

## Departments & Programs

- Asian American Studies
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  - English
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  - Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
  - Linguistics/TESL
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  - Queer Studies
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## The College of Humanities Newsletter



Elizabeth A. Say, Ph.D.  
CSUN Alum 1981

*From the desk of Humanities dean Elizabeth A. Say*

In a 2013 study, the folks at Google discovered—to their surprise—“that among the eight most important qualities of Google’s top employees, STEM expertise comes in dead last. The seven top characteristics of success at Google are all soft skills: being a good coach; communicating and listening well; possessing insights into others (including others’ different values and points of view); having empathy toward and being supportive of one’s colleagues; being a good critical thinker and problem solver; and being able to make connections across complex ideas” (Cathy N. Davidson, *The Washington Post*, Dec. 20, 2017). In other words, the so-called “soft skills” students develop while studying Humanities majors and minors are critical to success regardless of potential career paths. Two College of Humanities alumni will be recognized at the 2018 CSUN Distinguished Alumni

Awards—one for his contributions to law and social justice as a Los Angeles Superior Court judge, and the other for her innovation and leadership in banking as the chairperson and CEO of Montecito Bank and Trust. Also featured in this issue is an English professor partnered in a \$1.1 million grant-funded project using “big data” to investigate the Humanities, training our students to use 21st-century digital tools in critical new applications along the way. Finally, you’ll hear from a Chicana/o Studies faculty member who’s curating her third exhibition for the Petersen Automotive Museum, exploring the intersection of arts, culture, and America’s love of the automobile. As George Anders wrote in the August 17, 2015 issue of *Forbes*, “With a liberal arts degree in hand, you will be ready for anything.”

### The Hon. D. Zeke Zeidler to Receive Distinguished Alumni Award

The CSUN Alumni Association announced its first Distinguished Alumni Award back in 1981. In years since the Association has singled out scores of Matadors for the honor from among CSUN’s 350,000-strong lifetime graduate body, showcasing the University’s impact on the personal and professional lives of individuals, and highlighting the profound contributions of CSUN grads to regional and national business, education, arts, and culture.



Zeidler pictured in chambers

Distinguished Alumni Award recipients in 2018 include the Honorable D. Zeke Zeidler, a judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court. Judge Zeidler ’87 (English), a friend and booster of the College of Humanities, notes his delight in joining the ranks of Distinguished Alumni honorees such as Frank del Olmo, Irene Tovar, the Honorable Linda Lingle, Cheech Marin, Larry Feldman, Bill Imada, and Judy Baca. “What they all have in common is the ongoing commitment to better our society, while also continuing to find time to support the wonderful work going on at CSUN,” says Zeidler. “I can only hope that I have been able to make a small fraction of the impact that each of them has.”

*Zeidler continued on page 4*



Professor Martin Pousson with his PEN Center USA 2017 Literary Award for Fiction

## Martin Pousson Honored at PEN Center USA 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Literary Awards

It's not every day that the dean of your college calls you up and invites you out on a Friday night. But when she does, ya' gotta say yes! Little did I know that on this particular Friday night in October, not only was I going to take a selfie with one of my literary she-roes, but I was also going to learn, laugh, and be inspired.

The PEN Center USA held its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Literary Awards Festival at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel on October 27, 2017, and our very own English professor Martin Pousson was awarded the Fiction award for his novel *Black Sheep Boy*. And he was in great company! That same night Janet Mock received the Award of Honor, and Margaret Atwood received the Lifetime Achievement Award. The evening was filled with standard gala fare—open bar, chicken and green beans, and the chatter of strangers trying to connect. But beyond the predictable was a layer of inspiration, an atmosphere of truth and justice and transformation.

I'm embarrassed to say that going in I knew little about PEN Center USA. Beyond its mission to encourage and preserve interest in the written word, I discovered that it is a branch of PEN International, the world's leading international literary and human rights organization. Moreover, "PEN Center USA advocates for imprisoned, censored, and persecuted writers throughout the world." Learning this reality changed the entire affair for me. I was no longer at yet another award ceremony, but I was in the company of activists and truth-tellers. This could not be more timely, as it seems to be open season on responsible journalism, threats to net neutrality, and the contentious discourse surrounding the First Amendment.

