Welcome to another edition of Ovations, highlighting the outstanding achievements of students, faculty and supporters of the UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts.

Real Life Matters

It is a truism in higher education that successful colleges teach their students to be lifetime learners. As professional scholars, all of us on the COLFA faculty appreciate the value of continuous, lifelong intellectual development and hope to impart this disposition to future generations. With the task of co-editing this new edition of Ovations I gained a renewed appreciation for this principle. I learned some things. I learned about the interesting distinctions between modern horns and those of earlier days, and marveled at our Professor Kellman’s adventures as a bookman. More importantly, I came to understand better the breadth and reach of the work that our faculty and students do.

Assembling an issue that conveys the wide range of subjects in UTSA’s largest college is always a challenge. The vibrancy and downright fun of some of our scholarship comes across in several of the articles in this new issue. It contains some somber notes too, however, with articles about the cultural construction of death and the grim history of genocide. I confess that I was at first hesitant about presenting readers with such serious subjects, but then realized how critical these explorations are for facing difficult real-life matters and for helping our students prepare for the world ahead.

This broad coverage is the most important aspect of our college’s mission. COLFA faculty teach one-third of all the classroom hours at UTSA, and rightly so, since even the most vocationally-minded graduates need familiarity with facts and issues of the human condition that are investigated best through the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

I hope you will take pride, as I do, in our mission and in those who are pursuing it with so much energy and talent.

Dan Gelo
Dean
Stumberg Distinguished University Chair
Book: A quaint artifact of the pre-postmodern period, when men and women sat for hours transfixed by a bound ream of paper.

Leading institutions of higher education such as Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and Boston University once tailored entire curricula to the premise that studying books by Thucydides, Aristotle, Euclid, Dante, Hobbes, Newton, Shakespeare, Kant, Freud, and other major thinkers constitutes a meaningful liberal arts education. In the current age of distraction, when attention flits from cellphone to Twitter to streaming video, many lack the patience — and training — to follow a single sinuous sentence by Henry James. Two years ago, Bexar County proudly announced a new chapter — so to speak — in the digitalization of civilization: Bibliotech, the world’s first bookless public library. That was three years after UTSA inaugurated the Applied Engineering and Technology Library, the first completely bookless library on an American college campus. Pity the poor book critic, as obsolete as a cooper, elevator operator, or lamplighter.

The National Book Critics Circle, however, rejects pity, even if some of its 600 members are pitiless in assessing books. In fact, more than 300,000 new titles are still released annually just by American publishing houses (close to 450,000 new titles are published in China, 80,000 in the United Kingdom, 100,000 in Russia). The recently merged Penguin Random House conglomerate alone publishes more than 15,000 new titles each year. Add to that more than 400,000 new self-published titles annually. Last year, reversing a growing trend, new printed books outnumbered ebooks. And, after several years in which bookstores have been an endangered species, independent brick-and-mortar operations have been setting up shop throughout the country. For readers, the problem is not privation, but plethora. How to make sense of this robust glut of books?

Not even the most ardent bibliophile can possibly read every book published in a year just in this country. We need critics to sort through the bounty, to examine, analyze, and assess which works are worthy of attention and why. For most of my professional career, in addition to publishing scholarly studies in comparative literature, I have been a book critic, appearing in non-academic venues including Atlantic Monthly, Boston Globe,
It is a heady experience to sit around a large conference table and argue about books with some of the nation’s leading critics.
Never Again?

Student ITC Exhibit on Genocide Challenges Viewers to Reflect

BY: STEPHANIE SCHOELLMAN

In a contained area at the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), a sign warns potential viewers that the content past the glass doors is disturbing. Upon entering, visitors encounter a large video projection of local Holocaust survivors weaving a single narrative of the trauma and terror they endured. As one twists through the exhibit’s path and absorbs the information on five 20th-century genocides—the Armenian, the Holocaust, the Cambodian, the Rwandan, and the Guatemalan—the survivors’ voices from the entrance follow, echoing throughout the images and information illuminating the all-too-frequent stages of genocide.

Dr. Kolleen Guy of the Department of History at UTSA and her students created “Faces of Survival: Never Again!” (on display at the ITC through November 15, 2015) as a class project over the course of two semesters. In the following interview, Dr. Guy and two of her students, Joscelynn Garcia and Juana Rubalcava, describe their experience developing this moving and meaningful exhibit. Joscelynn and Juana are both second-year graduate students in history. Joscelynn works at the ITC, and Juana works at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in San Antonio. As a result of the project, Joscelynn would like to continue working at the museum, particularly the conceptualization aspect of it. Juana wants to include more examples of genocide into the Holocaust Museum, and grow the museum into a genocide center.
Q: How did the project come about?

Dr. Guy

The project, in some ways, is a culmination of 20 years of teaching about the Holocaust and genocide at UTSA. One of the things I realized early on is that when you teach about the Holocaust and genocide, people get depressed pretty quickly. It’s overwhelming, and it’s overwhelmingly awful. So I came up with the idea of taking what you learn in the classroom and becoming an activist, doing something in the community with it.

Twenty years later, after various classes have put together exhibits and lectures, I thought, what if we create something broader that the entire community could come and see? I pitched the idea to my graduate class, Comparative Genocide, and they were game. I also had students in the Honors College that I taught join us, so it was a combination of graduate students and advanced undergraduates, some of whom were from the Biology Department. This project really involved students from across the university.

Q: How did you decide which genocides to cover?

Joscelynn

We went with the United Nation’s more defined ones.

Juana

Then we decided on the 20th century, to stick with one time period.

Dr. Guy

One thing we wanted understood is that it isn’t a European phenomenon—it happens all over. I should point out that was a huge debate, with people making a case for why Native Americans weren’t included. And that’s the question I’ve been getting most frequently.

Juana

I think we did a little bit of that when we put in the last wall with the GenocideWatch.org.

(The last panel in the exhibit, GenocideWatch.org, provides a color-coded map showing which countries were in various stages of genocide. The U.S. is in grey—the tenth stage, Denial.)

Q: What were some of the goals you had for the exhibit?

Juana

Our focus was victims’ voices, teaching, and the local connection.

Joscelynn

And we put them under the umbrella of awareness.

Q: In the first section, there is a wall of mirrors labeled “bystander,” “perpetrator,” and “victim” interspersed with pictures of actual victims. What was the inspiration for the mirror wall?

Juana

I got that idea from a couple of Holocaust museums I had recently visited. The one in Mexico City is still one of my favorites.

Joscelynn

When we were researching exhibits online, a lot of us also chose the “Some Were Neighbors” [exhibit] in the U.S. Holocaust Museum about “Collaboration and Complicity.” That tied themes together for us, and cemented what we wanted to talk about: the ordinary people involved.

Dr. Guy

My idea was that we’re all implicated. There is no neutrality when your neighbor is being murdered. The mirrors are a metaphor for this, bringing the viewer into a personal relationship with the stories and questioning what the viewer would be.

Q: What were some of the challenges?

Dr. Guy

The thing about the Holocaust is that it’s a very literate society that is murdered by a very literate group of people, so there tends to be more written evidence of it. But when the literate are murdering the illiterate, like in Guatemala, there aren’t very many testimonies. The students really had to work to get out there and find individual tales.

