



San Francisco State University *Gater Retiree Gazette*



October 2026

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Autumn 2026

Upcoming Events

Board of Directors Meetings:

On Zoom

Monday, December 14, 2026, 10 AM

Wednesday, October 14, 2026, 10 AM

Zoom Talk with Jim Kelley — Regarding this year's El Nino Predictions

Thanksgiving Luncheon

Wednesday, November 18

Vista Room, On Campus, Education Bldg

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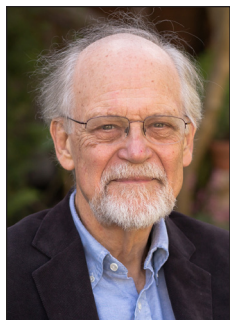
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Jim Van Ness
Richard Giardina

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Zee Zingaro
Judah Rosenwald



SFSURA c/o Advancement Office
1600 Holloway Avenue, ADM153
San Francisco, CA 94132
Digital Version: www.sfsu.edu/~retire



President's Corner

Dear fellow SF State retirees,

I was on campus one day last spring and was reminded how attractive the campus is at that time of year, with flowers in bloom and the grounds freshly trimmed. It reminded me of one of my favorite times of the academic year—Commencement, specifically, Commencement in Cox Stadium. When we held Commencement there, the entire campus became the staging area. The Quad was filled with students in their robes, faculty members in their academic regalia, and students' family members of all ages, from toddlers to grandparents. Some faculty members didn't like to attend Commencement, but I went nearly every year because I found the atmosphere of joy and celebration so energizing.

On one occasion, when Sally Scully and I were walking across campus in our robes, we were stopped by a student whom neither of us knew but who asked if he could get his picture with us just because of our robes—Sally's in Harvard crimson and mine in Columbia slate. The experience reinforced our understanding that the faculty's major function at Commencement was to be part of the scenery.

My last commencement was also one of the last in Cox Stadium. Pam Vaughn was Senate chair and therefore led the faculty procession, mace in hand, followed by the new emeriti, with David Meredith and me, as former Senate chairs, first in line. I don't know who took the photo, but it's a favorite of mine when I'm reminiscing.

I'm sure we all have our favorite memories of the campus. Feel free to share yours for a future GRG by sending it to me or Zee Zingaro.

I was very pleased by the success of our rescheduled spring luncheon in the Vista Room. It was nice to be on campus, and the luncheon itself could not have been more enjoyable—great food, great company, pleasant setting.

A last-minute addition: I've just read President Mahoney's message about her pending retirement; you'll find that message elsewhere in this GRG. In the 55 years since I arrived on campus in the fall of 1971, I've seen five

presidents. Lynn Mahoney is at the top of my list in every way: vision and values, ability to respond to unexpected challenges, ability to communicate, commitment to the mission of SF State, commitment to shared governance. We have been fortunate to have her as president during these past, often stressful, eight years. We'll be fortunate to find someone of her caliber to take over.

I'm sure you all join me in wishing her a happy and fulfilling retirement. And that you'll join me in welcoming her as a member of the Retirement Association.



All of which leads me to the way that I have been ending all these messages, with an encouragement to be generous in your support for the University. It's easy to contribute online—just go to <https://develop.sfsu.edu> and click on Donate.



Bob Cherny,
President

Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon



SFSU Retirement Association Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon & Meeting Election of Officers

At San Francisco State University
Vista Room, Burk Hall, 4th Floor, Room 401

Wednesday, November 18, 2026
11:30 AM
Buffet Lunch

The Link for purchasing lunch tickets will be available in an upcoming GRG Blast. Stay tuned.

Parking will be available
for those without parking passes.



Reflections on Serving as CSU Faculty Trustee

By Darlene Yee-Melichar, Ed.D., FGSA, FAGHE

Faculty Trustee, California State University, 2023 – 2026

Full Professor, San Francisco State University, 1990 – 2026

When Bob Cherny asked whether I would reflect on my three years as CSU Faculty Trustee, my first reaction was, “Where do I begin?”

Serving as Faculty Trustee has been one of the greatest honors of my professional career. It was also one of the most challenging, enlightening, and rewarding experiences I have ever had.

