Retirement from the Skidmore College Faculty

Spring 2021



Faculty Meeting

April the Thirtieth

Two Thousand and Twenty One

Be It Resolved:

The faculty of Skidmore College expresses its profound appreciation and admiration for thefollowing memberof the Skidmore faculty who have this year expressed determination to retire. The faculty further resolves that the following biographical highlights be included in the minutes of the faculty meeting April 30, 2021in recognition and celebration their distinguished service and achievement.

naugural recipient of the Ralph A. Ciancio Skidmore's University Without Walls, including Award for Excellence in Teaching, Class ofteaching in its prison program at Comstock; and 1948 Endowed Chair for Excellence in appointments as a Mellon Foundatisponsored Teaching, 2008 Moseley Lecturethat's scholar at Middlebury College and a research associate quite a trifecta of high honors among theat the Cornell University Library for Digital Skidmore faculty. The fact that all three of these haveollections. Farther afield, John's erudition and been awarded to John Anzalone speaks volumes abcutriosity earned him the European Union's Journées his 36-year career at the College and his role as Du Patrimoine recognition in 2016 for his publication exemplary faculty member, scholar, mentor, and facsimile of aWW I illustrated memoir, and he friend.

Was the recipient of two guest professorships in Paris at the Ecoles des Chartes.

As our colleague Michael Arnush puts it, "John embodies the epitome of the teachenolar, possesses John's work with students goes beyond the classroom, a remarkable breadth and depth of intellectual anathd he is one of the few among the humanities faculty artistic interests, invests himself in fostering andwho has consistently worked with students during the nurturing the success of others, and has a wicked sensemmer by engaing in collaborative research that has of humor."

resulted in published works, in both traditional and online publications. Given his indefatigable nature, he

John earned an A.B. degree at the University dfas continued this role into his final semester at Massachusetts at Boston and his M.A and Ph. DSkidmore by directing a student thesis on translation. degrees from the Romance Languages and Literatures

Department at Tufts University, with a specializationJohn's scholarship exhibits the same intensity as his in late 19th-century literature. He beganshteaching work in the classroom and is at once traditional, career in 1976 at the University of Massachusetts autting edge, nuanced, and everisteresting. He has Boston, where he also directed the Year in Franceritten on several occasions for Salmagumditopics Program. From 1981 to 1985 he was assistant professanging from "The Importance of Being Sartre" to a at Dartmouth College and also director of theseries of translations from odorov's Letter from Language Study Abroad Program in Blois and Program. Paris. His most recent books include a twolume, From early on in his academic journey, teaching annotated critical facsimile edition of a World War I mentoring, and supporting study abroad were integrial uninated journal by a poilua solder of the line who components of his passion for language, literature, and rise de l'Isle Adam's L'Eve futuren the "Faux titres" series on Continental Literatures. Among his

In 1986 John came to Skidmore and, drawing on hissany other publications is an article that poignantly experience, immediately experience, immediately experience coordinator of the exemplifies John's breath of interest and generous spirt Skidmore Junior Year Abroad Programs in Paris and collaboration—"Clouds in the Sky: Eric Satie, Madrid. That was quite the challenge for a new facult Charles Martin and member, given that at the time some 70 students per year were studying in Europe. Over the course of his years at the College ohn coordinated the Skidmore in Paris Program for 16 consecutive years and on several occasions was exite director of the Paris Program and

John has said that "Skidmore is too much of a treasure to keep it within our walls," and he has certainly put that concept into practice by his varied and multi faceted engagements with communities beyond the Skidmore campus. His outreach hashinded serving as director of the MALS program; working with

the London FirstYear Seminar, always with the same dedication to students and to the intellectual curiosity

he inspires.

designated a Yahoo pick of the week in June 2000. How cool is that!

Colleagues comment on his passion, warmth, and erudition, and on his faftung areas of interest. A colleague from the English Departent, Susannah Mintz, describes his "prodigious learnedness, from military aircraft to H ann (o)-4 (f5E o)-4 (f5K6 (k (r)3 (omph)1er)-e)esaef5k6ok aain-6 (r)

Her powerful performances are only matched by heyour very well-deserved retirement, knowing that your stellar teaching. "Working with Pola for the past eleve students love you, and that you read many people's years has been a tremendous experience," says Edays bright and helped them along their music Mack, Senior Teaching Professor. "I am always in awjourney."

of the growth in her students, the vitality of her

performances, and the kindness and care she give: Thank you, Pola, for helping so many along their her colleagues." Jan Vinci, Diatiguished Artist in musical journeys.