Joscelynn

For the back wall that Bonnie and I worked on, we had way more people [that we wanted to] include, but we couldn’t because of space, but then we felt bad because we wanted people to know their story, too. It was difficult choosing.

Juana

For me the hardest part was we only were allowed about 150 words per panel. Cutting the complex information down without taking away anything essential was a challenge.

Q: In the “Never Again. Never Again?” section, you ask the viewer several powerful, open-ended questions. Why did you choose this question as the title of your exhibit?

Joscelynn

Rwanda is one of the examples where they had reports of everything that was going on, but they used the term “acts of genocide” not “genocide.”

Dr. Guy

So the U.N. did not intervene. In the end, the Truth Commission went back and prosecuted, but where’s the point when you can do something if you know it’s going on beforehand? I think that’s where this question comes into play.

Dr. Guy

When killing begins, it’s almost too late. What you need to do is identify those early-on factors, and police your own society for those factors, because by the time you’re looking for a U.N. resolution, your timing is very limited. I still think that while you can’t change the world, you can change your piece of it.

Q: Do you think there is still potential for genocide today? And if so, why do you think genocide persists?

Joscelynn

Some, because when you look at that genocide watch map, almost every country in the world is at one stage. Even here sometimes the LGBT community is “Othered,” with people saying they’re not allowed certain rights—that’s how these things start.

Juana

I think so because our world is so connected in ways it hasn’t been in the past that those differences are more obvious now.

Dr. Guy

There’s the flipside, too. Part of what makes genocide possible is that perpetrators don’t think they’re going to get caught. It’s like police brutality—it’s obviously been happening, it’s not something new—but with smart-phone videos, we capture it. Globalization can create tolerance, but it can also amplify difference. It goes back to the mirrors. There is no absolute good and absolute evil. All of us have the capacity. The question is now—

Joscelynn

Who will you become?

Q: What are your future plans for this exhibit and how has working on this exhibit influenced other students involved?

Dr. Guy

My original hope was that it could become a traveling exhibit, something that will live long past this class. The students I got feedback from said that this was the most meaningful class they had ever taken. And I think it was just because you didn’t sit at home with your paper, you did something bigger—served something larger than ourselves. They see themselves as part of the solution to eliminate incidences of genocide.

What really excites me about this project is that we really went beyond the campus community. To me it’s the best of UTSA when we are embedded in our community. It is one of the strengths of our institution. We’ve seen these students be activists in the community.

Joscelynn

“Faces of Survival: Never Again?” is sponsored by UTSA’s Department of History, Honors College, ITC, Texas Humanities Commission, and the Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio, as well as others.

When you speak for the dead, you do God’s work.

Revka Ledor
local Holocaust survivor

San Antonio, as well as others.
What defines a life? When does it begin, and when does it end?

Before you reach for an automatic answer, consider that while birth and death may be among the few true human constants, cultures across the world frame these universals in surprisingly different ways.

In Western culture, for example, we locate personhood in the brain, but in other cultures equal emphasis is placed on the heart or the liver as the seat of consciousness. In many of these cultures brain death is not the clear clinical marker that a person has passed away, and declaring the moment of death is a religious matter rather than a medical one. In yet other cultures the deceased are not seen to have departed the physical realm at all, and their spirits are credited with being the prime shapers of everyday reality.
The ways in which we talk about certain kinds of people dying and the ways in which they die is very much a political project.

As strange as some of these notions may seem, the truth must be recognized that to other cultures, Western beliefs and practices surrounding death must seem equally bizarre and nonsensical. One fruitful approach to this astonishing variety of realities is that community - a sort of deep understanding of the ways in which humanity deals with one of life's most fundamental mysteries.

In Fleuret's view, the field of cultural anthropology - which at its essence explores the ways in which people make and share meaning about the world - is particularly well suited for the study of cultural attitudes towards death and dying. The field stands out from related social science disciplines, she points out, because of its unique unit of analysis and its emphasis on understanding the ways in which people make and share meaning about the events in their lives. Anthropology – which at its essence focuses on the mind and how mental processes produce a body of research that can positively influence the way people frame and understand the events in their lives - is essential to a fully lived life, and the knowledge they lead to is more than merely theoretical; it can positively influence the way people frame and understand the events in their lives.

For Dr. Jill Fleuret, associate professor in the Department of Anthropology, questions such as these are not merely interesting but essential to a fully lived life, and the knowledge they lead to is more than merely theoretical; it can positively influence the way people frame and understand the events in their lives. As a tool for the study of human beliefs and attitudes, the ethnographic process produces a body of research that is far from being a disinterested collection of abstract observations, provides a view into a foreign culture informed by empathy, context, and meaning. Studying death anthropologically implies successively slipping into different human lives (each complete with its own perspective shaped by individual experiences and cultural influences) to examine the topic from a richly varied set of viewpoints.

Among the most notable insights this approach to studying death has given Fleuret is an understanding of the alienating effects caused by recent changes in death practices in the U.S. Death, she explains, used to be a family and community event, with the person dying at home surrounded by loved ones, and the body kept in the home for mourning rituals. But with the medicalization of death and the emergence of the funeral industry in the twentieth century, the overwhelming majority of Americans now die in hospitals and assisted care facilities, and very often are not lucky enough to be surrounded by family and friends. The natural consequence is that the dying process is experienced as a lonely and frightening event, and those who are left behind and exposed to death in a way that fortifies them for future experiences.

“This all means that, for most Americans, there’s a lot of distance between regular experience and death and dying, and that makes it really hard for people to deal with death when it does confront them,” says Fleuret. “I think about people I know who have not been around death and experience it for the first time, and not only are they in a space of terrible grief but they don’t even have the vocabulary to come to terms with it – and, often, neither does anybody they know. And that to me is just so sad.”

Fleuret’s own experiences with death offer a telling reflection of these realities. Her first encounter with death occurred when she was seven years old. Her maternal grandmother died of emphysema alone in a hospital. The doctors didn’t allow her husband to be with her, much less her daughter or Fleuret herself. “I have a distinct memory of standing outside the hospital and looking through her first-story window to wave at her, and her waving back,” she says of the experience. “I never got to say goodbye.” Two years later, she had a completely different experience with death. Her paternal grandmother had contracted lung cancer, and her parents wanted her to be in the comfort of their home when her time came. Her grandmother stayed in a hospital bed in Fleuret’s room, and Fleuret moved into her parents’ room. Thanks to the way her parents framed the experience, the event was neither scary nor traumatizing. Instead, it was a time of great bonding, and her grandmother passed away gently.

Later in life, when in college, Fleuret was exposed in a span of months to the deaths of three young adults whom she loved deeply. Despite her earlier experiences with death, Fleuret found herself completely unprepared to make sense of the events. She understood that older people died. It was sad, but she had a script for understanding that. But she was not prepared for the grief that helped her. The death of young people, however, was an entirely different matter. She decided to get away from it all, traveling to Glasgow to study abroad. But she kept taking courses in anthropology, a discipline she had recently stumbled into and found to be an unexpected tool for self-understanding, and she slowly made her way through the grief and confusion.