As many of you know, the Faculty Trustee serves as a full voting member of the California State University Board of Trustees, participating in nearly every aspect of system governance—from academic policy and finance to campus planning, governmental relations, institutional advancement, presidential searches, and presidential evaluations. Over the past three years, I served on six standing committees, participated in the selection of Chancellor Mildred García, joined numerous presidential searches and reviews, advocated for the CSU budget in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., and visited campuses throughout California. Those experiences gave me an extraordinary perspective on both the complexity and the promise of the nation’s largest four-year public university system.

Perhaps my greatest lesson was that governing a university system is far more nuanced than I had imagined. Every Board decision involves balancing competing priorities—student access and affordability, academic quality, employee compensation, fiscal stewardship, legislative expectations, workforce needs, and public accountability. There are rarely simple answers. I came to appreciate that thoughtful governance requires listening carefully, asking good questions, weighing evidence, and seeking common ground, even when consensus is difficult.

One of the most encouraging aspects of my service was witnessing the extraordinary dedication of CSU faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and trustees. Across our 23 universities, I met individuals who work every day to transform students’ lives. Whether in classrooms, laboratories, advising centers, residence halls, libraries, counseling centers, or community partnerships, I saw countless examples of people who embody the CSU mission with remarkable commitment and compassion.

I was especially inspired by our students. Many are the first in their families to attend college. Many balance employment, caregiving responsibilities, financial hardship, and other challenges while pursuing their education. Their resilience continually reminded me why the CSU matters—not only to individual students but to California’s future.

Of course, there were challenges. During my term, the Board grappled with significant state budget uncertainty, enrollment recovery following the pandemic, changing demographics, artificial intelligence, civil rights issues, evolving workforce needs, labor negotiations, and difficult conversations about academic innovation and institutional sustainability. At times, these discussions reflected differing perspectives among trustees, faculty, students, staff, and external stakeholders. While not always easy, I came to appreciate that respectful disagreement is an essential part of shared governance and that diverse viewpoints often strengthen—not weaken—our decisions.



President Mahoney's Retirement Announcement

Issued September 8, 2026

Dear Campus Community,

It has been wonderful to see the campus return to life after a quiet summer. I have particularly enjoyed greeting students on the Quad. I thank, as always, all my colleagues who worked hard to launch the semester and our faculty whose exciting curriculum starts the academic year ahead. I thank as well student leaders and organizations who are deeply engaged in building community and welcoming the newest members of the Gator family. It has been a great start to the fall semester.

This fall marks the beginning of my eighth year at SFSU and my eighteenth in the CSU. It has been an honor to serve the CSU and the greatest honor to serve as your president. So it is with mixed emotions that I share with you that I have informed Chancellor Garcia that I have decided to retire next summer once she and the Board have identified a successor. This was a deeply and solely personal decision. Working with the best colleagues anywhere in service to our deeply engaged and talented student body has been a joy, but supporting my growing family, especially my beautiful granddaughters, calls.

Our journey together has been profound but not easy. We weathered a global pandemic—moving almost all learning and campus operations to a virtual modality for 18 months. We were among the first CSUs to experience demographic decline and the enrollment cliff. We have been buffeted by dramatic and detrimental changes in federal support and oversight. And we have suffered through years of declining state financial support. What I learned through all this, though, is the strength of our campus and community to take on challenges and navigate them, together. As I look across campus this fall, I see abundant evidence of our success at navigating these unprecedented moments.

This fall, our new student enrollment is up more than 10%. During my tenure, we have opened two new academic buildings and two new residence halls. Marcus Hall and the Science and Engineering Innovation Center house state-of-the-art facilities that are enhancing

student learning and drawing students to SFSU. West Grove Commons, our newest student housing, is the first of its kind—a largely state-supported residential facility that has allowed us to reduce the total cost of attendance for students most in need. And we have stood fast in our support of educational equity and as an exemplar of a welcoming campus. We received the Seal of Excelencia in recognition of our work to intentionally serve Latinx students and are regularly recognized for our work to address antisemitism. And just last fall, while universities across the country were closing their DEI centers, we opened a beautiful integrated space for our community inclusion centers in SSB 403.

