advisor of the department's Sigma Tau Delta honor society chapter for 25 years, co-advisor of the English Studies Association for 18 years, and liaison to the Honors Program for 12 years.

Highlights of his time at ISU include being named Outstanding University Teacher and College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Distinguished Lecturer. In April 2018, he received a CAS Outstanding Service Award. Research highlights include three books: *Innovations: An Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (editor); *We'll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema during World War II* (co-authored with Sally E. Parry); and, most recently, *Stephen Sondheim and the Reinvention of the American Musical*. He has published numerous articles on postmodern fiction, especially the work of Thomas Pynchon, and his work on 21st-century fiction has had a significant influence on conversations regarding fiction after postmodernism.

When asked what he appreciates about the English Department at ISU, McLaughlin writes: "I feel lucky to have



been in a department that encourages a healthy balance between research and teaching. I love both, and I'm glad I never felt pressured to neglect one to concentrate on the other. I feel lucky to have been in a department where I've felt my colleagues have appreciated my work. I feel lucky to have been able (through my positions with Sigma Tau Delta and Honors) to work with many outstanding students."

Regarding his retirement, McLaughlin writes, "I have 1,000 books I want to read, I have a dozen research projects

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I want to finish, and I have 100 places I want to travel to. Although I love teaching, it tends to absorb most of one's time and intellectual energy. I'm looking forward to using my time in different ways now; for example, having the leisure to read books that *aren't* directly connected to my teaching and research projects. In the last few weeks, I've had a grand time returning to the 19th century British novelists I haven't had the chance to read since graduate school! I also hope to be able to spend some more time in the local community theaters, on and off stage. And, of course, I'm looking forward to spending more quality time with Professor Parry and Claudia, our affectionate and playful calico cat."

Shane Combs wins University Graduate Student Teaching Award

Ph.D. candidate Shane Combs was the 2018 recipient of the Outstanding University Graduate Student Teaching (Level 1 Doctorate) Award. Combs was nominated for this award after winning the English

Department's Taimi Maria Ranta Award for Outstanding Teaching in 2017.

On receiving the University-wide award, Combs wrote:

Peers and faculty in the English Department were incredibly

helpful, and without those people, like Professor Aaron Smith and Jeff Rients (who had won the year prior), it would be a lot more difficult to figure out.

I came to Illinois State because this is a pedagogy-focused University, and the English Department sets us up from the beginning to be successful in pedagogical practices. We have a pedagogy seminar, we have English 402 (paired with teaching first-year composition), and I worked for the Writing Program. Professor Joyce Walker has created a very experimental program, so you can write in your teaching philosophy about things that went well and things that did not because you have tried, you have experimented. We don't just have pedagogy but practice pedagogy.

I like the opportunity to connect with students. I was a high-school dropout, and I never really connected with any of my teachers until I went back to college in my mid-20s. I think the things that we don't have access to are the things we eventually want to create for other people, and so I try my best to be a men-



and friends. *Euphemism* welcomes submissions from both the ISU community and from beyond it, both written word and creative art—and, indeed, the spring 2018 reading period welcomed a record number of art submissions. The online format allows for submissions beyond traditional print genres, as submissions calls include experimental sound, spoken word, videos, and original music. There are approximately 20 undergraduate staff members each year: in addition to the editor-in-chief position, *Euphemism* is helmed by four genre editors (art, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry), social media and submissions coordinators, and a contingency of readers that selects the published work in each issue.

Regarding the latest issue of the journal, outgoing Editor-in-Chief Alexandra Daggett wrote, "But it doesn't take a genius to feel. Or to write or sing or to open a watercolor palette. Art is accessible, and that's what fosters student engagement and curiosity. Art deconstructs institutions, pushes for change. Art is a protest, a weapon. Art is confession. Art *is*. And *Euphemism* recognizes that art. Recognizes the pain, the inequality, the oppression, and after everything else, the love. And I know that sounds cheesy, but this has been a tough semester, and here we are at the end of it all, celebrating art. So, Issue 13.2 is for those of you who have ever felt, in the words of poet Sierra DeMulder, 'more cracked than mosaic,' more sober than mystic, more broken than beautiful."

Professor Jeremy Hurley, advisor of *Euphemism*, is interested in locating issues of *The Triangle* and *Druid's Cave* that are not currently available in the *Euphemism* archive. If you have access to older issues, please email Euphemism@IllinoisState.edu. The Department of English is deeply grateful for the work that Professor Hurley has done alongside the students who edit *Euphemism*.

You can read past and current issues of the journal at English.IllinoisState.edu/Euphemism.

Faculty Research

Mimola or the Story of a Casket: The Publications Unit launches Undiscovered Americas with a translation

By Hannah Kroonblawd

The Publications Unit in the Department of English recently launched Undiscovered Americas, a new translation and lost/out-of-print book series that is a subsidiary of its Downstate Legacies literary imprint.

This fall, Undiscovered Americas published its first book, *Mimola or the Story of a Casket*, a 1906 novel by Haitian writer Antoine Innocent, translated by Susan Kalter, a professor in the Department of English. Since Downstate Legacies is committed to publish-

ing Midwestern poets and writers, Steve Halle, director of the Publications Unit and founder of Downstate Legacies, plans to have Undiscovered Americas also emphasize projects from translators, scholars, and editors working in Illinois and the Midwest, and beginning the series with a colleague from ISU made for a great collaboration.

“Working with Professor Kalter was the ideal partnership for starting Undiscovered Americas,” Halle said, “not only because she is a new translator—*Mimola* is her first published book-length translation—but also because, as a colleague, I have gotten to know her and her commitment to having a venue for these kinds of books deserving of attention. It is important to both of us. I also felt she would be more understanding that because of the press’s unique open access model for free access to digital books and also nicely designed, print-on-demand copies for purchase, that this would be a learning experience for me, too, and would include some growing pains.”

Hands-on student involvement in book projects like *Mimola* is also crucial to the Publications Unit’s mission, and two students were able to get applied learning experiences working with Halle on the editing, design, typesetting, and marketing work related to *Mimola*. Recent publishing studies sequence graduate Brigid Ackerman ’17 used her experience as a production intern working on *Mimola* and other projects to land a position as a digital production assistant at Princeton University Press, and Ph.D. student and Sutherland Fellow Sanam Shahmiri who worked as a production assistant supporting the project.