A Course on Death

Years later, informed by her own encounters with death and with the transformative power of anthropology as a lens through which to view life, Fleuret developed a course on death and dying in the hope that students might find their own unique, life-affirming answers to end-of-life issues that are seldom discussed in American culture. “I wanted to teach a course that through study of the unfamiliar, we become more aware and thoughtful about the familiar,” she says. “I found that most people either have an inherent and visceral interest in or avoidance of the topic, but once they’re given a platform which to talk about death and dying productively they stop operating on those poles. They often get intensely and personally involved with it.”

Throughout the course, students discuss a wide range of ethnographic texts and films about diverse approaches to death and dying to aid in understanding their own culture’s practices. Students are asked to write their own obituaries, non-binding advanced directives, and eulogies, which involves thinking through details such as their age at death, where they imagine themselves dying, what the role of medical technology will be in their deaths, who will survive them, and what their lasting impressions on loved ones will be. Far from having a morbid effect, many students actually find themselves having meaningful conversations with close friends and significant others about what they want to do with their lives and how they want to die. “The assignments allow them to think through career and family paths,” says Fleuret. “It makes them start to think about the ways in which they value their lives.”

Part of the course involves employing anthropological analysis to think through challenging debates around abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty, as well as using death rituals as an entry point to examining larger cultural issues, such as patterns of inequality in the world. Incidents of mass deaths and genocide are examined, along with trends behind memorialization and the reporting of certain deaths over others. “The ways in which societies talk about certain kinds of people dying and the ways in which they die is very much a political project,” says Fleuret. In all of this, students begin to develop a concrete and practical vocabulary for death that in many cases replaces a nebulous sense of fear or unfamiliarity.
viva Italia

BY MCKINLEY CULBERT

Wanderlust. It’s a feeling that affects more and more students, especially amid the hustle and bustle of midterm papers and final exams. UTSA study abroad gets the attention of these students by sending them to programs in various locations around the world, where their experiences turn them into storytellers.

The COLFA Semester Abroad in Urbino, Italy is no exception. The students who sign on for this incredible experience benefit from all the awe-inspiring ways that one can be affected by travel.

Urbino is a quaint city in the hills of the Marche region of Italy. It is home to some of the country’s most stunning views and warmest people. Urbino’s historic center is one of Italy’s 51 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The city is also well known for its university, L’Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo. Founded in 1506, the university is known for its innovative design by architect Giancarlo de Carlo.

UTSA students are a familiar sight in the town of Urbino. They find it easy to adjust to life alongside their Italian neighbors, taking in the essence of Urbino and the country of Italy. In the course of only one semester, they are creating memories that they will cherish for a lifetime.

To say that I’ve fallen in love with my new home is an understatement. I have nothing but absolute adoration for this city. Urbino is a city that is lively and bursting with life and will do nothing but captivate the heart.

I’ve gotten somewhat acclimated pretty quickly and quite to my surprise, all the Italian that I know has come back to me. Living in Italy and essentially being forced to speak in language foreign to me has been the best practice. I hope to one day be completely fluent in Italian.

I think at this point the most wonderful thing about my experience here, aside from actually living in this beautiful place, has been the strong bonds of friendship established amongst the students on this trip and it is incredible to see and be a part of.

As expected, the food and wine have completely swept me off of my feet and I’m doing just fine without my Chick-fil-A breakfasts and my weekly Chipotle runs.

I haven’t quite been able to completely explore the city on my own between all the tours and all that has been going on but I’m so excited to call this place home!
The Travel Bug
March 04, 2015

fernweh [German], noun 1. An ache for distant places; a craving for travel

It only makes sense to use a German word on this blog entry since I just returned from Germany!

The past couple of weeks have been crazy busy. Not that I would have it any other way! With every city I visit, I fall more and more in love with Europe. I recently visited Rome, Frankfurt and Berlin. Amazing cities!

It wasn’t long before I gained an appreciation for that it was a huge, dirty, overpopulated city. It wasn’t enough. My first impression of Rome was

First Rome. Although we stayed 5 days, it was NOT enough. My first impression of Rome was that it was a huge, dirty, overpopulated city. It wasn’t long before I gained an appreciation for the culture, the food, and everything else the city had to offer. In the midst of basilica tours, gelato shops, a unique study abroad experience and living in a small Italian city like Urbino sounded ideal. I cannot express how glad I am to have checked Twitter that day!

Next Deutschland. A relatively small group of us took the trip. Getting there was definitely a doozie, but so incredibly worth it. While we had the streets of missing our train and looking the wrong hotel, I would do it all over again.

Frankfurt was a beautiful city. As soon as we got off the train, we sampled the local fare. It was incredible! While I enjoyed Frankfurt,

Q & A with Camila Alarcon
College of Liberal & Fine Art, Department of Communication

Q: Why did you choose the COLFA Urbino study abroad program?

I learned about the Urbino program from a Tweet posted by UTSA. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but I decided to go to the information meeting anyway. I was sold right away after learning about the city of Urbino. I was searching for a unique study abroad experience and living in a small Italian city like Urbino sounded ideal. I cannot express how glad I am to have checked Twitter that day!

Q: What are some misconceptions people have about studying abroad?

One of the biggest misconceptions I had about studying abroad was the idea that I was going to be terribly homesick. While the initial culture shock was a lot to handle, I was constantly looking forward to a new trip, seeing a new city, or learning more about Italian language and culture. I rarely felt homesick or wanted to return home, but by the end of the semester I was sad that the experience was coming to an end.

Q: What were the hardest things to adapt to while living abroad?

Adapting to a foreign place and the initial culture shock that comes with it hit me at all once. The first few days were somewhat surreal. Not understanding the language, adjusting to the time zone difference, and realizing that I was not going home for four months was a lot to deal with at first. However, I constantly reminded myself that the experience was not going to last forever and not one moment should be wasted. The initial shock only lasted a few days. The thing I missed most about home was having cell phone service anywhere, but I soon found an appreciation for the disconnect. It gave me the opportunity to soak in the experience to the fullest.

Q: What did you take away from this experience?

Studying abroad has been one of the most altering and influential experiences of my life. Independence is a major strength I have taken away from it. Going into a completely foreign situation and not knowing a single person forced me to be flexible and open-minded. Traveling by trains, buses, and planes in countries where I don’t speak the languages left me with problem-solving skills and communication skills that I never knew I was capable of. You never know how quick on your feet you are until you get lost in the labyrinths of the Venetian canals or the metro system in Barcelona.

Q: How will your experience help you in the future?

I hope the skills I acquired while living abroad will help me in my future career. I adapt to new places. I am eager to learn more about different cultures and use what I learn to grow both professionally and personally.

Q: What do you miss most about your experience abroad?

Everything! I miss being surrounded by different cultures and languages. Every day there were possibilities of learning something new or seeing a new place. Meeting people from around the world and seeing grand places like the Roman Colosseum or the Eiffel Tower in Paris made me realize what a small place I occupy in the world. It is incredibly humbling.

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Past Melodies Resound Via Rare Natural Horns

BY STEPHANIE SCHOELLMAN

Much of the classical music still enjoyed today—by composers such as Bach, Mozart, and Brahms—sounds different now than when it was originally performed. One of the reasons for this variation is that instruments have evolved over time.