So while on the surface this evening was about honoring great poetry, fiction, journalism, research nonfiction, etc., it was ultimately about a revolution—the revolutionary act of writing. Each honoree spoke of taking risks and freedom and power. They spoke of storytelling as a radical act, whether it is fictional or not. They lamented over concerns for freedom of speech and the consequences of silence. Janet Mock claimed, "the act of writing your story is revolutionary." Martin Pousson declared, "Who controls language controls speech. Who controls speech controls silence." And Solmaz Sharif proclaimed, "The first casualty of war is language." There was no end to the gratitude these authors expressed. Yet, simultaneously, a shared fear stood as a rallying cry for all the artists and activists in the room. We cannot allow hate and injustice to eclipse truth, and we cannot settle for anything less. The moment we accept censorship as our reality is the moment we give our power away.

PEN Center USA understands that freedom to write is freedom to live, and the act of awarding writers isn't about judging great versus mediocre writing; rather, it is about honoring the courage to write and speak your truth. I cannot say it any better than my colleague Martin Pousson: "We are the words we say, and we are the stories we tell. If we don't say the words or tell the story, then someone else will say and tell in our name, and someone else will claim authorship and authority over our lives."

**PEN Center USA Presents**  
**THE 27TH ANNUAL LITERARY AWARDS FESTIVAL**  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017 | BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL

Hosted by **WICK OFFERMAN** | Cocktails 6PM - Dinner & Program 7:30PM

FEATURING **CHELSEA HANDLER** | **CECILE RICHARDS** | **SOPHIA AMORUSO**

<b>LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD</b> <b>MARGARET ATWOOD</b>	<b>AWARD OF HONOR</b> <b>JANET MOCK</b>
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**FREEDOM TO WRITE AWARD**  
NEW YORK TIMES JOURNALISTS  
**KATIE BENNER, JODI KANTOR, MICHAEL SCHMIDT,**  
**EMILY STEEL & MEGAN TWOHEY**

— THE 2017 LITERARY AWARDS WINNERS —

## Scott Kleinman's WE1S Project Awarded \$1.1 Million by Mellon Foundation

Declaring a major in the humanities often incites a skeptically raised eyebrow from friends and loved ones, and the suggestion that the only career you'll be prepared for is as a barista at the local coffee shop.

Research sponsored by the WhatEvery1Says project (WE1S), co-directed by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) English professor Scott Kleinman, may provide you with new data to counter those skeptical looks. The WE1S project, based at University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), has recently been awarded \$1.1 million by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Along with Professors Alan Liu and Jeremy Douglass at UCSB and Professor Lindsay Thomas at the University of Miami, Kleinman will spend the next three years studying how the public views the humanities, providing those in the field with the tools to counter negative stereotypes.

The researchers will mine digital media—newspapers, magazines, and blogs—to learn what pundits, politicians, scholars, students, and even the media itself think, say, and write about the humanities. “The reality is, we don't know which perceptions predominate, and in what contexts,” said Kleinman.

To find those answers and others, Kleinman and his colleagues will employ “topic modeling,” a method of using sophisticated computer algorithms to search vast digital archives of media—from newspapers and magazines to blogs—for words related to the humanities and liberal arts. The computer sorts the words from these materials into groupings of identifiable topics or themes that the researchers can then analyze for answers to their questions about how the public perceives the humanities. Topic modeling is used frequently in the growing field of Digital Humanities, and Kleinman and his collaborators believe that it will allow them to achieve insights into public perceptions of the humanities beneath the familiar clichés and memes.

The research program includes three years of summer research at CSUN by teams of students and faculty, which will be led by Liberal Studies professor Mauro Carassai. Undergraduate and graduate students will assist in collecting and analyzing thousands of documents. In addition, the project will create open protocols and tools for performing humanities research with computers that can analyze large amounts of data. The data collected will be used to formulate strategies and narratives to counter the perception that the humanities are irrelevant in today's tech-driven world.

An important goal of the WE1S project is to think critically about the procedures needed and design appropriate tools to engage in such a large-scale undertaking in the humanities. As part of the project, the WE1S team will develop a system that allows researchers to generate their own topic models with an interactive browser for studying their implications. The system will be easily reproducible and adaptable for use by other humanities researchers who are increasingly making use of digital approaches to engage in collaborative scholarship and to tackle the materials of humanistic inquiry at scale.

The project's hypothesis is that digital methods can help us learn new things about how news media sources portray the humanities. For example, are there hidden connections or mismatches between the premises or framing narratives of those arguing for and against the humanities? How do different parts of the world or different kinds of news sources compare in the way they think about the humanities? “The WE1S project will attempt to bypass set debates and well-worn arguments,” Kleinman said, “to find new and more varied ways to advocate for the place of the humanities in today's society.”

