

SMC's Professors of the Year Celebrated

By Amanda Kuehn

Saint Mary's College professors, students, alumni and community members packed into the Orinda Room at the Soda Center April 9, eager to hear history professor Myrna Santiago present an address entitled "Anger, Love, and Teaching," which focused on the resilience of her students and her love of teaching about the past.

With a bachelor's degree from Princeton, Fulbright experience in Mexico and a Ph.D. in Latin American History from UC Berkeley, Santiago already had quite a resume. She has now added to it the honor of being named Saint Mary's College 2013-14 Professor of the Year.

At some universities, the profes-

sor of the year is given a substantial load of responsibilities and speaking engagements. At SMC, however, this isn't the case. Though the professor of the year is expected to give a presentation in the spring, the award, which comes with a \$5,000 stipend, is seen as recognition of what has already been accomplished. "It should be an honor of achievement, celebratory of the [professor's] accomplishments and impact on campus," said SMC Provost Bethami Dobkin, Ph.D., who was recently named as one of the "Most Influential Women in the Bay Area" by San Francisco Business Times.

Santiago was given carte blanche regarding the topic of her address. "It took me pretty much the whole year to think about the frame and title," said Santiago, who knew right away that she wanted to focus her message on why she teaches and what motivates her year after year. The presentation and reception is open to all. "This particular one had a lot of students," Dobkin noted, "which speaks to [Santiago's] engagement with her students."

Nominations for the award can

come from any member of the Saint Mary's community, including students, faculty and staff. The incoming Professor of the Year is announced each spring at an end-of-the-year dinner hosted by the provost. Two months prior to the announcement, the Rank and Tenure Committee, joined by the provost and the deans, meets to discuss nominations. According to Dobkin, selection is made based on "all around achievement" including academic research, service and teaching, as well as the information provided by students and peers.

On receiving the award, Santiago was flattered and surprised. "It felt like it was a little early," she said, noting that she has only been at Saint Mary's for 15 years, far less than past recipients. Santiago, who is used to working more or less anonymously, found herself frequently blushing. "It feels funny to be in the spotlight," she said, also noting that, "It's a great honor that your colleagues think you deserve that recognition."

On Thursday, May 15, David Bowen was named the 2014-15 Professor of the Year. With a strong background in business manage-

ment, Bowen helped to set up Saint Mary's MBA program, (the first executive MBA program in Northern California), back in the mid '70s and has been teaching as a full-time professor since 1983. Bowen was scheduled to teach a class the night of the banquet before he was summoned by an email from the provost.

"Of course I knew what happens that week," said Bowen. "My first reaction was sort of disbelief. I couldn't imagine how I pulled that off; there are so many wonderful professors at the college."

Dobkin countered, stating, "Professor Bowen has earned the highest regard from his colleagues, particularly for his wise and compassionate leadership, his mastery of the theory and practice of organizational behavior, and his inspiring work with students."

Needless to say, Bowen made it to the dinner. "Once I got over the shock I rearranged the class."

Alongside Santiago, Dobkin was proud to recognize yet another outstanding member of Saint Mary's faculty. "Any chance we have to show them off we need to take," she said.

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Myrna Santiago



Photo Tony Burditt David Bowen Photo courtesy Saint Mary's Magazine

Springhill Students Artwork Displayed in SF

By Cathy Tyson



Springhill Elementary School student Sam Swan's poem and artwork will be part of the "Befriending the Imagination" exhibition through June 27.

Photo provided

A celebration of kid wisdom and creativity can be found in San Francisco through June 27 in an exhibit at the Commonwealth Club called "Befriending the Imagination," which examines human imagination as an essential natural resource – not rare, but precious.

The exhibit features 35 picture poems made by children, along with 10 of Lafayette resident J. Ruth Gendler's monotypes – a kind of printmaking produced by drawing or painting on a smooth, non-absorbent surface. Gendler has been a Poet in the Schools for over two decades, and has been at Springhill Elementary School in Lafayette since 1994.

Gendler feels that now more than ever, there is a need for the arts for children due to their increasingly digitized and constantly interrupted world. "Creativity is contagious" she explains. "It's very easy to lose it." Her lessons to third, fourth and fifth graders at Springhill have more of a human rhythm, with poems, questions, and building on examples of things like water or faces, sometimes seeing old things in a new way. The student's thoughts are expressed visually and with language creating truly unique and authentic personal imagery.

"Adults who have seen the show so far have been charmed by the children's art but surprised and moved by

the sophistication of the writing. As I like to say the children's writing is often casually profound and profoundly hopeful," said Gendler, who has published three books, and is a poet and artist herself. Stanley Middle School student Sarah Zemelman, whose work will be on display explains that "it's a great way to express feeling." Fellow artist and Stanley student Sam Swan enjoys the creative process and suggests, "don't be afraid

to write down the words that are in your head" as a method of finding subject matter.

The Commonwealth Club is located at 595 Market Street, second floor, in San Francisco. The exhibit can be viewed Mondays through Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. For more information, call (415) 597-6700.

My words are paint
Making an image to last the ages
To create a picture in your mind
To touch the delicate fabric of thoughts
To create a web of ideas
To make a story for young people to enjoy
To paint on the canvas of reality for all to see.
– Sam Swan, written in fifth grade, 2013

My face holds the past
Sorrow, loss, joy, bravery and same
of ancestors long gone by
With many tales
of heroism and pain.
Lost in the pages of time.
Leading up to the present
Me
My eyes shadow other faces
Thousands of years old
My ears have packed away stories forgotten
Longing to be told once more
My nose a crease of endless time
My features old, cruel and kind.
– Sarah Zemelman, sixth grade

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