Take the horn, for example. The modern horn is fashioned in a factory, exiting the assembly line with an unblemished luster. The mouthpiece is attached to intricate coils of tubing, blooming into a bell at the end where the cavernous notes emanate into the air. The valves—an addition added in the early 19th century—divert the air through different lengths of tubing to shift the harmonic series precisely. Thus, on a modern horn, the tone of each note is the same regardless of the key in which the piece is written.

A natural horn, by contrast, is hand-hammered into being, with abrasions as proof of its forceful birth. Natural horns also lack valves, requiring the performer to use his or her hand movements in the bell to alter pitch and to physically add or remove crooks—a supplement set of tubing—so that each key has its own distinct character, ranging from warm and rich in the lowest keys of C and D to bright and shrill in the higher keys of G and A.

The dimples in the natural horn’s form and the instrument’s dependence on the performer’s technique further contribute to its more natural, less manufactured sound. The oscillating notes in a natural horn are not as precise as they would be in a modern instrument—and that’s the beauty of it, says Stephen. “The more beat up it is, the better.”

Drew Stephen is an associate professor of musicology at UTSA and personally owns three natural horns—a copy of an early 18th century model (Nürnberg by J. W. Haas) made by Richard Seraphinoff, a copy of a 19th century hand horn (Mainz by F. Korn, ca. 1830) made by Friedbert Syrhe, and an authentic French trompe de chasse made by Marcel Auguste Racoux around 1830. Stephen is one of only a handful of Texas musicians who specializes in period instruments and one of a small group worldwide who play the natural horn professionally. He currently performs as principal horn with the Austin Baroque Orchestra and has performed with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Aradia Ensemble, and I Pirodissi.

His dual perspective as both scholar and performer of period instruments informs Stephen’s research as well as his musical interpretations in the concert hall. Viviali’s Concerto in F for Two Horns RV 536 and Handel’s Water Music, which Stephen performed last fall with the Austin Baroque Orchestra, are written specifically for the natural horn. He says part of the appeal of playing a period instrument is that “it’s easier to play that music on the instrument for which it was written.” The challenge, he adds, is that much instruction has been lost since the natural horn’s prime.

The natural horn was not taught at all from the early 1900s to the 1960s. The Conservatoire de Paris was the last place it was taught, and when that institution finally switched to the valve horn in 1903, the last link that institution finally switched to the valve horn in 1903, the last link to the natural horn led Stephen on a quest to rediscover how to play the natural horn. The Conservatoire de Paris was the last place it was taught, and when that institution finally switched to the valve horn in 1903, the last link to the natural horn led Stephen on a quest to rediscover how to play the natural horn. The Conservatoire de Paris was the last place it was taught, and when that institution finally switched to the valve horn in 1903, the last link to the natural horn led Stephen on a quest to rediscover how to play the natural horn.

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Among the post-1965 arrivals were significant numbers of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, many of whom gained admittance to the U.S. by obtaining skilled worker visas. Doctors, engineers and scientists – now able to bring their families along thanks to the new laws – began establishing South Asian communities across the U.S., making novel inroads into American culture. Some of these immigrants who ventured to the American West, however, were in for a surprise.

“What many people don’t know is that between 1900 and the 1940s, there was an already sizeable population of Punjabis [Indians from the northwestern state of Punjab in Texas and California],” said Anne Hardgrove, associate professor in the Department of History. Hardgrove’s main research interest is in the history of India. For the past seven years, she’s been interested in a little-known and fascinating story of Punjabi men who began settling in the American Southwest as early as the 1890s, who by marrying local Mexican women in large numbers gave rise to a culturally unprecedented and sparsely documented phenomenon. “When the wave of professional Indians showed up in the 1960s, they were taken aback by the fact that these Punjabi men had married outside of their community,” Hardgrove said. Not only that, but the families they had created were already three generations deep. The new South Asians didn’t know what to make of this, and, perhaps not surprisingly, did not accept the Punjabi-Mexican families as part of the developing community.

For better or worse, this treatment as outsiders was nothing new to the Punjabi men, who came from a long history of cultural displacement and global diaspora. The Indian state of Punjab is known, among other things, for its agriculture and its age-old military traditions. During the British occupation of India, many Punjabi men were drafted into the British army and dispatched across the world to help police Britain’s global presence. By the turn of the 20th century Punjabi immigration had begun settling in various regions in and around the West coast of North America, including Vancouver, Washington, Oregon, California and Texas. They came seeking new opportunities, and used their skills as farmers to carve out a living in their new land. Those who settled in Washington and Oregon went into the lumber industry; in California and Texas, they became accomplished ranchers.

The men were in their late twenties and early thirties when they first arrived, and it took them some time to find their feet in an unfamiliar and often hostile cultural landscape. Once they’d achieved a measure of success, however, their priorities shifted from mere survival to finding deeper satisfaction in life, and they looked to start a family. By the 1940s, they had to root themselves more firmly in the community. “A few of them had been married in India,” said Hardgrove, “but in those days when you migrated to a new continent, it was basically like going to Mars today. It was a one-way trip.”

It was right around this time that history served up a coincidence, the nature and magnitude of which seems in retrospect to have only been possible as the product of intricate planning. Spurred by the recent legalization of divorce in Mexico following the 1910 revolution, an exodus of both men and women began making its way into the United States. Many of these women were taken directly to El Paso – which at the time held the highest concentration of Punjabi immigrants in the U.S. – aboard a train that connected the town with Mexico City. Taking into account the U.S.-anti-miscegenation laws of the time that prevented different-colored people from marrying one another, and the fact that the Punjabi men and Mexican women possessed nearly identical skin tone, the result of this auspicious confluence of events was almost inevitable; along with California’s Imperial Valley, El Paso would eventually come to host a sizeable Punjabi-Mexican community.

Once it became obvious that the Punjabi-Mexican marriages satisfied the county clerks whose job it was to assess marriage license applicants and decide whether they were racially acceptable according to the prejudiced standards of the time, word quickly got around. It was not uncommon for Punjabi men who had successfully been married to Mexican women to introduce their brothers to their wives’ sisters, and so a unique expression in American culture was born.

The Punjabi-Mexican families embodied an intriguing meld of cultures. When Hardgrove first began teaching at Northwestern University in Chicago, among the materials she used with her students was a book titled Making Ethnic Choices that offered an in-depth look at the Punjabi-Mexican communities in California. It so happened that one of her students had grown up in a predominantly Punjabi-Mexican town, and she brought her high school yearbooks to class one day. “The kids had these fascinating names like Jose Akbar Singh,” remembered Hardgrove.

The wives became adept at cooking delightful fusion dishes like curried tamales, and the men learned to speak Spanish, which helped them communicate with the farmworkers who were often hired to help cultivate their land. The children inherited the religion of their mothers and grew up Catholic. One common story puts an interesting twist on the tradition of following mass with a family meal. The men would wait in the church parking lot, speaking Punjabi with one another, and when their families were done worshipping everyone would pile into their pickup trucks and go out to eat together. The tradition held until Punjabi religious institutions started to form along the lines of the three major religions of Punjab: Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam. The Sikhs practiced in their traditional gurdwaras (place of worship), Hindus erected temples, and mosques were built by the Muslims, with the buildings functioning both as places of worship and as community centers for the thriving Punjabi-Mexican population.