We start the year with a healthy state budget after years of unfunded mandates and state budget reductions, thanks to joint advocacy from students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. And we once again surpassed our annual fundraising goal, raising \$35.8M last year, bringing the total since my arrival to \$175.8M. These funds support faculty positions and research, student scholarships and research, and many important initiatives across the University.

We have done all this driven by an unrelenting focus on our mission. We are an exemplar of equity-driven education befitting our social justice legacy. Average unit load, which measures student access to classes, is up. Our two-year grad rates for transfer students and four-year grad rates for freshmen are at or near all-time highs. This is remarkable and reflects the deep commitment all here have to students. Behind these statistics are individual students and their families. We have enabled thousands of students to graduate in a timely fashion, saving them money and enabling them to launch graduate study or careers earlier. Every May, I ask our graduating students who are the first in their families to graduate from college to stand and be recognized. Thousands stand to thunderous cheers and applause. And the stories our alumni share are just as powerful. It is clear that we are more than meeting our mission and thriving. At SFSU, we transform lives.

We have so much of which to be proud, but what I am most proud of is how we did all this together in a context of robust shared governance that includes active participation of our students, faculty and staff. We have continued to be true to SFSU's historic commitment to activism. And we are not done yet. I look forward this year to working together to bring greater intentionality to our work to create

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We Don't Need No EducAltion!

We Don't Need No EducAltion!

By Michael A. Goldman

Academics have strong opinions about artificial intelligence, or AI. Some think it will revolutionize life, work, research, and education. Others fear that it will weaken our ability to think and reason for ourselves. Still others imagine more catastrophic possibilities. I suppose I fall somewhere in the middle. I see AI as an indispensable productivity tool for faculty, staff, and students, but only if we learn to use it critically and responsibly.

AI has been around as an academic field since at least the 1950s, and I have been thinking about its usefulness in biology and medicine since the late 1990s. But it became a mainstream campus issue with the public release of ChatGPT in late 2022. At first, many institutions responded defensively: restrict access, warn faculty about cheating, and treat AI mainly as an academic-integrity problem. More recently, the CSU system has moved from resistance to adoption, entering into a systemwide contract with OpenAI for ChatGPT Edu.

Fast forward to 2026. I consult ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, Claude, or another AI system almost every day. I transcribe my lectures using Zoom or Otter.ai, then use AI to clean up spelling errors, remove ums and ahs, and turn rough transcripts into useful notes. Those notes may later become the basis for lectures, articles, or even a textbook. I sometimes feed last year's slides into an AI system and ask for suggestions for updating a lecture. The suggestions are not comprehensive, but they often prompt ideas I had not considered.

AI also helps with my book reviews. As I read, I dictate notes using OneNote on my phone. Later, I upload those notes to ChatGPT or Claude to clean up transcription errors and produce a summary. The AI does not write the review for me, but it helps me organize my thinking.

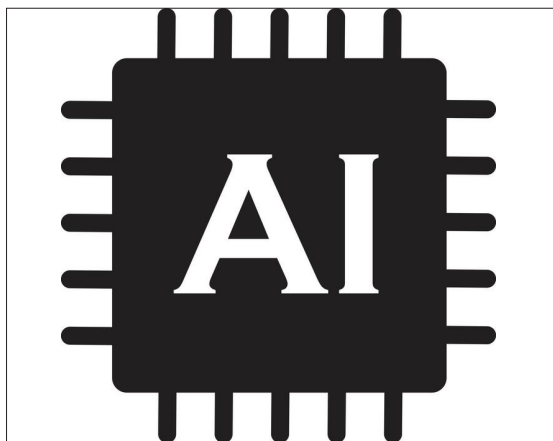
Preparing exams is one of my least favorite parts of teaching, and AI helps there

too. I provide lecture notes, slides, and instructions about the kinds of questions I want. The result is a draft exam with answers. I discard most of the questions and revise the rest heavily, but it gives me a useful starting point. The harder issue is student use of AI. I have become less interested in trying to detect AI use after the fact and more interested in designing assignments that require process, reflection, citation, oral explanation, or application to specific course materials.