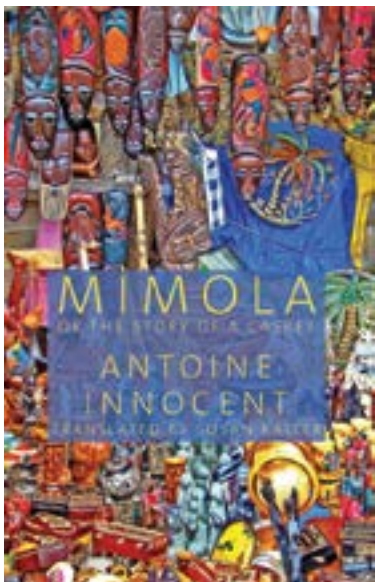
According to Halle, one of the main goals of Undiscovered Americas is to have the books it publishes readily available for instructors and students to use in the classroom at no cost (or low cost for its print-on-demand option). Halle hopes that this model will encourage more instructors to consider teaching literary texts in translation, as well as noncanonical or out-of-print books that are not always readily available through university bookstores.

“Despite a recent flowering of independent presses publishing literary translations, these books still make up an extremely low percentage of books published in the U.S. each year,” Halle said. “Part of the reason is that university presses are not really in a position to publish translations, as these presses have to focus more on publishing books that have crossover appeal for the trade market, which means more competition for resources among potential books that would appeal to a specialized audience, like translations or historically important, noncanonical books that wouldn’t have a wide readership but rather appeal to a small, committed niche of readers. Translated books also tend to have more cost, as rights have to be acquired and books are often bilingual, which makes for a higher production cost. This is where a unique organization like the Publications Unit and the series Undiscovered Americas can step in and meet a demand.”

The Undiscovered Americas series plans to continue publishing books by North, Central, and South American writers in an open-access model, where digital versions of the books are available for free through ISU ReD, Illinois State University’s institutional repository, hosted by Milner Library and supported by bepress. The digital versions of Undiscovered Americas books will also link to the print version available for purchase from a print-on-demand provider, usually Lulu, which prints books when they are ordered by readers from their point of sale. The open-access digital model, in combination with a print-on-demand option, is more sustainable and environmentally friendly, as limiting the run of print copies helps to minimize waste.

You can find Undiscovered Americas and download *Mimola* through ISU ReD: ir.library.IllinoisState.edu.

Following the publication of *Mimola or the Story of a Casket*, graduate student intern Hannah Kroonblawd had the opportunity to speak with Susan Kalter, professor in the Department of English and translator of Antoine Innocent’s 1906 novel. In the following interview, Professor Kalter discusses what led her to the text of *Mimola*, the ethics of translation, and possible future translation projects.



tor to my students. I try to engage them and get them interested, and see what it takes to reach students.

I honestly believe that if you care about pedagogy, if you are going forward into the academic job market, this University sets you up in an amazing way. Job ads are just starting to come out for the next school year, and when it comes to the smaller liberal arts schools or schools that have a teaching emphasis, the materials I completed for the English Department and for the University-wide award match the same kind of conversation those schools are having in their mission statements. And I can match my own mission to theirs, because those values have been fostered in me for four years.

Jonah Mixon-Webster wins the 2017 Sawtooth Poetry Prize

Ph.D. candidate Jonah Mixon-Webster’s poetry collection Stereo(TYPE) was selected by Tyrone Williams as the winner of the 2017 Sawtooth Poetry Prize. Stereo(TYPE)

was published in spring 2018 by Ahsahta Press. Of the collection, judge Tyrone Williams wrote,



“Stereo(TYPE) is an urgent cri de fe, a fiery pre-emptive strike against, and homage to, the next generation of masters and mistresses, terms that apply equally to those taking up the mantles of white supremacy and those (for example, Kara Walker, Dawn Lundy Martin, Richard Pryor, Tisa Bryant, Douglas Kearney) making up their own supremacist/constructivist responses to the pecking orders, side-stepping self-immolation in the process. Terse, flippant, and more often right than wrong, Stereo(TYPE) is an ambidextrous skill set, multiplex declensions of that unwritten book called *The Descent of Negro*.”

Of his time at Illinois State, Mixon-Webster writes, “I began my Ph.D. in English Studies/Creative Writing at Illinois State University in 2014 after graduating with a master’s in creative writing. Here, I started studying poetry and poetics with Gabriel Gudding and Duriel E. Harris, with whom I also worked on the journal she edits, *Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora*. I also began studying African-American literature and creative

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writing pedagogy with Ricardo Cortez Cruz, and postcolonialism with Paul Ugor. In my doctoral work I have been able to make connections (especially with postcolonial studies) that would allow me to access the greater stake of my poetic investigations in regard to the nature of stereotyping.”

Graduate student research and service

Pedagogy Beyond the Classroom with Jenn Coletta, Lynn Dill, and Samuel Kamara

During the 2017-2018 school year, Department of English graduate students and post-doctoral fellows brought a variety of experiences into the classes they taught. Jenn Coletta, Lynn Dill, and Samuel Kamara each provided their students with new ways of writing, analysis, and application of knowledge in the wider world.

Jenn Coletta

In order for me to best explain my love of using performance poetry in the classroom, I need to start, briefly, with my own poetry journey. For too long, I believed in the (false) critical/creative binary; I convinced myself that if I wanted to be a



scholar, I couldn't be creative. So, when I immersed myself in Write About Now, one of Houston's slam poetry communities, it took an absurdly long time for me to admit I could be a poet too. Before I finally started performing, I spent the first year observing and studying the poetry, the poets, the venue, the behind-the-scenes stuff—I wanted to know it all.

Once at ISU, I realized this was a kind of genre research. A kind of coming into myself in a new literacy. This awareness helped me realize the erroneousness of the creative/critical binary, and it motivated some of my recent research projects, including examining the role of slam poetry in juvenilia and youth political resistance movements. It has also inspired me to introduce performance poetry to

Hannah Kroonblawd: When did you first come across the original text of Mimola, and why did you choose it as a translation project?

Professor Susan Kalter: I had gone to graduate school to study not only United States literature but literature in the northern part of the Western Hemisphere. Though it wasn't my specialty, I wanted to do the period paper of my qualifying exams on Haitian literature and, more broadly, Caribbean literature. I started ordering books from all over the place and narrowed it down to four prominent Haitian fin de siècle novelists: Justin Lhérisson, Antoine Innocent, Frédéric Marcelin, and Fernand Hibbert. Innocent published his only novel, *Mimola*, in 1906, and he and Lhérisson were the two that really struck me in the way that they were challenging notions within their own country and also outside of their own country, whether it was Vodou, race, or social structure of Haitian society. Innocent was the one I worked on first, and right now I'm working on two of Lhérisson's short novels.