Another core mission of the WE1S project is to study the way racial, ethnic, gender, first-generation student, and



Professor Scott Kleinman, English Department

# The College of Humanities Newsletter

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Judge Zeidler truly exemplifies the Matador spirit of reaching beyond himself to make his community a better, more welcoming space for all. As a student, both at CSUN and at Loyola Law School, as a lawyer, as a judge, and as a citizen he has fought for equity and diversity, urging personal and institutional responsibility in ethical decision making. He has invested his energy and influence in causes as diverse as divestiture in apartheid-era South Africa, sanctuary for displaced Central Americans, voter registration and campaign support, environmental protection and safety, affordable housing for seniors, gender equity and parity, and expanded services for disabled persons. Along the way he has fought against gender discrimination and violence.

Certainly not least among Zeidler's social justice concerns, he has made tremendous strides alongside and on behalf of LGBT individuals. In 1984, while a student senator at CSUN, he came out as gay in the campus newspaper. The concept of "coming out" may strike some CSUN students today as quaint by the standards of their generation. But the present state of relative acceptance among peers of different sexual orientations must be recognized as a dividend of dues exacted from gays and lesbians of Zeidler's generation, many of whom paid a personal or professional price for their desire to live openly. Happily, Zeidler's talents and determination outmatched these social challenges: The same year he came out in the campus newspaper he was elected student body president.

Zeidler attributes his effectiveness as a career activist to his formative years in student leadership. "Whether lobbying in Sacramento with statewide student leaders, impacting local government with the Los Angeles Collegiate Council, or working on campus issues with the Associated Students, the level of professionalism really was amazing," Zeidler says. "When I transitioned to political involvement off campus, including lobbying on gay, lesbian, and AIDS issues in Sacramento, I had already gained valuable experience, as well as strong relationships with many elected officials, and those relationships have continued on for decades."

Judge Zeidler has continued throughout his life to promote visibility and equality for LGBT communities at regional, national, and international levels. Notably, after ascending to the bench of the Los Angeles County Superior Court in 2005—the first openly gay man ever elected to the position—he would serve four terms as president of the International Association of LGBT Judges.

Perhaps Zeidler's most profound impact has been felt in his advocacy on behalf of abused and neglected children, the cornerstone of his law career prior to the bench. His judicial career commenced upon being appointed as a juvenile court referee in 1998, and his caseload has concentrated on the welfare of children since his election as a Superior Court judge. Zeidler, who was also elected to multiple terms on the Redondo Beach School Board and served as its president, prizes education highly and encourages kids to overcome difficult circumstances through academic achievement and literacy. He is in turn encouraged by the hope and progress he has personally witnessed as an attorney and judge in the child welfare system. "I have been able to see children flourish and thrive in the most trying of situations," he says, "and I have seen parents overcome tremendous odds to improve their lives and strengthen their families."

His influence is magnified through his training and mentorship of newly appointed or elected judges. In this capacity he takes special care in stressing fair and ethical treatment for all who come through the court system. He credits his time at CSUN, particularly his interdisciplinary studies for a women's studies minor, with having opened his eyes to the idea that so much of our history has been recorded in a "narrow and exclusionary manner," leaving it to us to "question our sources of information, be constantly vigilant, and serve as beacons of a larger, more inclusive truth." Such revelations have been extraordinarily relevant and resonant in his judicial career. Having chaired the committee that creates anti-bias curriculum for judicial officers and court staff throughout California, his training synthesizes judicial courses with competencies in LGBT domestic violence, juvenile protections, and diversity among cultural attitudes and practices—all topics he has addressed on national platforms through speaking engagements and workshop presentations. Asked what it means to him to be recognized in this way by the Alumni Association, Judge Zeidler is characteristically humble. "For me the Distinguished Alumni Award is a vote of confidence in my own efforts to make a difference," he says, "but it also energizes

*Zeidler continued on page 7*

## Janet Garufis to Receive Distinguished Alumni Award



Janet Garufis, Chair and CEO,  
Montecito Bank & Trust

Janet Garufis (BA, English, '77; MA, English, '02) only started training as an endurance runner a little over a decade ago. It was at the suggestion of one of her two sons, who hoped that the discipline would help her cope with the 2007 death of her husband. Yet you could say that the marathon is an apt metaphor for Garufis's life journey, from false academic starts to a banking career with zero shortcuts to the top.