The larger question is what students still need to learn for themselves. I do not worry that they can no longer illuminate manuscripts, set movable type, or sequence DNA by older methods. But some skills remain foundational: close reading, logical argument, experimental design, quantitative reasoning, and critical judgment. AI can assist with these, but it cannot replace the need to learn them.

Nor are all AI tools the same. ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Perplexity, NotebookLM, and other systems have different strengths, weaknesses, guardrails, and failure modes. Faculty and students need to understand when one tool is appropriate, when several should be consulted, and when none should be used at all.

I do not see AI as something universities can simply ban, ignore, or embrace uncritically. It is already part of academic life. Our task is to teach judgment: when to use it, when to distrust it, how to verify it, and how to preserve the human capacities that make education worth pursuing. We do need educAltion. But now, like it or not, educAltion has an AI in the middle of it.



SF State Retirement Association & The CSU Emeritus & Retired Faculty & Staff Association

The San Francisco State University Retirement Association was formed in 1979 at the initiative of Ann Paterson, who also encouraged similar organizations elsewhere in the CSU. The CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association (ERFSA), dating to 1985, was the outgrowth of those early organizations. The two organizations are different but complementary. The RA operates locally; ERFSA operates at the state level, keeping tabs on matters of interest to retirees at the legislature, PERS, and the CSU Trustees.

The Retirement Association is the SF State affiliate of ERFSA. We send delegates to the ERFSA state council meetings.

Although the two organizations complement each other, and each has its separate mission, they have separate dues structures. One can pay dues to only one or to both. As the SF State affiliate of ERFSA, we receive a portion of dues paid by SF State members. The Retirement Association board agreed that all SF State retirees who belong only to ERFSA will receive all our communications and be welcome at all our activities.

We encourage all SF State retirees to join both organizations.

To join the Retirement Association, go to <https://tinyurl.com/36yn8naj>

To join ERFSA, go to <https://www.csuerfsa.org/index.php/membership>

Rodger Birt Honored by Archives of American Art

The Archives of American Art has recently announced that the Rodger Birt Papers are now available for researchers. Birt is Professor emeritus of Humanities and American Studies. His collection at the AAA consists of his research files on the history of photography especially the celebrated Black photographer of Harlem, James VanDerZee, the subject of Birt's co-authored monograph, *VanDerZee: Photographer, 1886-1983*, published by the National Portrait Gallery in 1993. The Rodger Birt Papers at the AAA also include Birt's own photographic work. The AAA, a branch of the Smithsonian Institution, is perhaps the most prominent U.S. archival repository for the arts. You can read about it here: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/aaa/2025/64/2>



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Rodger Birt papers, circa 1940-2024

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-7950
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Access to Software for Emeriti

Over the past several years, your SF State Retirement Association has repeatedly inquired regarding access to software for those emeritus faculty and staff who continue to be professionally active and require software for their work.

Andrew Roderick, Assistant Vice President, Technology, has provided a very helpful explanation of the current situation, and we thank him bringing us up to date on this important issue for many of our members.

Here's Andrew's explanation:

In the past, software vendors were pretty forgiving with software licensing and IT folks on campus, wherever they were, could pretty easily install software liberally without much consequence (and many of us did, as we worked with retiring faculty and wanted to set them up for post-SFSU life). Most contracts have always only covered active campus employees (i.e., not emeritus and other related categories), but that limitation wasn't always enforced and allowed those in IT to be generous in providing access. However, some years ago, vendors tightened up tracking and, at the same time, campus infrastructure advanced to where tracking assignment and utilization became part of how software is deployed, removing the previous flexibility that had sometimes been liberally applied.

This change has been a source of ongoing confusion for emeritus faculty over the last several years.

The Academic Senate has recently revised its emeritus policy including the section on technology privileges. The statement had been previously been rather open-ended regarding access to software. The new statement modifies "technology privileges" by specifying "as available" and as "based on available budget":

"Library and technology privileges (as available), including but not limited to email. Technology privileges are provided based on available budget, resources, and University compliance requirements (typically around digital security)."