Antoine Innocent has these beautiful descriptions of nature, and I had first gotten into teaching as a part of a wilderness program. So that was some of the attraction, but he is also doing some really complex work in terms of storytelling after the Haitian Revolution. Much Haitian literary translation is focused on either the present day, or the Haitian Revolution itself. But there is less concentration on the aftermath of slavery and the movement toward independence, what happened between 1804 and the Duvalier era of the 1960s.

In the book, Innocent has created the character of Albert, who is the intellectual, and his counterpart Léon, who thinks of himself as the intellectual. Their friendship exemplifies a problem in Haitian education at the time: Are we educating our youth toward alienation from their own population? You see that in Léon, and though Albert is not free of that alienation, he is more a man of the people.

He has his ideals, even though they don't come to fruition...

I see that as a part of Innocent's artistry—he turns around and dashes your hopes, leaving you without the Hollywood ending where you think that everything is going to go wonderfully. Albert has “castle in the air” ideas, but what happens when the rubber meets the road?

What was the process of translation like, in terms of time and work you've done?

I actually started in a graduate class, in 1996 or so, but I only did maybe half a chapter's worth to turn in as my project for that course. Then I put it on the shelf for a long time. The 2010 Haitian earthquake revived my will and interest in returning to it, but it was a couple of years after that when I started to translate in earnest.

It took two summers and the months between, about 16 months total, to complete it. It is really helpful, once you do the first pass, to set it aside for a while and then come back and, if you can, read it out loud very slowly to yourself. One of the passes through I was saying to myself, “OK, this cannot sound awkward. No one will want to read it if it sounds awkward in English.” My tendency is to adhere very closely to French grammar, which I have to fight because sometimes it just doesn't work in English. I have all kinds of moral problems with my own decisions... How much do you pull something into the target language? How much do you force people in the target language to confront language itself and differences in how we speak and think?



In your introduction, you write about the decision to leave the Haitian Creole (Kreyòl) as Creole, with translations appearing in the endnotes and also the difficulty of constantly changing verb tenses.

Those were definite struggles, especially as I'm working from deeply embedded high school French, where I was taught very diligently what all of those tenses were equivalent to in English. But as I was beginning to translate, I would think, "But we wouldn't say that; there's no way we would say the verb phrase that way." In English literature, the past continuous sounds unnatural. So, as the translator, I had to make those kinds of decisions.

Where do you see this translation project as situated alongside of your teaching and academic research interests?

First of all, I was thrilled to do this project with the Publications Unit. Brigid Ackerman, the undergraduate production intern for the book, was actually in one of my classes last fall. It was thrilling! It's the first project I've done here at ISU where a student actually saw the research or creative activity that I was doing.

The spiritual themes of the book are also very resonant with what I teach in Native American Studies, the non-Christian religions throughout the world that have been suppressed in various ways. If we're looking to revive our understanding of what they meant to the people in that era and what they mean now, that inquiry connects to Innocent's interest in nature. Many of those religious traditions are embedded in trying to live with the earth rather than against it, and so in that way I think it is very closely connected to a strong base in indigenous history and literature.

I also participate in the Ethnic Studies Program, and though my concentration is in Native American Studies, I've always taught a lot of writers from many different walks of life. I teach African American writers, and I was an African Studies specialist during my undergrad. I don't see it as separate. It is all about the experience of various peoples who endured colonialism and who have found ways to survive it and speak their truth.

You mentioned a little about your future projects, including more translation...

Steve Halle (the director of the Publications Unit) and I were talking about this when he brought copies of the book in. We had debated back and forth about leaving the Kreyòl in the book untranslated. I felt strongly about doing that for *Mimola*. But for the next two, depending on how much further I go... I'm toying with the idea of translating this terrific book called *Séna*, by Hibbert, so I might do that one as well. But Lhérisson is, in both French and Kreyòl, playing with words a lot. He's very satirical, he's pushing boundaries and making up words, and he also embeds Kreyòl much more frequently and in a way that is more sustained than Innocent. I'm working with someone who will be a co-translator, because even when you know French vocabulary and grammar, and even if you understand that the grammar of Kreyòl is different from the grammar of French, you can only go so far without needing some assistance.

And the translation resources that are out there for Kreyòl are not that great. I found this thick Haitian Creole-English dictionary. But it goes from English to Kreyòl, and not the other way around. One of the projects I'm thinking about is creating a Kreyòl-English dictionary that would go from Kreyòl to English, because I would think that would be in demand and helpful to people.

So, currently, my projects are the two novels, maybe *Séna*, maybe a dictionary, but definitely collaboration with someone who is an expert in Kreyòl.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about the publication of the book?

In the fields that I work in, both in Native American Studies and Caribbean Studies, there are hurdles you have to overcome when you're publishing. Sometimes the audience is fairly small. Things go in and out of print so quickly, and some things never go into print at all because a press will say, "We love this project, but we don't think we'll have a big enough audience to sustain it."

Because of that, Steve Halle and I are very excited about the Undiscovered Americas model of creating an open-access and print-on-demand publication. It makes the text more accessible for students—students in K-12 classes, students in college—without having a huge expenditure. I'm really hoping that it will help democratize access, in a sense, to the work.

my English 101 students. I love getting them to experience poetry in new and unusual ways—ways that deviate from their knowledge of (with all due respect) a bunch of dead white guys.

We start with this unit in part because it's the perfect opportunity to foreground rhetorical genre studies, which is the foundation to our writing program's curriculum. More than that, though, it's important to me that we begin here because spoken word/slam communities are inherently communal; as a result, this unit sets the tone for the rest of the term by helping us learn to listen to each other and to forge relationships early.

These relationships were key last semester because during week 6, I presented my class with an unusual idea: What if we scrap the rest of the syllabus and, instead, study all the genres involved in creating a poetry event? What if we put into practice what we've been talking about for all these weeks? The idea that genres are bigger than classrooms. That writing is everywhere in our worlds. That poetry can be *by* and *for* regular people.

I let them vote and it was unanimous. We quickly formed four committees: Marketing and Community Outreach; Event Planning and Logistics; Social Media and Branding; and Finance. They were excited because they chose what fit their interest and expertise best, and they had control over their individual tasks. The students were responsible for creating their own goals and deadlines within their committees, but it all had to revolve around genre and writing with the ultimate goal of putting on a poetry event. They got to think about how the texts (that is, social media posts, advertisements, grant proposals) they were creating *move* in the "real world." They understood the impact of audience because their emails were actually going to real people. As they did all of this work, they kept field notes, and at the end of each class, we all came together to have a "board meeting" where each group provided status reports.