Obvious differences like language and religion aside, one of the most interesting features of the Punjabi-Mexican union is how well the cultures came together. Many of the original couples stressed how similar the two ethnicities were despite their vast geographical separation. As Hardgrove points out, the similarities are notable: both cultures share origins as agrarian societies, have an appreciation for colorful traditional art (some examples, held side by side, could be taken to have been crafted by the same artist), and enjoy similar foods (the Mexican tortilla and the Indian chapatti are virtually interchangeable, and the chili pepper looms equally large in both cuisines). These similarities may help explain why the Punjabi-Mexican story remains a little-known one, since over time the Punjabi-Mexican families blended ever-unrecognizably into the larger Mexican community of South Texas.

Though rarely heralded, the fact that South Asian Indians have made their home in Texas and contributed profoundly to the economy and culture of the Southwest – perhaps more so than subsequent generations of South Asian immigrants, who came as fully-formed professionals ready to incorporate themselves into American consumer society – the hard-won failures and victories of the earlier immigrants stand as a testament to the reality that culture is an ever-evolving phenomenon. “Community is not something that’s static,” concluded Hardgrove. “It’s not something that’s transmitted over the generations in fixed form. It’s always changing and adapting.”
In the Fall of 2009 Dr. Catherine Clinton, now Denman Endowed Professor in American History at UTSA, was invited to deliver a series of lectures on Southern history at Louisiana State University as part of the prestigious Fleming Lecture Series. Her talks centered on Southern women in the Civil War, a scholarly territory she had traversed at many points in her career, including in her first book – The Plantation Mistress – in 1982 and in her subsequent work on more than two dozen books, many of which touched on issues of gender and race in the Civil War era.

**Epic Sisterhoods**

*Southern Women in the Civil War*

**BY PATRICK COLLINS**

In the Fall of 2009 Dr. Catherine Clinton, now Denman Endowed Professor in American History at UTSA, was invited to deliver a series of lectures on Southern history at Louisiana State University as part of the prestigious Fleming Lecture Series. Her talks centered on Southern women in the Civil War, a scholarly territory she had traversed at many points in her career, including in her first book – The Plantation Mistress – in 1982 and in her subsequent work on more than two dozen books, many of which touched on issues of gender and race in the Civil War era.
Despite Clinton’s deep familiarity with the topic, in preparing original material for the LSU lectures she found herself asking questions of womanhood, the South, and the Civil War from new and invigorating perspectives. Her explorations encompassed the stories and experiences of Southern women across all spectrums of society, from those who ran plantations in the wake of the male exodus to war to those who liberated themselves from the yoke of slavery to become central figures in the struggle for black freedom. Her research will result in publication of her lectures in 2016 to coincide with Clinton’s appointment as the president of the Southern Historical Association, in a book titled Stepdaughters of History: Southern Women and the Civil War.

“Women in the South have always been viewed monolithically and mythically as one model, which of course is very untrue,” Clinton said. “There were rich women and poor women, white women and black women, enslaved women and free women, all rolled up into the Confederacy. I’m trying to look at what the impact of the overwhelming drive for Confederate independence was on those women, and to talk about women who struggled not only to support men’s efforts but who actually took on men’s roles in many forms.”

One of the realities that struck Clinton during her research was the fact that in their postwar memoir literature, white women provided a unique picture of the war very different from that portrayed by men. They wrote narratives of their experiences that were emotionally moving and powerful, creating in the process a subconscious identity of wartime womanhood. “Confederate women in particular were very adept at spinning their personal narratives into ideological tales gilded with emotionalism,” said Clinton. The narratives show that, though the stories seldom form part of popular history, women in the Civil War era forged epic sisterhoods and accomplished feats in the face of extreme challenge every bit as brave as their male counterparts.

**Battle-Born Bonds**

While militaries may have clashed on the battlefields, those at home were affected just as strongly by the conflict. “The home front in the Confederacy was as complex and interesting and worth investigating as was the battlefront,” said Clinton. “A lot of my work has involved concentrating on what was going on at home during the war. What were the divisions? What were the conflicts and challenges? How did women cope with the great burden of war that fell on their shoulders?” Coping on the home front was no trivial task. Wives of plantation owners, for example, were accustomed to acting as agents of their husbands capable of carrying out intricate business activities while their spouses traveled to the statehouse or took jobs as surveyors or lawyers. But it was an entirely different proposition to take on that type of responsibility knowing that their husbands might never return.

“Wartime layers over such extreme emotions that I think white women felt very much beleaguered, and they often got a lot of comfort from one another. Particularly in the period after the war, when legions of white men came home and declared they’d been defeated, it was very difficult for these women to cope with the period of limbo and decline.” These extreme challenges forced women to turn to one another for support, and the communities they created proved capable not only of carrying them through the war but also of providing them with an enduring sense of kinship and unity.

**Against All Obstacles**

The scope of women’s influence on the Civil War also extended beyond the home front. Clinton’s research identified a class of women who were so devoted to their cause that they transgressed traditional gender roles (a far from trivial undertaking in nineteenth-century America) and risked their lives to defend their ideals in the face of the enemy. Many became spies, and nearly 200 women were documented to have gone so far as to disguise themselves as men to fight on the battlefield itself.

Women like Loreta Velazquez and Rose Greenhow deserve our attention,” said Clinton. “They were belittled in their own time because they didn’t conform to traditional gender norms, and because they weren’t seen as ladies they were pushed outside of the narrative frame. They were ostracized and labeled as outsiders, and they’ve since been marginalized and treated as not worthy of our time and attention.”

**Untold Heroism**

Of all the women in the South during the Civil War era, enslaved women endured the greatest hardship and underwent the most profound transformation, and yet they have only recently begun to receive their due in the historical narrative. “African American women were doubly marginalized and in some ways doubly invisible,” said Dr. Clinton. “They could bear things and pass on information.” One such example is Mary Elizabeth Bowser, a highly educated former slave with a photographic memory who was placed as a spy in the Confederate White House by Richmond Clinton recently worked as a consultant on a documentary that tells one of these extraordinary and little-known stories. The award-winning film, Rebel, features the tale of Loreta Janeta Velazquez, a Cuban-born New Orleans woman who by the age of 21 was widowed and had suffered the death of her children. Rather than sink under the weight of her loss, Velazquez went into military service, according to her autobiography, and disguised herself to serve as a soldier in the Confederate army, spying for both sides before the war was over. Another notable example is Rose Greenhow, a well-known society widow in Washington, D.C. who was so feared by the Union that she was placed under house arrest and declared a spy when the war broke out. Greenhow died at sea while returning from Europe on a mission to smuggle gold and sensitive documents into the blockaded Confederacy.

"African American women were doubly marginalized and in some ways doubly invisible," said Dr. Clinton. “They were belittled in their own time because they didn’t conform to traditional gender norms, and because they weren’t seen as ladies they were pushed outside of the narrative frame. They were ostracized and labeled as outsiders, and they’ve since been marginalized and treated as not worthy of our time and attention.”