The full, current policy is at <https://sfsu.policystat.com/policy/18020305/latest>

What does that mean for current emeriti? We used the Senate update to define exactly what software can be afforded to emeritus faculty based on contracts or other factors.

SF State Email Account

M365 (MS Office) Online

Emeriti faculty interested in the downloaded version of the M365 products can refer to the [AT Help page covering Microsoft and Adobe software access](#).

Box.com

2FA – DUO

Canvas – Access to five years of past courses

Zoom – Not including cloud recording or AI features

Here is the link where this is explained:

<https://athelp.sfsu.edu/hc/en-us/articles/48617377024403-Emeriti-Faculty-Software-Affordances>

We know that some emeritus faculty continue to provide service to the campus community through their department or college. So, we've developed a process whereby an emeritus faculty member can be endorsed by a chair and dean to gain community-member status and thereby gain access to additional software licenses. This has come up mostly for the installable version of MS Office and sometimes Adobe but can apply to some other titles too. There are other software that are so costly that they are not offered (such as ChatGPT)."

Here is the explanation of all this on the SF State website:

<https://athelp.sfsu.edu/hc/en-us/articles/48615829347219-Microsoft-365-MS-Office-and-Adobe-Software-Eligibility-for-Emeriti-Faculty>

Many thanks to Andrew for this information.

Membership Updates

New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members of the Retirement Association!

Deborah Curtis

Dept: Equity, Leadership Studies &
Instructional Tech.
Email: dcurtis797@gmail.com

Nina Hagiwara

Dept: J. Paul Leonard Library
PO Box 27213, San Francisco, CA 94127
Email: nhdot4557@sfsu.edu
Home Phone: 415.504.7546

Gloria Nusse

Dept: Biology
129 Stanford Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941
Email: glorianusse52@gmail.com
Cell phone: 415.328.1630

Mary Beth Love

Dept: Public Health/ Metro College Success
Program
Cell Phone: 415.846.3187

Mary Scott

Dept: Education/Staff & Cinema/Faculty
2411 47th Ave, San Francisco, CA 94116
Email: msundead@gmail.com
Cell Phone: 415.846.7492

Beverly Voloshin

Dept: English Language and Literature
Cell phone: 707.779.9460
Email: voloshin@sfsu.edu

Darlene Yee-Melichar

Dept: PACE — Gerontology Program
205 De Anza Boulevard, PMB 142
San Mateo, CA 94402
Email: Dyee@sfsu.edu
Cell Phone: 650.906.0304





Roger W. Bland, Professor emeritus in the Physics and Astronomy Department, passed away on Feb. 23 at the age of 85. Roger taught and did research at SF State from 1979 until he retired and became emeritus in 2009. He was chair of the department from 2003 to 2004.

Bland received a B.S. in Physics from the California Institute of Technology and a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of California, Berkeley. He held post-doctoral appointments in Paris and Glasgow and at CERN, working in elementary particle physics and on the early development of gravity wave detectors.

His research at SFSU, always including students, started with pioneering work in the search for free quarks. Bland later developed superconducting detectors for dark matter searches and finally did important work in underwater acoustics focused on calls of whales and other marine life. He helped set up a collaboration with University of California, San Francisco, to improve the analysis of medical imaging data. Bland had an amazing ability to quickly learn and master new fields of research. In 1987, he received the American Physical Society Prize for Research in an Undergraduate Institution.

Zhigang Chen, Roger's colleague in Physics & Astronomy, offered these recollections:

I was heartbroken to hear about Roger's passing. It is still hard to believe he has left us, as he always struck me as such an energetic, brilliant, and inspiring person, with a wonderful sense of humor that made every conversation memorable. I will not forget how he and his wife, Sally, warmly welcomed me when I first arrived in the Bay Area decades ago, helping me become familiar with SFSU. I remember with deep gratitude how he supported me in setting up the first laser lab on campus, and how he made countless selfless sacrifices for colleagues in our department. His generosity and quiet dedication shaped not only my career, but the community around him.

Roger was a kind, generous, and truly remarkable person. I feel profoundly grateful to have known him as a friend, mentor, and colleague for so many years. He touched many lives, including mine, with his warmth, wisdom, and unwavering support.