Ultimately, we created Breaking Normal Poetry—Bloomington-Normal's first (to my knowledge) spoken word community. We had 33 poets get on the mic, which breaks the record of even some established communities. My students showed up to the event, not because they had to, but because they were invested. Some of them even read their own work. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to work with these incredible students and that we got to see the power of collaboration and applying our work outside

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of the classroom. And, as an added example of the genre's reach, what we did together will outlive that particular 101 class as we have plans to keep this going through the year and hopefully for many more to come! Follow us at Breaking Normal Poetry on Facebook and Twitter for updates!

Lynn Dill

I like to think of my classroom as an opportunity to build a community—an inclusive community of diverse individuals.

In the ENG 101 course I teach at ISU, I have witnessed this sense of community expand beyond the doors of the classroom by introducing a service-learning component. Not only are students able to contribute to the community, but they are also able to explore genres of writing they may never have produced in the past with a very authentic audience in mind. When students care about something, they are much more invested—whether it is volunteering for a few hours or producing a piece of writing.

Last spring, one of my students in ENG 101 volunteered during his spring break for an organization that helped children in the Chicago public school system with reading. The experience was so meaningful that he returned several more times and made plans to continue working with the program the following school year. In another section, two of my students volunteered at Midwest Food Bank in Bloomington and talked about



a man they met who showed up every day just to greet volunteers and open the door, noting that they realized the difference just one person can make by simple actions. The students also were thrilled when Midwest Food Bank posted the public service announcement they created on its Facebook page. Another student interested in addressing the gang violence he witnessed in his neighborhood returned to his high school to interview students about their experiences and wrote a newspaper article to bring awareness to the issue. These are just a few examples of the ways service learning has engaged students in experiences and writing projects that are meaningful

“Re-Believing Peter Elbow”

An English Class Meets a Legend

By Rachel Hatch, Media Relations

Students of English often read the work of living authors, some of whom might be considered living legends. The students in the class Major Figures in the Teaching of Writing did more than read the work of a pioneer of teaching writing, they talked with the man himself.

Peter Elbow, who penned such volumes as *Writing Without Teachers*, agreed to take part in a series of video conferences with the graduate students in Professor Bob Broad's graduate class. “Not only did they read works by Peter Elbow, and criticism of Peter Elbow, the students were able to speak with him,” said Broad, who immediately thought of his former mentor Elbow when developing the course.

From his home in Seattle, Elbow said, “For me, it is such a pleasure to see and read the students' reactions to my work. Talking with others always opens windows to new ideas, even on work I started in the 1970s.”

Through his research, Elbow developed many of the practices of free writing, editing, and revising that are now considered standard practice for teaching writing processes. Broad thought Elbow the perfect fit for his course, whose students were in-service, high school English teachers working on post-baccalaureate certificates in the Teaching of Writing. The students met on Saturdays around their teaching schedules, and Elbow would Skype with them. “The video conferencing really gave the class that rich dimension—just to see his smile, to hear his jokes and little comments,” Broad said. “They could pose questions to him based on their own interests. It made the experience personal and also richer intellectually and in a scholarly way.”

Student Clinton Soper found inspiration through the chats with Elbow. “Peter's dedication to the art of teaching writing was clear in his willingness to spend time and energy with our small group of teacher-students on a weekly basis,” said Soper, an English teacher at Roanoke-Benson High School in Roanoke. “Peter is a gem, and I miss seeing his infectious smile up there on the screen.”

Elbow admitted he chuckled at the idea of being called a “major figure” in teaching, even though his work has spearheaded many modern writing processes—from peer editing to group discussions. “I imagine many of the ideas have been absorbed into the field of writing and teaching writing,” Elbow said. “But for me, it was just wonderful to hear all the different approaches to writing the students brought.”

The capstone of Broad's course will be the dedication of an entire issue of *Illinois English Bulletin* to Elbow's work. The state's journal for teachers of secondary English, the *Bulletin* will contain essays from the graduate students on the impact of Elbow's work, complete with a submission from Elbow himself.

Titled “Re-Believing Peter Elbow,” the issue, like the graduate class, takes off from an appendix essay in Elbow's 1973 book, *Writing Without Teachers*, an essay Elbow calls, “The Doubting Game and the Believing Game: An Analysis of the Intellectual Enterprise.”

“It is a special allusion to a very powerful idea that Peter Elbow introduced,” Elbow said. “Elbow argued that education, especially higher education, emphasizes the doubting game: You hear an idea and you critique it. You try to find its weaknesses.” But Broad was calling attention to how Elbow, while affirming the value of the doubting game, insisted on the importance of a matching game, namely, the believing game. “That's where you hear an idea that sounds doubtful or wrong, but you look for all the ways it might be fruitful or even true. But in order to see the value of ideas that seem dubious or wrong, you must make a leap of faith and try to believe them, at least for now.”

In his works, Elbow pushed for writers to employ both approaches. He noted that the positive is needed now more than ever. “People tend to think of positive reinforcement as ‘wimpy’ or ‘mushy,’ or not careful,” Elbow said. “But it takes just as much discrimination and



thought to give positive comment. In fact, sometimes it's easier to say 'I disagree with this' than to find what is valid or useful in an idea that most people see as obviously wrong."

Soper plans to take the lessons from Elbow back to his classroom and said the lessons also will strengthen his relationship to his pupils. "My students are writing more than ever," said Soper, who noted he will implement daily freewriting, grading contracts, reader-based feedback workshops, and portfolio assessment, as well as a more open approach. "I'm increasingly striving to cultivate a collaborative, constructivist relationship with my students, rather than the potentially adversarial relationship that emerges when students simply see me as the 'grader.'"

Broad said he encourages students to employ both techniques when encountering any new idea or approach. "We need to exercise both the believing muscles, if you will, and the doubting muscles," said Broad, who speaks with a certain relief that teachers are gaining the chance to be re-introduced to Elbow. "I would say that our profession has been playing the doubting game with Peter's work for 30 years, and that it is time to play the believing game and to see what value we can find."

New faculty and staff member spotlight

Welcome to ISU, Professor Danielle Lillge and Director of English Education Maggie Morris Davis

Professor Danielle Lillge

Danielle Lillge comes most recently from a faculty position at Missouri State University, where she also served as director of undergraduate and graduate English education programs for three years. She earned a doctorate degree from the University of Michigan in the Joint Program of English and Education. There, she taught courses for both the English Department and the School of Education. As the English Department Graduate Student Instructor Mentor, she led graduate pedagogical workshops, courses, and mentoring efforts. She also worked across campus with graduate student instructors as a teaching consultant for the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. Lillge has received campus-wide awards for her teaching at the University of Michigan and for her academic advising at Missouri State University. In October, she will receive the NACADA National Outstanding New Advisor Award for Faculty Academic Advising.