Residence, likewise lauds Pola's "inspirational musical approach to teaching." Pola has arranged for more than 80 quest artists to give performances and deliver master classes at Skidmore, always with an eye to what best serves her structe Among the most distinguished artists that Pola has brought to campus may be included Simone Dinnerstein, Frederic Chiu, Jon Kimura Parker, Stephen Hough, and Jeremshe was appointed Porter Chato honor creative

Denk.

brilliant artist, dedicated colleague, and beloved friend, Debra J. Fernandez came to SkidmoreCollege in 1990.Her academic career was marked by promotion to full professor in 2006; and from 20122017 contributions to the Dance Department and to the

College.Debra's work as an artist/scholar is both broad

for Choreography in Dince, expertly guiding countless

A dedicated and tireless teacher, Pola has deliveredad deep She has compes musical works for wide range of pianocurses over the course of her 34-chamber ensembles as well assoreograped over year career, including private lessons, chamber musispeventy unique dances which have been presented fortepiano, and keyboard skills. As a Distinguished Ihroughout New York and beyond at such diverse Artist-in-Residence, she has guided numerous Filencenues as The Yard, P.S.122het Frances Tang scholars in piano to successful careers in music aiTeaching Museum, andhet Hyde Collection A non-music felds. Hannah Knaul '18 says: "Piano comprehensive view of Debra's careeeveals a lessons with Pola were always lively and fun. I love beautifully woven tapestry which parallels her work as choosing new pieces to learn with Pola because she has artist—contemplative, eloquent, and profound. such a wide repertoire herself, and could think of such

interesting pieces for me to play. She challengedome Following her graduation from the University of South try new genres and composers and branch out from orda in 1974, Debra was invited by York City traditional western music which I appreciated an Ballet (NYCB) choreographer Todd Bolender to work cherished." Not only does Pola teach piano, but sheith him in Istanbul, Turkeyin his national ballet also arranges for the purchase, evaluation, around mpany Subsequently she spent twelve years in NYC maintenance of all of the pianos in Zankel; no little jothoning her craft in dance and music, including work in since we have more than 50 of them on sintelluding, commercials and film.nl 1990 she movetob Saratoga two harpsichords, an †18century replica of a Walter Springs to join the Skidmore danfæculty, where she fortepiano (Mozart's piano) and an original 19th Grafielped create the currenstructure of the Dance fortepiano, all of which Pola tends with consummat@epartmentthe form in which itcontinues to thrive today. She envisioned and implemented a curriculum care.

Thoughtful, collegial and generous of spirit, Pola is the tudents through this coursework many of whom epitome of artistic and professional integrity.continue in her footsteps now as professional Throughout her career, she has poured her heart ainderent educator, Debra's investment in both student time into serving her art, her department and thend faculty learning hasalways been a priority college. But, most importantly, she has poured hethroughout her career

heart and soul into serving her students. Perhaps, Joseph Eisele '17 best sums up the sentiments of her students and colleagues when he writes of Pola: "Your warmth, support, and wonderful teaching made me look forward to every lesson. And I know lessok for everyone when I say it was such a treat to get to hear you play. I still sometimes reminisce when I hear you play the Mendelssohn Variations! I hope you enjoy

new courses such as Performance Elements, a Yogangin 2010 to a score by Richard Danielpour. In based course to enrich the performance of dancers and tober of 2012 Swan Somgaspresented again as a actors; Jazz and Ballet Contemporary Performance part of Saratoga Dances II, curated by Justin Peck, Workshops; and Jazz Intensive, unique Summer 6 dancer and now resident choreographer of New York week program offered through Skidmore Special City Ballet (NYCB). Featuring guest performances by Programs.

Debras artistry is a complex mix of cursity, humanity, ironyand risktaking. She gently guides students and artists to inhabit new spaces and express new dimensions. Hework stretches far and wide and is demonstrated byscholarshipthat include many dance genres as well as experimental and traditional theater and operan 1994 Debra was invited to work at the Williamstown Theater Festival as a movement instructor and choreographer, relationship which continued for seven years. Further collaborations with artists from the festival led to performances at The Virginia Opera, The Blgrade International Theater Festival and the Hysterical Ontological Theater in NYC, to name onlya few. The Virginia Opera's production of Orfeo and Eurydice was described by The Richmond, Virginia Timesispatch as "...a dreamy, almost hallucinatory contien...". She has indeed received accolades for her interdisciplinary spirit and ability to cull the essence of a theme and develop artistic expression around it. Debraat the top of her field as a master choreographer and collaborator.