He will be remembered as an accomplished physicist who pioneered work in diverse areas, including fractional charges and the search for free quarks, superconducting detectors, underwater acoustics, and boat-wake dynamics in San Francisco Bay. And of course, he will also be remembered as a gracious host who brought people together for creative and joyful gatherings at his home.

Whitney Chadwick, Professor emerita of Art since 2009, an accomplished academic and influential art historian who brought centuries of women artists full credit for what they had achieved, died on Aug. 6 in Berkeley. The cause of death was Alzheimer's disease. Her husband of 38 years, the realist painter and former SFSU faculty Robert Bechtle, preceded her in death in 2020.

Chadwick's first major book "Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement," published in 1985, explored the role of women, their partners and muses in the development of the surrealist movement. Her second major investigation, "Women, Art and Society," published in 1990, quickly became the textbook of choice for many college-level courses in an area long ignored. Books, articles, catalogue essays, reviews and anthology chapters followed in profusion. A prolific researcher and writer, Chadwick teamed with numerous art historians and feminist scholars to investigate the contributions of women artists across the globe.

As a change of pace, Chadwick also wrote, in 1998, her only novel, "Framed," a historical crime novel, published in London by Macmillan.



Having earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Art from Middlebury College in 1965, Chadwick went on to earn a Master of Art and a Ph.D. in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University in 1968 and 1975, respectively.

Her professional teaching career began at MIT in 1972, as a lecturer, then assistant professor (1973 – 1977) and, finally, associate professor in 1978. A stint as visiting assistant professor of Art History at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1977, spurred a permanent relocation to California. In 1978 she joined the art history faculty at SFSU, where she mentored thousands of students, organized exhibitions and collaborated with faculty in other departments. Her colleague Mark Johnson noted: “Whitney was fun as a colleague; generous and demanding as a teacher; inspiring as a scholar.”

In 2003 she was awarded an honorary degree (Doctor Honoris Causa) by the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

Jose Cuellar, Professor emeritus and former chair of Raza Studies, and celebrated musician, died January 21 at 84 in San Francisco. He earned his B.A. from Cal State Long Beach, and his master’s and doctorate from UCLA in Anthropology. He taught Chicano Studies at San Diego State, then Chicano Studies and Anthropology at Stanford, and he taught and did research at UC Berkeley and Harvard. He came to SFSU in 1990 as chair of Raza (now Latina/Latino) Studies, became emeritus in 2010, and continued to teach some classes until 2020.

While at Stanford in the 1980’s he founded a band that became “Dr. Loco’s Rockin’ Jalapeno Band” that specialized in Chicano music. He was Dr. Loco and sang and played saxophone, flute, and other wind instruments, and accordion with the band for 40 years. He was active as a researcher and performer of ancient Mesoamerican wind instruments, especially ocarinas, through personal collection of ocarinas from various Latin American countries. There is an extensive feature article at: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/jose-cuellar-sf-state-professor-dr-loco-obituary-22160301.php>

Max C. Kirkeberg, Professor emeritus of Geography, died on April 6, 2026, at the age of 93. Kirkeberg came to San Francisco in 1965 while writing his dissertation and taught courses in cultural geography for 37 years. He launched his immensely popular “San Francisco on Foot” course in the early ’70s, leading students on long walking tours through the city’s neighborhoods. After officially retiring in 2002, he continued to teach a series of shorter, neighborhood-specific walking tour courses for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute until 2013.

Max’s collection of almost 60,000 photographs documenting the changing landscapes, architecture, development, and culture of San Francisco neighborhoods and nearby communities were a by-product of his field classes, walking tours, and related slide lectures. They can be found in The Max Kirkeberg Collection at <https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/kirkeberg/#browse-collections>

Max’s commitment to community, remembrance, and collective action touched countless lives. He founded an AIDS Walk-SF team merging two of his communities -- the SF State Geography Department and his congregation at St. Francis Lutheran Church -- and raised over a million dollars for HIV-AIDS charities. With his husband Gabriel Proo, he also established an endowed scholarship awarded to a School of the Environment student whose work aligns “with the dedication to the lived and changing environment of the Bay Area,” according to the university. Max was remembered in obituary by KQED: <https://www.kqed.org/news/12078966/max-kirkeberg-sf-state-professor-who-chronicled-the-city-on-foot-dies-at-93>

Remembrances



Demetrius John Kitses, fondly known as Jim, was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, in 1933, to Greek immigrant parents. From an early age, he knew the value of hard work—shining shoes to help support his father, following his older brother Stavros (Steve) into plenty of adventures, and spending time with his younger sister Elizabeth.