Earning and maintaining credibility as a secondary English language arts teacher and teacher educator is important to Lillge. Diverse experiences in K-16 classrooms motivate her commitment to promoting socially just English instruction. She began her teaching career as a high school English teacher in Wisconsin, where she worked with rural and multilingual, first-generation future college students before serving as a secondary literacy consultant. She has taught in urban schools in Detroit and Toledo. More recently, as part of her embedded English methods course, she developed a co-teaching partnership with an urban high school, where over 29 different languages were represented in the student population. Alongside undergraduate teacher candidates and a program alum, she taught two mornings per week in a diverse ninth-grade classroom.

Her research interests in instructors' professional development (PD) experiences emerged from and continues to be fed by her ongoing teaching and other experiences leading regional literacy PD and working collaboratively with instructors in rural, suburban, and urban classrooms across the Midwest. The diversity of these experiences has inspired her study of how secondary instructors learn to teach literacy within their classroom and PD contexts. Through her scholarly publications she has contributed greater theoretical and practical understandings about the value of engaging framework conflicts as resources for helping teachers apply their professional learning about literacy teaching and learning in diverse classrooms. Given her research and teaching interests, Lillge is eager to contribute to the ISU English Department's commitment to English studies and pedagogy. She looks forward to

in their lives. Putting a face to social justice issues allows students to understand the purpose behind bringing awareness to a particular issue. Stakeholders are no longer nameless, faceless strangers.

I teach two sections of First Year Composition with class sizes of 23 students for a total of 46 students each semester. In the final five weeks of the course, students take some type of active role in a non-profit organization (NPO) of their own choice or in bringing awareness to a social justice issue; they research, analyze and create a product to bring awareness to a particular organization or social justice issue and then deliver a final presentation on the entire experience during the last week of class.

At the center of my teaching philosophy is a universally designed classroom that recognizes the individuality of all students and, at the same time, challenges students to grow and expand beyond their comfort zones. As part of my commitment to making my classroom as accessible as possible, I have designed this unit to offer students several choices. Students have a choice in both the active role they will take and the final deliverable for the unit. Although the majority of students choose to volunteer at a NPO, some students may need to take a different approach. I work with each student to make accommodations as needed. I also recognize that all students are individuals and make meaning in multiple manners. Alphabetical text is not the only available means to create a text to bring awareness to a particular social justice issue. The multimodal nature of this assignment allows students to create products that are meaningful to them and align with the way that they make meaning in the world.

In my most recent course, I asked students to explore a social justice issue in the preceding unit and write a recommendation report discussing the problem and possible solutions for addressing the issue. The issue students explored needed to be related to their intended community partnership for the final unit. For instance, if students intended to volunteer at a food pantry, then they would write about some issue involving hunger in the recommendation report. I added this component to provide students with a better understanding of the societal issues underlying the need for these NPOs.

At the top of my syllabus is a quote by Robin Williams in *Dead Poet's Society*—where he told a group of students: "No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world." It is

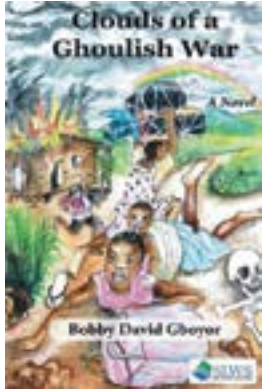
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my hope that writing opportunities, like this service-learning unit, will help my students recognize that their words and ideas can make a difference in the world.

Samuel Kamara

In my Interdisciplinary Studies Class, Texts and Contexts, in the fall semester of 2017, I focused on the post-civil-war novels of Sierra Leone. One of the objectives



of this class was to teach my students how to write thesis statements and develop sound arguments. So, I designed an activity in which I simulated court scenes in my classroom, put characters

in the selected novels on trial, and asked my students to argue as prosecutors or defending attorneys to find these characters guilty or not.

This activity proved very useful in getting my students to understand how to use evidence from novels to situate their arguments. Also, there was a very big shift away from their tendency to summarize the plots of novels. Furthermore, I got some of these Sierra Leonean authors living in the United States of America to Skype in and talk to my students about their works.

Thus, when Sierra Leonean-born author Bobby David Gboyor decided to re-publish his novel, *Clouds of a Ghoulish War* (2007) and asked me to write a critical introduction to the new volume and requested two of my students, Debora Bargmann and Jacob Luciski, to write readers' commentaries, I knew a pedagogical opportunity had offered itself for me to reinforce the lesson that what we do in our classrooms has real-life implications. Furthermore, I wanted to teach my students that one does not have to write in a linguistically sophisticated style to be a published author. So, I felt confident in asking both Debora and Jacob to send me their thoughts about *Clouds of a Ghoulish War*.

As authors who contributed to the publication of this new novel, both Debora and Jacob will receive complimentary copies that will boost their confidence as writers and literary analysts forever.

new research initiatives that will enable her to continue collaborating with students, instructors, and PD facilitators.

Maggie Morris Davis, Director of English Education

Maggie Morris Davis comes to the English Department after previous positions as an assistant professor in charge of the English Education Program at the University of Southern Indiana and as a lecturer at the University of Illinois, as well as teaching an Honors Mindset Seminar here at Illinois State. She is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, earning her master's and doctoral degrees as she taught full-time at Marion High School in Marion. Morris Davis brings 11 years of experience in the secondary education classroom, teaching AP Language and Composition and Honors American Literature as well as core English courses, to her position as the new director of English Education.



When asked about what she is most looking forward to in coming to Illinois State, Morris Davis said, "I am excited about the opportunity to enter a really strong, vibrant teacher preparation program with really great faculty and wonderful students. What I'm hoping to do is to continue to grow the program, come up with new programs to support teacher candidates as they head into 21st-century classrooms... It's refreshing and professionally fulfilling to come to a place that prioritizes education so much, along with pedagogy and teaching. I'm thankful to work within a department where all faculty members are engaged in the preparation of teachers, not just English Education faculty. I've heard over and over from so many people, and from students, that they are constantly learning methods and pedagogy in all their courses, not just in their methods courses."