![Rose O’Neal Greenhow and her daughter](image)
socialite Elizabeth Van Lew (herself a spy and philanthropic abolitionist). Taking on the pseudonym of Ellen Bond, Bowser blended into her surroundings as a soft-spoken servant with access to virtually the entire mansion, turning over a large and strategically priceless body of classified information to Union intelligence.

A better-known figure, Harriet Tubman is widely recognized for her extraordinary acts as an abolitionist and humanitarian. Less known, however, is her involvement in the Civil War as a Union spy. One of her crowning missions involved her role in the Combahee River Raid, which resulted in the freeing of 750 slaves in a single night. Tubman led three Union gunboats carrying 150 black soldiers up the Combahee River, helping them steer clear of Confederate mines thanks to information she had secured by going behind enemy lines, and giving the all-clear to slaves lying along the banks waiting to be rescued. It was Tubman’s work on the Underground Railroad that allowed her to effectively coordinate the major military operation. The raid dealt a powerful blow to Confederate morale, says Clinton, who drew on her award winning 2004 biography, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, to illuminate her role in Civil War history, a neglected chapter of Tubman’s long and productive career.

In publishing *Stepdaughters of History*, Clinton aims to strike just as deeply into the monolithic historical construct of womanhood during the Civil War. The stories she brings forth demonstrate that women’s wartime actions were central to the struggle in a way that may surprise those accustomed to conceiving of female social roles as merely supportive. Clinton aspires to elevate recognition of women’s contributions as much within her research as outside of it; her recent invitation by Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew to participate in a roundtable discussion on the decision to feature a woman on the redesigned $10 bill is just one example of her efforts to contribute to a more gender-inclusive cultural dialogue. “In many ways,” she said, “the book is a reflective series of essays on larger questions of gender and region” – issues that are just as relevant to mid-nineteenth-century America as they are in contemporary culture.
We use language to write poetry that elevates the human experience, to convey complicated theories and ideas, and more generally, to help us make sense of the world within our own culture.

For instance, English speakers classify both light blue and dark blue as shades of the same color, while Russian speakers, who have two separate words to describe the hues, label them as different colors. Language also connects us to a group’s shared customs and history, allowing us to position ourselves both as individuals and members of a group. Our identities are often intimately connected to the way we speak, which is why, as Whitney Chappell points out, the loss of the Spanish language is so keenly felt at a personal and cultural level among U.S. Latin@s.

Chappell is an assistant professor of Hispanic linguistics at UTSA, specializing in monolingual and bilingual dialects of Spanish. Her research focuses on how different linguistic variants are used to negotiate identity within a broader social setting, contributing to our understanding of how language use intersects with and informs our social behavior and attitudes. San Antonio provides a unique locus of study for sociolinguists like Chappell who are interested in bilingual communities; approximately 40% of San Antonio residents speak Spanish compared to only 11% nationwide. In spite of the high rates of Spanish use and bilingualism in San Antonio, a monolingual bias in the U.S. drives an ongoing shift towards English. “You can actually see this shift take place within a single family,” says Chappell. “It is not uncommon in San Antonio to hear grandparents speaking Spanish to their grandchildren with the grandchildren responding in English.” Typically, within two to three generations, the Spanish language is lost or is only used emblematically in fixed phrases, replaced in most contexts by English.
It is not uncommon in San Antonio to hear grandparents speaking Spanish to their grandchildren responding in English.

Societal pressures play a central role in language shift; parents may fear discrimination against their children for speaking a language other than English, or worry, based on incorrect but popular assumptions, that hearing two languages at an early age will “confuse” a child. “Few linguistic myths are more incorrect but popular assumptions, that hearing two languages at an early age will “confuse” a child. “Few linguistic myths are more

Speak “Spanglish,” “Tex Mex,” or “un español pocho,” convinced that their way of speaking Spanish is impure and therefore illegitimate.

This idea of a “pure” language is one of the prominent myths that Chappell seeks to dispel in her class on Bilingualism in the Spanish-speaking World. All languages are mutes to some degree. English, for example, is a hybrid of Germanic roots and Latinate vocabulary, its purity a myth believed only by those without access to etymological dictionaries. Words like flexible, grammar, and composer, once bemoaned by English language purists as Romance corruptions of a pure Germanic tongue, are now categorically employed, their English equivalents bend some, speechcraft, and tonesmith long since abandoned. Spanish is just as rich and varied as English, having transmitted with time, space, and contact with other cultures. No one lamented the use of contact-driven Romance loan words in English, so why should English loan words like troca ‘truck’, lonche ‘lunch’, or wachar ‘to watch’ provoke such ire among Spanish speakers? According to Chappell, “Value judgments about language are the last bastion of socially acceptable discrimination, as a person’s way of speaking indexes her place of origin, race, class, heritage and myriad other social factors.”

The grammar police attack anyone who uses ain’t or creates a sign that reads Puche la palanca ‘push the lever’, armed with preconceptions that link language with intelligence, group membership, and even moral character. In other words, linguistic complaints can perpetuate the social hierarchy that places an educated elite above the masses, and can serve as veiled criticism of the social characteristics reflected by a certain way of speaking. Chappell notes that such critiques are particularly potent on college campuses, especially when they come from instructors. “The deficit perspective that is often applied to more socially stigmatized varieties, especially the Spanish spoken in San Antonio, is dangerous.” Chappell argues. “If professors tell their students that the way they speak, the way their family and friends speak is ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’, those educators are ultimately driving their students away from Spanish classes and, more generally, away from higher education.”

Rather than alienating UTSA students, several new classes in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures seek to celebrate the knowledge of Spanish that students already have and to empower them. At the upper division level, Chappell’s bilingualism class helps students understand linguistic ideologies, language loss, and the legitimacy of “Spanglish” in both cultural and linguistic terms. At the lower division level, heritage speaker (HS) classes provide a space tailored for English-dominant Latin@ UTSA students. Lilian L. Cano, a lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, taught one of the new HS classes this spring. She describes the course as “a new Spanish class specifically for heritage speakers – people who grew up speaking Spanish but have limited writing, listening, and speaking skills.” The class provides “an opportunity for heritage speakers to come together and connect with their community, become more confident, and improve job opportunities through a better understanding of Spanish,” she says. Chappell says convincing heritage speakers that the Spanish they already know is valuable is an important first step. “We hope to show our heritage speakers that they don’t need to learn another language. They simply need to learn another register, a more formal variety of Spanish,” Chappell explains, “but it is also important to preserve the variety of Spanish we speak with our friends and family.” The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures intends to expand its courses for heritage speakers and also upper division level linguistics offerings, which will help students gain confidence, value their heritage, and learn how to dress their language up in the appropriate contexts.

When asked how to prevent Spanish language loss in San Antonio, Chappell answers, “Speak Spanish as much as you can and value whatever form, whatever level of Spanish you know. And if you are a heritage speaker, sign up for our courses and improve on the advantage that you already possess.”
Somali immigrant Raege Omar was determined to pursue a college education, so he studied for the GED while making days-long deliveries as a truck driver.