As a young man, Jim spent summers in Massachusetts tending bar at night and working as a lifeguard by day. He later joined the Air Force as an air traffic controller, attended Harvard, and became a gifted writer, publishing the legendary *Horizons West* in 1969. He taught film in London, LA, and Ontario, publishing many books and articles. He spent most of his career in the film department at San Francisco State University, inspiring countless students.

Perhaps Jim's greatest story was the life he built with the people around him, as a devoted father, husband, and friend. Jim leaves behind his wife, Paula; his children Angela (Sam), Jesse (Jasmine), and Anastasia; his grandchildren, Audrey and Olive; his sister Elizabeth; and extended family, Anita, John (Jen), Margie (Chris), and John (Devon).

Jim loved the ocean, the ballpark, his Greek heritage, and the people he shared his life with. In his later years, he found a special place in Hawaii. Those who knew him will remember his wonderful sense of humor, his kindness, and the sweet way he treated everyone he met. He lived a full and remarkable life.

Keith Anthony Morrison, Former dean of the SFSU College of Creative Arts from 1994 to 2005, passed away on June 1 at 84. Morrison was a distinguished artist (printmaker and painter), art critic, curator, scholar, arts educator, and academic administrator. He held academic deanships at various institutions of higher education from 1972 through 2008. These include: the San Francisco Art Institute; the College of Arts and Humanities, University of Maryland, College Park; the College of Creative Arts, San Francisco State University and the Tyler School of Art, Temple University. During these years he appointed more than 100 faculty members; developed several degree programs; created exhibitions and festivals in art, dance, film, music and theatre; raised major funding; and led several academic programs to national and international distinction.



Keith Morrison's large painting that was formerly in the President's Conference Room, under President Corrigan. It is now on the 3rd floor of the Library.



In Memoriam

Abdiel Oñate, Professor emeritus of History Abdiel Oñate passed away on July 30th, 2026. Born and raised in Mexico, Oñate was a specialist in Latin American history. At San Francisco State, where he began teaching in 1986, he became the first Director of the Latin American Area Studies program and also served as a Social Sciences/History Teaching Credential advisor.

Abdiel's PhD was from El Colegio de Mexico, Universidad Autonoma de Mexico, in 1985; he received a diploma in history from the University of East Anglia (Great Britain) in 1975; and his B.A. was in economics from the National University of Mexico in 1971. His books, *Razones de estado: estudios sobre la formación del estado mexicano moderno* (*Raison d'état: Studies on the Formation of the Modern Mexican State*, 2006) and *Banqueros y hacendados. La quimera de la modernización en Mexico* (*Bankers and Landowners: The Chimera of Modernization in Mexico*, 1992), and his articles explore the political, historical, and economic ties and parallels among modern Latin America and western countries, particularly Spain, France, and Britain.

He served on and often chaired all departmental committees, and also took an active part in professional associations. As a member of the Academic Senate, Oñate was a strong defender of the principles of shared governance.

His colleague, Trevor Getz, recalls, *Abdiel was a superb officemate. I learned a great deal by listening to and witnessing the extraordinary patience with which he treated students who were facing difficulties, whether academic or in real life.* His colleague, Julyana Peard, recalls, *One of the things I most enjoyed about Abdiel was his hilarious sense of humor with a totally deadpan delivery.*

Kathleen O'Sullivan, Professor emerita of Secondary Education from 1986 to 2006, died September 21 in Port Huron, Michigan, at 78. She was involved in science education, specifically NSF-funded teacher training programs in biology, curriculum development involving NASA/SETI researchers, and the SFSUGK-12 Fellows Project.