Morris Davis's doctoral degree is in American literature, with research interests in early 20th-century American literature and how literature and culture represent the child in poverty, more specifically the language of the child. This has informed her classroom practices as she engages critically with the teaching of students living in poverty and the ways in which poverty enters the curriculum in terms of chosen texts, how texts are taught, and how contemporary issues are navigated within an English-Language Arts classroom. Recent and forthcoming publications include articles in journals such as *Stephen Crane Studies*, *Mid West Review*, and the *Canadian Review of American Studies*.

Morris Davis is looking forward to her time at Illinois State, even as she's learned that her family is continuing to live "downstate," though they have moved quite a bit north of Marion. Her husband teaches at University High School, and they have a 4-year-old daughter. In fall 2018, Morris Davis taught English 194, Introduction to English Education, and in spring 2019 she will be supervising student teachers.

In loving memory

Professor Carrol Cox

Carrol Byron Cox Jr., 88, of Bloomington died Friday, August 10, 2018, at Luther Oaks in Bloomington. He was born July 22, 1930, in Benton Township, Michigan, the son of Carrol and Lillian Cox. He was preceded in death by his first wife Jessica (Bowling) Cox. He then married Janice (Peters) Cox on May 10, 1969, in Bloomington. She preceded him in death this year.



Cox completed his Master of Arts degree at Western Michigan University in 1957. He then served four years in the Air Force during the Korean and Cold Wars as a cryptographer, where he met his first wife, Jessica. They moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Cox attended the University of Michigan. Cox received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University Michigan in 1964. He was a Milton scholar and published important literary criticism in the December 1987 issue of the journal *Milton Studies*. He was a professor in the Illinois State University English Department from 1961

to 1997. He was beloved by his students and an early innovator in approaches to teaching English composition.

He and his second wife Janice dedicated their lives to social justice and environmental causes. He was a member of many organizations in Bloomington-Normal, beginning with passionate involvement with “US!,” the Red Star Council, New Voice, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Students for a Free Palestine, Bloomington Normal Peace and Justice and the League of Revolutionary Struggle and Solidarity. More recently, he was an ardent supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement. He raised his daughters at anti-Vietnam war rallies and marches and his son, named after the two Black Panthers, Mark Clark and Fred Hampton, grew up during his efforts to support the struggles of the people in Central America against United States Imperialism. All three of his children inherited his deeply principled dedication to social and economic justice.

Faculty news & accomplishments

Selected Publications and Presentations

Amato, Joe. *Samuel Taylor’s Hollywood Adventure*. Novel. Bordighera Press, 2018.

Breu, Chris. “Biopolitics and Infrastructure” as featured scholar. Society for Critical Exchange: Winter Theory Institute. Feb. 9, 2018. Victoria, Texas.

Broad, Bob, and Michael Theune. *We Need to Talk: A New Method for Evaluating Poetry*. Buffalo, New York: Multilingual Matters Press, 2017.

Burt, Susan. “Person-Referring Expressions, Reference Nominals, and Address Nominals: Explorations in a small, local corpus.” This was accepted for volume 1 of *Titles in Address Research*, edited by Bettina Kluge, Irene Moyna, and Horst Simon.

Coats, Karen. *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Children’s and Young Adult Literature*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

Ellison, Katherine and Susan Kim, eds. *A Material History of Medieval and Early Modern Ciphers: Cryptography and the History of Literacy*. New York: Routledge, September 2017.

Fleisher, Kass. “If Your Soul Seesaw.” Essay. Dispatches from the Poetry Wars, February 2018. Excerpt from Volunteer: Journeys through America’s Antiviolence Agencies.

Halle, Steve. “Side-Hustle Publishing: Sustaining a Small Press in Austere Times.” Panelist/moderator. AWP Conference. Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Florida. March 9, 2018.

Huff, Cynthia delivered “Iterations of Eugenics: Francis Galton and Organizing the Victorian Global Family” at the Interdisciplinary 19th-Century Studies Conference, March 1- 4, 2018, San Francisco, California.

Jung, Julie, and Kellie Sharp-Hoskins. “Emergent Mattering: Building Rhetorical Ethics at the Limits of the Human.” *Kenneth Burke + The Posthuman*, edited by Chris Mays, Nathaniel A. Rivers, and Kellie Sharp-Hoskins, Pennsylvania State UP, 2017, 162-83.

Kalter, Susan. “Translating Innocent: A New Translator’s Efforts to Bring *Mimola* to a Wider Audience.” Comments toward the panel discussion on “Translating Haitian Literatures: Practice, Publication, and Circulation.” Fortieth Anniversary Conference of the American Literary Translators Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Oct. 6, 2017.

McBride, William Thomas. “*Dutchman* Heaped in Modern Cinema.” *MLA Approaches to Teaching Amiri Baraka’s Dutchman*. Eds. Gerald Early and Matthew Calihman. MLA, 2018.

McLaughlin, Robert L. “Soldier’s Home: Homecoming Anxieties in World War II Theater.” Presented at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana, March 28, 2018.

Neuleib, Janice. “When A Student Walks Out,” English Articulation Conference. Allerton House, April 18, 2018.

Parry, Sally E. “Elmer Gantry.” *Books to Film: Cinematic Adaptations of Literary Works*. Ed. Barry Keith Grant. Vol. 1. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale, 2018. 105-08.

Faculty awards

Creative Activity Initiative Award: Congratulations, Professor Kass Fleisher!

Professor Kass Fleisher was named the recipient of the 2018 University Outstanding Creative Activity Award at the Founders Day Convocation on Thursday, February 15, 2018, at 2 p.m. in the Brown Ballroom of the Bone Student Center. The winner of the University Research Initiative Award (2006) and Outstanding College Researcher



Award (2012), along with several national prizes for her writing, Professor Fleisher has, since arriving at ISU in 2003, published five single-authored books, including *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History* (2004), *Accidental Species: A Reproduction* (2005), *The Adventurous* (2006), *Talking Out of School: Memoir of an Educated Women* (2008), and *Dead Woman Hollow* (2012). In 2015, she added to this extraordinary record of creative productivity with the publication—co-edited with a student in our master’s program—of an ambitious anthology of innovative writing, *Litscapes: Collected US Writing 2015*.