That job was far more flexible than his previous position as a temporary laborer for a manufacturing plant. As a truck driver, he could plan his own schedule for three to four days at a time. With only a rudimentary education and basic knowledge of English, Raege taught himself the course material for the exam. In May 2012, after four years of driving eighteen-wheelers, Raege took the GED and passed.

“That’s when I decided to go to college full-time,” he said. Raege saw higher education as a wonderful opportunity for himself and his family, and a way to give back to his community.

As a Somali, Raege has experienced civil war, disease, and economic upheaval firsthand. His older brother almost died from cholera, and Raege himself suffered from tuberculosis and hepatitis during the decade the family spent in a refugee camp. “I’ve never had malaria, but many died from that,” he said. “I’ve always been interested in what we can do to mitigate problems like that.”

After spending a year at Amarillo College in the Texas panhandle, Raege transferred to UTSA. He is pursuing a double major in public health and sociology. An exceptional student, he consistently makes the Dean’s List and the President’s List, and he is part of the Honors College. Raege will graduate in December 2015.

Even though he is proud of his accomplishments, Raege regrets that he is an exception in his community. “Middle-aged Somalian immigrants usually do not have the opportunity to go to college full time,” he said. “I know so many who can’t.” Among those who can pursue higher education, Raege notes a preference for technical degrees. “The few young Somalis who go to higher education study at two-year colleges, and they only study business or computer-related fields,” he said. “That’s really important, but I feel we need to have scholarship.” He believes that studying social sciences creates leaders who can guide social change.

Raege hopes to open a path for others in his community through his accomplishments. And not only does he want to inspire fellow students and friends, he also wants to be a good role model for his son. He said, “I want to inspire my son to go into higher education, become successful, and contribute to knowledge-building and social change.”

Currently, Raege is working on his honors thesis, “Texas Somali Refugees’ Beliefs in Health, Illness, and Health-Seeking Behavior.” “The purpose of this project,” he said, “is to identify specific perceptions that have an effect on Somali refugees’ health in the American system.”

He has already presented his research at UTSA’s Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry Showcase, and he took the $300 prize for Outstanding Community-Based Research Project. He also recently submitted an abstract for the Mixed Methods International Research Association 2015 Conference.

Raege credits his UTSA research mentor and thesis chair Thankam Sunil and his honors advisor Ann Eisenberg with pushing him to pursue his challenging projects. “Before I met Eisenberg, I did not have any aspirations or confidence that I could do research at an undergraduate level,” he said. “She encouraged me to go for the highest scholarship in the Honors College.” He is also grateful to Jill Fleuriet and Gabriel Acevedo, who are on this thesis panel and have helped him with his research.

Raege does not plan to stop at undergraduate research. “I’m all for going for a Ph.D. in global health and medical anthropology,” he said. “My ultimate goal is to go back to Sub-Saharan Africa and contribute to social relief and development.” Focusing mainly on women’s empowerment and economic development, Raege wants to spread awareness of Somalia’s current gender inequality and political issues to promote change.

Raege is amazed at what he has achieved at UTSA. He believes that because he was able to succeed, many others can realize their potential as well: “This has been my radical metamorphosis to transform myself into an academic. In three and a half years, I transformed from truck driver to an academic!”
Open your Own Doors

BY: LINDSEY HALL.

Esther Isasia-Ross is a very busy woman. As the Foreign Language Program Manager and Language Analyst in the San Antonio headquarters of the FBI, she coordinates communications between six other offices around Texas and manages at least 55 people in the San Antonio division. So it is no surprise that her schedule stays full and her office door, inevitably, stays open. What is clear, however, from just one conversation with Isasia-Ross, is that she is right where she wants to be.

Isasia-Ross graduated from UTSA in 2000 with a master’s in Spanish with a concentration in linguistics, which has helped secure the position she works in today. Dr. Maryellen Garcia, formerly of UTSA’s Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, was particularly influential. Her classes in Southwest Spanish gave Isasia-Ross new insight into the many ways Spanish is spoken in the region. “It’s like England, Australia and the U.S. — the language is the same, but the accent and the slang are different,” she said. She could read English, however, so she decided to pursue a career in the Air Force, because she could read the tests. She was accepted, moving on to work in Human Resources, and eventually becoming Personnel Manager of the Year for all the Air Force bases in Europe in 1990. In the Air Force, she worked with influential teachers and supervisors who helped shape her into the confident woman she is today. She also met her husband, Jeffrey, with whom she has a son, a daughter and a grandchild.

The transition out of the Air Force was not easy for Isasia-Ross. “Transitioning for veterans was not as good as it is today,” she said. She found work with a contracting company that also worked with the FBI, and through this connection, she acquired her position in the Language Unit of the FBI in 1994 as a self-employed contractor. “The process to get in was very lengthy; it took over a year,” she said. In 1998 she became an employee, working as a Language Analyst. She was promoted to Supervisory Foreign Language Coordinator in 2006, and to Foreign Language Program Manager in 2007.

In 2008, Isasia-Ross went on to obtain another master’s, this time in Strategic Intelligence with a concentration in Middle Eastern Studies at American Public University. “You cannot stagnate in anything,” she said, explaining that when the work for Spanish linguists diminished in the FBI, she looked toward other avenues of career advancement.

We have to open doors for ourselves, Isasia-Ross added. “No one else is going to do it. You have to look for opportunity; it’s not going to come to you.” And she does look for that opportunity. Her work extends beyond her title as Program Manager; she also works as a coordinator of the Languages Program with the national headquarters of the FBI in Washington, D.C. and is an adjunct faculty member in the FBI Academy. She has been a guest speaker twice for the COLFA Awards ceremony, as well as guest speaker twice for the Inter-American Air Forces Academy (located at Lackland Air Force Base) during Women’s History Month. Her former professor, Dr. Garcia, had also reached out to Isasia-Ross to speak with students about her career, and she has participated in recruiting for the FBI at UTSA.

“I know I’m contributing, and I’ve helped someone somewhere,” she said. Some of the cases she works on are distressing, especially when the crimes committed involve children. As a recent grandmother, Isasia-Ross finds these difficult. However, she knows that her work in translation, and in managing diverse translators on cases, has helped victims. Learning to keep this positive attitude, she said, has “been a long road.”

Though Isasia-Ross remains a very busy woman in a rewarding position, she still finds time to visit her family in Spain every year and half. How does she do it all? “It’s about flexibility—the ability to change in your career. That’s the key to success,” she said.
Sally feels that they have been privileged to be part of San Antonio's evolution, affirming that economic development and conservation efforts are interlinked, and that this relationship has paid off in manifold ways, some incalculable. She also learned that half a world away, there were parallels between cultures. “My grandfather had a ranch out in West Texas, and the people out there are very proud of their property and a bit laconic if they don’t know you. The people in Afghanistan kind of reminded me of them. You were definitely in their country. These people had dignity, and you were made to understand that.”

Meanwhile, during Bob’s senior year in college, his mother sent him a clipping of some proposed development along the River Walk, and a family friend named Hap Veltman was involved. “I went to him and said there was a place that I thought it would be super-duper-hunky-dory-peachy-keen to have. He told me that was the most foolish idea he ever heard of because people don’t go down to the river — there’s nothing there. But I pointed out that I had preliminary plans but no financing, and he had financing but no plans, so we had a partnership by the next day,” Bob said with a smile.