From its inception ri 2000, Debra was invited to establish a relationship with the space and concept of the Franes Young Teaching Museum fact, since its opening, she has created five everlipmonth works focused specifically on the Tang as interactive performance spec. Tang Q a collaboration with David Porter and Margo Mensingentered around a live performance of John Cage's natas and Interludes for Prepared Pian'o It was commissioned of the grand opening 2002 she created Ballsamed as one of the "year's ten be to Metroland and described as an "unabridged thesaurus" of dance, "compelling, odd and beautiful' Her second collaboration with David Porter and Margo Mensing 2004 is entitledMak 3 it was an evening of dance, theater, music, artfilmd constructed and created to illuminate the live performance of George Crumb's masterwork, "Makrokosmos III".

Debrahasalso solidified a lasting relationship with the Arthur Zankel Music Center during her tenure at Skidmore Most notable isher choreography of Swan

requests has been, "Sounds great! What do you need?" This memorywill forever remainwith all who were lucky enough to be her colleague Debra's unconditional support for others and her unique ability to lead by example has fostered immeasurable projects, pieces, and even careers within the discipline of dance. Her fervent invitations to find answers from within and 'trust your gut' has saped the lives of all who are blessed to work with her. Jon Cooper writes:

I cannot put into words how much you have profoundly shaped me as an artist, a dancer, and a human. My time at Skidmore within your guidance, creation, and friendship means more to me than I can express. You have given me, and so many others, such incredible life lessons and memories that I still call upon today to help me navigate my path forward. Our candor, our laughter, our unapologetic editing and critiques, all lift me highe make me smile, and have made me the artist and human I am. Thank you for always believing in me, especially when I doubt myself, and for being my mentor and friend. I could have not have been blessed with a better, kinder, more beautiful, soulful, talented teacher.

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Always in perfect fashioand eager to meet the next challenge Debra, andher beautiful dog Bodhi will be sorely missed even as the image of their whizzing through the halls of the dance theater and directing all

that come into theipath remains. Debra will leave a-4 d36004 Tc 0 Tw 2.06 0 Td (r)Tj -4 d360 ut c(r)-1 5-2 (

No. 1(2018). Our colleague Charlene Grant, who was an associate editor of CELAAN, said, "Hisdideep love of and incredible depth of knowledge of the Francophone literature of northern Africa and of French colonies inspired so many students, both at Skidmore and in graduate studies at SUAMbany and elsewhere, including my own."

To engage local educators, Hédinducted a workshop for high school teachers from the Capital Region, funded by the French Government's Cultural Services

assignment, assessmentof learning with respect to research kills and outcomes and the role of embedded librarian where Barbara became full member of and contributor to the MB107 Faculty Team. Barbara participated in the orientation meeting, taught at least one classfor each section of MB107 and served as subject matter expert to the MB107 Faculty Coordinator throughout the calendary ear. For example, I consulted with Barbarare garding assigned readings related to the Executive Presentation asseach summer.

Around 2004, Barbara and I developed a research partnership. Our MB107 Faculty CoordinatorEmbedded Librarian collaboration resulted in a highly productive research partnership which has produced three publications, a forthcoming paper, and ten

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is absolutely magic in her ability to know what to say." This aptitude for listening has led to a long roster of advisees who rely on her as a guide for navigating their educations, but also their lives. Her capacity for empathy has also made her a teacher of teachers, and many faculty members describe how she has taught them important lessons about how to be patient, to listen deeply, and to be present in their classrooms.

so that we could continue to teach and learn in the Art Center throughout the Covit9 crisis. In these moments and others, Janet is a generous collaborator: she will tell you that she is strengthened by the people she works with and that she is constantly in awe of the work that Art Department staff do to keep the Department functioning. While her time as Chair has been bookended by crises, Janet has been determined not to focus on the difficulties, but instead to appreciate our community and history. She commented the 40th Anniversary of Saisselin with a community celebration and created an oral history project that documents the lives and hopes of the Skidmore Art alumni.

Janet is a light that has illuminated the halls of Saisselin for 36 years. She has genely gifted her time, energy, and compassion to the Department, the College, and her students. Through her words and images Janet has taught us how to be better teachers,