Dan Vencill, Professor emeritus of Economics and long-time affiliated faculty member in Criminal Justice Studies, passed away on Oct. 30.

He earned his Ph.D. at Stanford University and began working at SFSU as a faculty member in 1977, serving as a professor in Economics. Upon retirement in 2010, Vencill was named professor emeritus in Economics.

After retirement, he continued to teach in the Criminal Justice Studies Department, bringing his deep understanding of the intersections between macroeconomics and crime to our students. Vencill last taught for SFSU in fall 2024. He was a remarkable force, researching, publishing, providing expert testimony to a range of organizations and making a substantial impact on the profession, right up until death.



Serving as CSU Faculty Trustee

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As a longtime faculty member, I also gained a deeper appreciation for the Board's fiduciary responsibilities. Trustees must continually balance short-term needs with long-term stewardship, always keeping students and the public interest at the center of their decisions. That broader perspective has changed the way I think about higher education leadership.

Looking back, I remain especially grateful for the opportunity to represent faculty voices while building relationships across the CSU community. I was fortunate to work with outstanding trustees, Chancellor Mildred García, campus presidents, Chancellor's Office leaders, Academic Senate CSU colleagues, the California State Student Association, alumni leaders, labor organizations, and many others who care deeply about the future of public higher education. Although we did not always agree, I was consistently impressed by the shared commitment to student success and educational opportunity.

Serving as Faculty Trustee also held special personal meaning. I was humbled to become the first person of color and the first woman to complete a three-year term in this role. I hope that milestone encourages others from diverse backgrounds to pursue leadership opportunities and public service.

As I enter retirement from full-time university service, I leave with immense gratitude and optimism. Retirement, after all, is not an ending so much as a transition. Like many emeritus faculty, I look forward to remaining engaged through mentoring, advising, writing, advocacy, and continued service wherever I can make a meaningful contribution.

If I have learned anything over these past three years, it is this:

Higher education has always faced change, challenge, and uncertainty. Yet its enduring strength lies in its people—faculty who inspire curiosity, staff who remove barriers to success, administrators who build opportunity, trustees who steward the public trust, and students whose dreams remind us why our work matters.

My advice to colleagues entering retirement is simple: remain curious, stay engaged, continue serving, and never underestimate the impact you can still have. Retirement may change our titles, but it need not diminish our purpose.

It has been one of the greatest privileges of my career to serve the California State University. I leave this role with profound gratitude—for the friendships formed, the lessons learned, and the shared belief that public higher education remains one of society's most powerful engines of opportunity, innovation, and hope.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of that journey.



Retirement

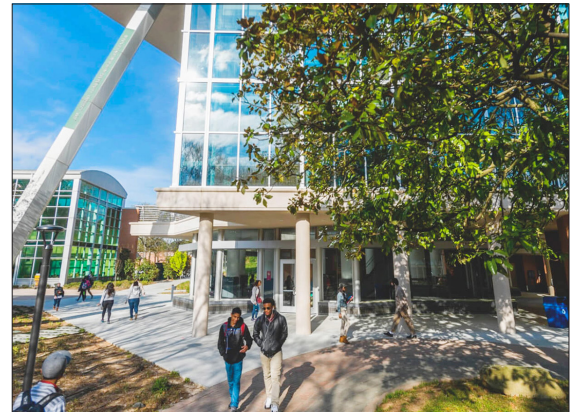
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pipelines to internships and careers, to achieving even greater fundraising success, and to continuing the work to reimagine our academic programs and administrative structures to meet the needs of current and future SFSU students.

I conclude where I started—what an honor it has been to serve as your president. I look forward to the work we will do this year and to supporting SFSU as it continues to meet its mission to serve students and the region.

Best,

Lynn





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What Have YOU Been Up To?

Now it's your opportunity to share some news of your travels and activities with our members. Please send your account to Irene Donner at: iredonner@gmail.com. If you have photos, please send them as separate jpg files. We eagerly look forward to your participation. It will appear in the next GRG.



What's the Blast?

When the SFSU Retirement Association has timely information between the Gator Retiree Gazette mailings, you will receive a GRG Blast email.

Keep an eye out for these from time to time.