Additional faculty and staff honors

Eileen Bularzik

Department of English Exceptional Teacher of the Year—Instructional Assistant Professor

Elise Hurley

Department of English Exceptional Teacher of the Year—Assistant Professor

Angela Haas

Department of English Exceptional Teacher of the Year—Associate Professor

Robert McLaughlin

Department of English Exceptional Teacher of the Year—Professor

Kass Fleisher

Department of English Outstanding Graduate Mentoring Award

Susan Kalter

Department of English Outstanding Department Service Award

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On giving back

The English Alumni Board Scholarship and Endowment

When the English Department decided five years ago to establish an Alumni Board, the new members began to deliberate on ways that our graduates could contribute to current students and their learning experiences. Quickly, the group settled on the idea of beginning an English Alumni Scholarship for worthy students. The committee got in touch with our College of Arts and Sciences Development Director Stephanie Sellers to discover how members should proceed in setting up the new scholarship.

The first thing the board learned was that such a scholarship has to be endowed; that means a minimum of \$25,000 as support funds for the distribution of the scholarship. At the present time, the board is vigorously contributing to this endowment. Board members would not, however, mind at all if other English Department members, students, and alumni contribute to the endowment fund and to future scholarships!

Contributing is simple: Send a check to the ISU Foundation directing the check to the English Department Alumni Board Scholarship Fund.

I just sent another check for this year! It's a great feeling to contribute. Join me!

—Professor Janice Witherspoon
Neuleib, 1970 M.A. graduate,
Professor Emeritus

August Schiess

Why I Give

The English Department is a special place. It's not an exaggeration to say my four years at ISU were transformative. I started the program in 2009 with a love of English and storytelling. I also loved ISU's degree in English publishing studies, as it allowed me to pursue English, while also exploring skills in editing, design, marketing, and more. Early on, I knew the ISU English Department was my home. I had found my people.

But it wasn't always easy. I had a lot to learn, and I knew I needed to get involved and expand my knowledge beyond the classroom. Luckily, there were many opportunities. Some of my best memories were from the Publications Unit, Sigma Tau Delta, *Euphemism*, and more. In the classroom, dedicated and passionate professors inspired and challenged me.

Robillard, Amy E. "Essaying to Understand Violence." *Getting Personal: Bringing Personal Writing into the Classroom in the Digital Age*. Ed. Laura Gray-Rosendale. Albany: SUNY P, 2018: 43-60.

Seloni, Lisy and Yalcin, S. "The role of L2 writing in EFL teacher preparation programs in Turkey: Institutional demands, pedagogical practices and student needs." March 28, TESOL 2018 International Convention, Chicago.

Sparby, Erika M. "When Trolls Become Technical Communicators: A Case Study of iOS8 and Wave," Association for the Teachers of Technical Writing Conference, March 2018.

Thetard, Lisa. "Real Reading and Authentic Writing:" Pre-Service Teachers Designing Lessons for Student Engagement. IATE Fall Conference Oct. 22, 2016. Normal.

Trites, Roberta Seelinger. *Twenty-First Century Feminisms in Children's and Adolescent Literature*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2018.

Troelstrup, Holms. "Generations: Mothers and Children." Woman Made Gallery Literary Series, April 29, 2018, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago. Featured Reader.

Ugor, Paul. "Cosmopolitanism from Below: Oil Capitalism, Informality and Citizenship in Nigeria." *Negative Cosmopolitanism: Abjection, Power, Bio-politics*. Eds., Eddy Kent and Terri Tomsky. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, July 2017.

Additional items of interest

Bob Broad was invited to be the plenary speaker at the Latin American Association of Research on Writing Studies Conference, October 9-11, 2018, in Santiago, Chile.

Susan Burt attended and served on the National Screening Committee for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistants program in Germany held in Chicago on Nov. 29, 2017.

co•im•press, headed by Publications Unit director Steve Halle, received a Programa sur translation subsidy from the Ministry of Culture, Argentina, for the translation and publication of *Vision of the Children of Evil* by Miguel Ángel Bustos, translated by Lucina Schell. *Valdivia* by Galo Ghigliotto (Chile), translated by Daniel Borzutzky, published by co•im•press, received the 2017 National Translation Award in Poetry from the American Literary Translators Association.

Katherine Ellison was invited to be the keynote speaker for the International Conference on Historical Cryptology. It was held from June 18-20, 2018, in Uppsala, Sweden. In 2017, Ellison was also appointed vice president of the Defoe Society. An award has been created in her name, the Ellison Award for Best Essay in Defoe Studies.

Professor Cynthia Huff was invited to deliver the keynote address and interviewed as a major life-writing scholar at the international conference "Convention and Revolution: Life writing by women in the 1800s and 1900s: archives, critiques and methods," in Warsaw, Poland, Nov. 29 to Dec. 1, 2017. The interview is to become part of the archives of the Women's Archive: Writing Project of the Humanities Division of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Mothers in Children's and Young Adult Literature: From the Eighteenth Century to Postfeminism, co-edited by Lisa Rowe Fraustino and Karen Coats, and including an essay by Mary Moran, was chosen for the Children's Literature Association Edited Book Award for 2018.

Obsidian: Literature and Arts in the African Diaspora, edited by Duriel E. Harris and printed at ISU's Publications Unit, was awarded a 2018 Art Works grant of \$10,000 by the National Endowment for the Arts.

William Thomas McBride curated his ongoing "Six Week Film School at The Normal Theater: 'Wonder Women Directors.'" He introduced, screened, and led discussions following *Christopher Strong* (Dorothy Arzner 1933), *The Hitch-Hiker* (Ida Lupino 1953) with Li Zeng, head of ISU's Theatre and Film Studies, *A League of Their Own* (Penny Marshall 1992) with Shari Zeck, interim dean, ISU's Milner Library, and *Lost in Translation* (Sofia Coppola 2003).

Graduate student news & accomplishments

Selected publications and presentations

Belomoina, Lyudmila. "Multilingual Students in Mainstream K-12 Classrooms: Making the Most of Language Difference," TESOL conference in West Palm Beach, Florida, May 11, 2017.

Charron, Justin. "The Garden Shed," Academy of American Poets website. Nov 7, 2017.

Coletta, Jennifer. "The Missing B Word: Compulsory Binarization and Bisexual Representation in Children's Literature." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, vol. 10 No. 1, 2018, pp. 85-108.

Combs, D. Shane. "Joy Meets World: Joy Narratives in Academic Spaces." Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning Conference, Denver, Colorado, June 21-24.

Halsey, Robin. "Reading Instruction for Adult English Learners: Training 'Old' Ears to Hear New Sounds." Ohio TESOL Conference, "40 Years of Excellence in English Language Teaching," Columbus, Ohio, October 27-28, 2017.

Hudson, Cory. "David Foster Wallace Is Not Your Friend: The Fraudulence of Empathy in David Foster Wallace Studies and 'Good Old Neon,'" *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*.