Bob’s plans and Hap’s finances coalesced into Kangaroo Court. How the restaurant and pub got its name is a story Bob likes telling: “Hap went down to Laredo for R&R. He was known to have a heavy foot on the pedal, and in those days, you couldn’t go two blocks without a roadie (an adult beverage),” Bob said. “They were stopped outside of Cotulla and introduced to South Texas justice. By the time Hap came back, the restaurant was built, and we were clipping coupons, bidding the time. When asked what happened, he said, ‘Well, that was just a kangaroo court!’”

When inquired about San Antonio’s character, Sally’s advice to UTSA graduates is to “have character, be honest, and be dedicated to the work,” and Bob’s is to remember that “San Antonio has its own character. When we were growing up it was several hundred thousand people; now it’s over a million, but it still has a sense of community. It’s still the city that loves to party, but it parties together. It’s something you normally don’t see in a quote-unquote big city.”

Bob and Sally Buchanan fondly reminisce about San Antonio’s development because there was a chance then to create a space. And “it feels like I’ve been very lucky being on the Conservation Board and the River Authority to be so engaged in watching the river development and see a water source agency with six projects turn into a much more environmental agency where we promote low-impact development.”

Building businesses was one thing; attracting customers and creating a culture centered around the River Walk was another. “We came up with the idea of having a festival. We had had terrible weather, but that day, the sun came out, and we thought the whole world came down to the River Walk. From that moment on, it just grew,” Bob said.

Bob and Sally Buchanan fondly believe that UTSA, with its stellar staff and professors, is part of what makes San Antonio singular, which is one of the reasons why they give so generously.
The following students were awarded spring 2015 Archer Fellowships. The Archer Fellowship Program was established by The University of Texas System with former U.S. Representative Bill Archer to bring ambitious and gifted students to Washington, D.C., to participate in internships and attend classes focusing on policy, history, and advocacy.

Christine DeMeyers, anthropology
Sarah Gibbens, English (correction from the 2014 Ovations)
Evelyn Head, communication
Alfredo Hickman, political science (correction from the 2014 Ovations)

FACULTY
Congratulations to M. Kathryn Brown, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Kirsten Gardner, Associate Professor, Department of History, and Deborah Moon Wagner, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology. These exceptional faculty members were recognized by the UT Regents with Outstanding Teaching Awards from the University of Texas System for 2015. They are among 79 faculty from the 15 academic and health institutions that comprise the UT System to receive Regents’ Awards for 2015, which come with a monetary award of $25,000.

Additionally, Brown, Gardner, and Wagner have been inducted into the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teachers.

Wendy Barker was honored by UTSA’s Creative Writing Program in the Department of English in the University’s first Festschrift. Festschrift, a German term, refers to a volume of writings by different authors presented as a tribute to a scholar. “The Quiet Born from Talk” is a book featuring essays and poems written by Barker’s friends, colleagues and former students in celebration of her life-long career as a poet.

Mary McNaughton-Cassill, professor of psychology, was chosen for induction into the University of Texas System Academy of Distinguished Teachers. McNaughton-Cassill is one of four UT System faculty selected for membership.

Christopher Ellison, Dean’s Distinguished Professor in the Department of Sociology, and Jeanne Reesman, professor and Jack & Laura Richmond Endowed Faculty Fellow in the Department of English, were inducted into UTSA’s Academy of Distinguished Researchers.

Steven Levitt, Associate Professor in the Department of English, won the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies Tejas Foco Award for Poetry, and was nominated for both the Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin Award and the Texas Institute of Letters Bob Bush Memorial Award for Poetry.

Arturo C. Sotomayor, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Geography, was a recipient of the 2015 Luciano Tomassini Latin American International Relations Book Award for his book, The Myth of the Democratic Peacekeeper. This is the highest recognition given to a book in the field of international relations by the Latin American Studies Association.

Walter Wilson, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Geography, was a recipient of the Margaret T. Lane / Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award from the Government Documents Round Table of the American Library Association for his co-authored article, “Surrogates Beyond Borders: Black Members of the United States Congress and the Representation of African Interests on the Congressional Foreign-Policy Agenda.” This award recognizes an outstanding research article in which government documents form a substantial part of the documented research.

COLFA Recipients of UTSA University Excellence Awards 2015
President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching Excellence
Jill Fleuriet, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Andria Crosson, Lecturer II, History
President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Core Curriculum Teaching
Sue Hum, Associate Professor of English
Jodi Peterson, Lecturer II, History
President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in Community Service
William McCrany, Associate Professor of Music
President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Research Achievement
Joanna Lambert, Professor of Anthropology
President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Performance, Creative Production, or Other Scholarly Achievement
Kasandra Keeling, Associate Professor of Music
President’s Distinguished Achievement Award for Advancing Globalization
Sonia Alconini, Associate Professor of Anthropology
ALUMNI
Melissa Vela-Williamson, MA Communication 2009, was named the Public Relations Professional of the Year by the Public Relations Society of America.

FACULTY BOOKS

Art & Art History
The first volume to assemble and analyze a comprehensive body of ancient Andean architectural representations in pottery and explore their connections to full-scale pre-Hispanic ritual architecture.

Communication
Uses ethnographic research to provide an instructive case study of the importance and challenges of confronting injustice in all of its manifestations.

English
Provides a wide range of analyses of both traditional and contemporary work on language use in African American communities in a broad collective.

English
The Rise of Cantonese Opera, Wing Chung Ng, University of Illinois Press, 2015.
Charts the evolution of a rural tradition of ritual theater into a form of commercialized entertainment that thrived in city playhouses in South China and followed the migrant Chinese in their sprawling diaspora.

History
Illuminates the often-exploitative nature of Southern labor, the growth of the agribusiness model of food production, and the role of women of color in such food industries.

History
The culmination of a project which systematically presents the characteristics, themes, and findings of anthropology as applied to classical studies, this book highlights the important contribution this approach can make to the understanding of Greco-Roman culture.

Philosophy
The papers in this collection, deriving from a workshop held on and with Simon Critchley at UTSA in February 2010, take up the ways in which religion’s encounter with politics transforms not only politics but also religion itself.

Philosophy
A lyric testament to the resilience of the Cuban people and their revolutionary spirit that has inspired legions throughout the world to fight for justice.

Psychology
Preventing Violence in Australia – Policy, Practice and Solutions, edited by Andrew Day and Ephrem Fernandez, the Federation Press, 2015.
Draws from the social sciences as well as law and criminology to explain and remedy violence in Australia as it affects indigenous, non-indigenous, and ethnic minority groups, with relevant cross-national comparisons.

Modern Languages and Literatures
Fifteen essays, four interviews, and 40 pages of photographs offer a provocative, insightful look at the poetic dimension of Eliseo Subiela’s films.

Political Science
Demonstrate the interconnected nature of European governance, domestic reform, and democratic politics, and presents a theoretically informed assessment of the consequences of the European crises for state-society relations and democratic legitimacy.

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