Now the chairperson and CEO of Montecito Bank & Trust, Garufis, among CSUN's three Distinguished Alumni Award honorees in 2018, credits her success in the male-dominated industry to her steady rise through the ranks, from an unassuming start as a bank teller at Security Pacific National Bank in 1972. The Boyle Heights-born Garufis took the teller job after dropping out of UCLA, an academic choice that had proven an ill fit for her after graduating from a private girls' high school. Speaking to an interviewer with the *Santa Barbara Independent* in late 2017, Garufis described UCLA as the biggest mistake of her life, but she went on to say, "It's only through failure that you can become your next best thing. If you're not willing to take the risk where failure is an outcome, you're not going to grow."

She would return to college in 1973, first attending Santa Monica College, then transferring to CSUN to complete a bachelor's degree in English, all the while continuing to work at the bank. By the time she graduated CSUN, in 1977, she had learned practically every job on the floor through a combination of innate curiosity and a willingness to pitch in wherever needed. She entered training in operations management, which might not seem like a natural fit for a Humanities grad, but branch banking relies on relationships. Garufis mastered that combination of soft people skills and problem-solving drive that Humanities degrees emphasize, and that makeup would help her rise through ranks of steadily increasing responsibility in retail, commercial, and private banking operations.

Garufis has succeeded in part by identifying and filling niches of previously unmet need. After graduating from Pacific Coast Banking School at the University of Washington in 1986, she built and managed a small business loans division for Security Pacific. When Bank of America acquired the smaller bank in 1992, Garufis's new employer tapped her to do the same for them: With riots having erupted across Los Angeles in spring of that year, local businesses affected by fires and looting needed rapid response loans to help them rebuild in the community.

Despite all her success in banking, Garufis had her own unmet need, and in 2000 she took early retirement to pursue her lifelong dream to become a literature professor. She entered the English master's program at CSUN and graduated in 2002, then went on to a Ph.D. program in education at University of California, Santa Barbara. She completed all coursework for the degree, but her dissertation completion was derailed as her husband was stricken with worsening symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Garufis had taken what she thought would be a permanent break from banking to immerse herself in the world of letters. In the end the most practical decision was a return to the banking world, but it would be on her terms. She applied to Montecito Bank & Trust and was quickly hired as a vice president by founder Michael Towbes, who knew a great leader when he met one. Montecito is a regionally focused savings and loan institution where lending decisions are driven by familiarity and interest in the strengths and needs of the community, a brand of "relationship banking" ideally suited to Garufis's sensibilities and vision. Within two years, she was promoted to president and CEO, and Towbes handpicked Garufis to take over as chair-

## The High Art of Riding Low

Dr. Denise Sandoval, a professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at CSUN, is curating a spectacular exhibit at Los Angeles's Petersen Automotive Museum that examines and interprets the roots and significance of lowrider art, lifestyle, and culture. We asked her to tell us a bit about the exhibit and share some favorite images.

This show examines the diversity and complexity with which 50 artists visualize, celebrate, and interrogate the lowrider car through vehicles, paintings, sculptures, and site-specific installations. The lowrider car (*ranfla*) inspires many artists, but it is especially celebrated by Chicana/o artists throughout the Southwest. Symbols of cultural pride (*corazón*), and icons of everyday life experiences, lowriders also embody the formation of multicultural communities through a passion for a specific form of car customization. As "canvases of self-expression," lowriders serve as the basis of artistic creativity (*inspiración*), inspiring generations of artists to engage with their iconography, performativity, and aesthetics.

This exhibition builds on the work of the previous Petersen Automotive Museum exhibitions: *Arte y Estilo: The Lowriding Tradition* (2000) and *La Vida Lowrider: Cruising the City of Angels* (2007-08), both of which focused on the cars, people, and culture of lowriding. Rather than document the history of lowrider art or focus on one lowrider artist, this third exhibit complicates how the lowrider car has become an artistic medium and an art object as artists have reworked and reimagined the lowrider car's form and aesthetics. These artists explore Chicana/o identity and history, the importance of placemaking and rituals, and the significance of gender politics. Their work spans the "high and low" worlds of galleries, car custom scenes, community art spaces, and museums. These artists refract the lowrider through a multitude of lenses, including surrealism, abstraction, conceptualism, folklore, kitsch, and popular culture. Their work reveals their medium as a "liminal space," a "betwixt-and-between," wherein values and meaning are constantly in flux. Our goal is to provide a rare opportunity to reflect on the high art of riding low and capture the deep emotional connections—the *corazón*—various communities share as they sculpt, paint, and perform the lowrider as both object and subject.

The exhibition runs through September 2018 at the Armand Hammer Foundation Gallery of Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. Visit [www.petersen.org](http://www.petersen.org) for gallery hours, admission, and directions.