Kamara, Samuel. "Mirror and Sexuality: Double Oppression of African Female Diasporic Subjects in Hannah Khoury's *So Pretty an African*." *The Postcolonial Subject in Transit: Migration, Borders, and Subjectivity in Contemporary African Diaspora Literature*, ed. by Delphine Fongang. Lexington Books, 2018, pp. 95-107.

Karn, Colleen. "Nazi Demons and Jewish Werewolves: The Horror of Dehumanization in John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London*." Monstra II: Simbologie e Funzionalità degli Esseri Mostrosi hosted by Museo delle Religioni "Faffaele Pettazzoni," Rome, Italy, July 10-14, 2018.

Koenig, Charley. "Looking to the '80s for an Appreciation of Childhood: Nostalgia and Power Dynamics in *Stranger Things*." British Modernities Group Conference, "Stranger Things: The Weird, the Paranormal, and the Problem of Belief," Urbana April 20-21, 2018.

Kroonblawd, Hannah. "'We Are Not Like Shells': Transfigurative Water in the Poetry of Katie Ford, Mohja Kahf, and Mary Oliver," paper presented at "The Poetics of Faith: Exploring Belief in Modern and Contemporary Poetry Conference," University of York, England, January 2018.

Mondal, Sayanti. "The Custodianship of Mahasweta Devi: A Responsibility for the Readers," *Indian Scholar Journal*, Volume 3, Issue IV, July 2017.

Nusrat, Masrufa Ayesha. "The Frog Eater, from Jahanara Naushin's 'Jadukar,'" translated in *The Daily Star*, August 2018.

Rahman, Mijan. 2018. "Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice in Bangladesh: A Socio-historic and Language Ideological Perspective," American Association for Applied Linguistics Conference in Chicago, March 24, 2018.

Sanchez, Claudia. "A quest for identity: Fala language and its fight against language planning," The 21st Annual Ohio State University Congress on Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics, March 30-31, 2018.

Tidmarsh, Bryanna. "Our Monstrous Selves: Queer Potential in Mackenzi Lee's *This Monstrous Thing*." International Conference for the Fantastic in the Arts.

Trivedi, Amish. "What We Remembered Before the Fire," chapbook. above/ground press. Spring 2018.

Viswanath, Tharini. "'Sorry, I Don't Speak Bear': Voice, Agency, and the Mother-Daughter Relationship in Disney-Pixar's *Brave*." *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, vol. 25, No. 1, July 2017, pp. 1-22.



It's difficult to explain the impact my time in the English Department had on me. It shaped who I am, and guided me to a career I love. Therefore, when I graduated, it was an easy decision for me to give to the department. I want to give back to an institution that gave me so much, and I want to make sure it has the support to continue to progress. I give because I feel strongly about providing the same experience I had to students just like me.

August Schiess is the director of social media for the University of Illinois. Before this role, she worked in communications for the Coordinated Science Laboratory and the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. She received a bachelor's in English publishing studies from Illinois State University and a master's in advertising from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Celebrating recent academic appointments

Meg Gregory (Ph.D. 2017): Assistant Director of Academic Services, The Teaching Center, Washington University in St. Louis.

Samuel Kamara (Ph.D. 2017): Lecturer, The Mico University College, Kingston, Jamaica.

Francesco Levato (Ph.D. 2017): Assistant Professor of Literature and Writing Studies, California State University San Marcos.

Ana Roncero-Bellido (Ph.D. 2017): Assistant Professor of English, Gonzaga University.

Cristina Sánchez-Mártin (Ph.D. 2018): Assistant Professor of English, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.



From left, Alexa Parker, undergraduate vice president; Britni Williams, graduate president; Amy Robillard, Sigma Tau Delta co-sponsor; Sally Parry, Sigma Tau Delta co-sponsor; and Ryan Edel, former Sigma Tau Delta officer

Sigma Tau Delta Book Drive

When Hurricane Maria decimated much of Puerto Rico in September 2017, among the things that were destroyed were books and libraries. Ricia A. Chansky and Eric D. Lamore, graduates of our Ph.D. program who teach at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez (UPRM), sent a message to Professor Cynthia Huff asking for help in rebuilding their library.

"We only have a bare skeleton of a library now because water damage and mold destroyed the books that did survive the hurricane," they wrote.

Members of the Lambda Delta chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English honor society of which both Chansky and Lamore were members, sprang into action. The group put out a call for much-needed books, especially classics and anthologies, as well as literary theory, rhetoric and composition, Caribbean and postcolonial literature, and women's literature.

The chapter received many donations, including nearly complete runs of several children's literature journals from Professor Karen Coats. Drawing on these donations and the contents of the Sigma Tau Delta bookstore, which had recently received major donations from former Professors Carrol Cox, Hillary Justice, Bill Morgan, and Rhonda Nichol, members packed 15 boxes of books to send. Their efforts were generously supported by the department and Professor Jan Neuleib. The books are helping to rebuild the Department of English library at UPRM.

Chansky and Lamore wrote the following: "You can't imagine what it means to English majors—who have no library and no bookstores—to receive books!"

Additional items of interest

Elizabeth Jones was awarded an Ora Bretall dissertation grant from the graduate school.

Colleen Karn was appointed to the position of graduate representative to the National Board of the Popular Cultural Association. Karn also hosted a book talk titled "Monsters vs. Villians" at the Peoria Public Library as a part of PBS' *The Great American Read* series. The Peoria Public Library is one of 50 libraries across the country that received a grant to promote *The Great American Read* by providing community events such as presentations and book talks.

Jonah Mixon-Webster was the recipient of the 2017 Conversation Literary Festival Poetry Fellowship.

Abigail Palmisano was awarded a full-tuition scholarship to the Digital Humanities Summer Institute in Victoria, Canada. Palmisano took a course on Digital Publishing in the Humanities and networking with hundreds of international faculty and graduate students doing Digital Humanities work.

Michael Soares was selected as an Ora Bretall Fellow.

Alumni news

James W. Bennett

In March 2018, Bennett published his most recent book, *Loopey to Beau*, a memoir that grapples with mental illness and celebrates the joy that can be found in canine companionship. Bennett is the author of 12 previous books, most of which are fiction.

Matt Felumlee

In fall 2017, Felumlee was promoted to Distinguished Professor of English at Heartland Community College in Normal.

Nichole Folkman

Folkman, an English teacher in the Hartsburg-Emden Community Unit School District, was named runner-up for the Penguin Teacher Awards for Literacy. This is her second year as a runner-up. She was also awarded Penny Kittle's Book Love Foundation Grant.



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Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu

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