Photos courtesy of the Petersen Automotive Museum



1939 Chevrolet Master Deluxe, Gangster Squad '39, Collection of Mister Cartoon



1950 Chevrolet Sedan, Our Family Car, 1984, Gilbert "Magu" Lujan, Collection of Paul Dunlap



Santa Cruz, 2006, Luis Tapia, Collection of Curt, Christina, and Jonah Nonomaque

*Kleinman continued from page 3*

other groups are positioned by the media, or position themselves in the media, in relation to the humanities. For example, how does the mainstream media position students and others from particular ethnic groups relative to the humanities? How do media articles by or addressed specifically to such groups compare with mainstream media in how they depict this relationship? In what ways does public opinion about the very ideal of “diversity and inclusion” correlate with public opinion about the humanities?

“We don’t know yet what we’re going to discover,” Kleinman said. “We expect that our methods will yield some surprises that will help us re-think our methods of advocacy and provide us with a greater understanding of how to explain what we do and why it is important.”

More information about WhatEvery1Says can be found on the project’s website: <http://we1s.ucsb.edu>.

*Garufis continued from page 5*

person of the board upon his illness-related retirement in April 2017.

While Garufis’s service to the community is rooted in banking, it certainly doesn’t stop there. She serves as a board member to a wide variety of nonprofit and professional organizations benefiting the arts, K-12 and higher education, health, housing, children’s welfare, and women in business.

Likewise, detailing the scope of her previous honors would exceed the space of this article. Suffice to say, she’s been recognized as a trailblazer for women in business and banking, a shining light in charitable giving and volunteerism, a role model in health and wellness, and, perhaps most important, an inspiration to young girls to think expansively and pursue excellence wherever life takes them, even when it’s not precisely where they expected to land!

The College of Humanities is proud to have been part of this outstanding alum’s incredible journey.

*Zeidler continued from page 4*

me to do even more in order to live up to the award.”

Among many previous honors, Judge Zeidler is the recipient of the Stonewall Democratic Club’s Lifetime Achievement Award and Education Works’ Foster Youth Education Service Award. He resides in Los Angeles with his husband, attorney Jay Kohorn, the assistant director of the California Appellate Project.

**O**ur most anticipated time of the year at California State University, Northridge is just around the corner: Commencement! The College of Humanities and the College of Health and Human Development I ceremonies will take place May 21 at 8 a.m. on the Oviatt Library Lawn. For additional details on CSUN commencement and surrounding events, please visit [www.csun.edu/commencement](http://www.csun.edu/commencement).

**COMMENCEMENT 2018**

**36th ANNUAL HONORS CONVOCATION**

6:00 PM - SATURDAY, MAY 12TH  
- Recognizing outstanding graduating students!

**FRIDAY, MAY 18**

6:00 PM - CEREMONY ONE  
- Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, & Communication

**SATURDAY, MAY 19**

8:00 AM - CEREMONY TWO  
- David Hazarian College of Business & Economics

6:00 PM - CEREMONY THREE  
- College of Engineering & Computer Science  
- College of Science & Mathematics

**SUNDAY, MAY 20**

8:00 AM - CEREMONY FOUR  
- College of Social & Behavioral Sciences I  
- Africana Studies, Communications & Asian Studies, History, Political Science, Public Administration, Social Work, Sociology and Urban Studies & Planning

6:00 PM - CEREMONY FIVE  
- Michael D. Eisner College of Education  
- College of Social & Behavioral Sciences II  
- Anthropology, Design and Psychology

**MONDAY, MAY 21**

8:00 AM - CEREMONY SIX  
- College of Humanities  
- College of Health & Human Development I  
- Child & Adolescent Development, Communication Disorders & Sciences, Gerontology & Occupational Health, Health & Consumer Sciences, and Health & Human Development

6:00 PM - CEREMONY SEVEN  
- College of Health & Human Development II  
- Health Sciences, Kinesiology/Exercise, Physical Therapy, and Recreational & Social Management

**ALL CEREMONIES TO TAKE PLACE ON THE OVIATT LAWN**  
For a complete list of receptions & celebrations visit: [csun.edu/commencement](http://csun.edu/commencement)

# CSUN

CALIFORNIA  
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*The Mission of the College of Humanities is to create a community of learners who...*

Explore and value the diversities of cultures, thought, perspectives, literatures and languages of humanity;

Critically reflect on and analyze multiple dimensions of human identity and experience;

Contribute to scholarship and creative production and innovation; and

Act as responsible global citizens committed to principles of freedom, equality, justice and participatory democracy.



Visit us on the web at: <http://www.csun.edu/humanities/>