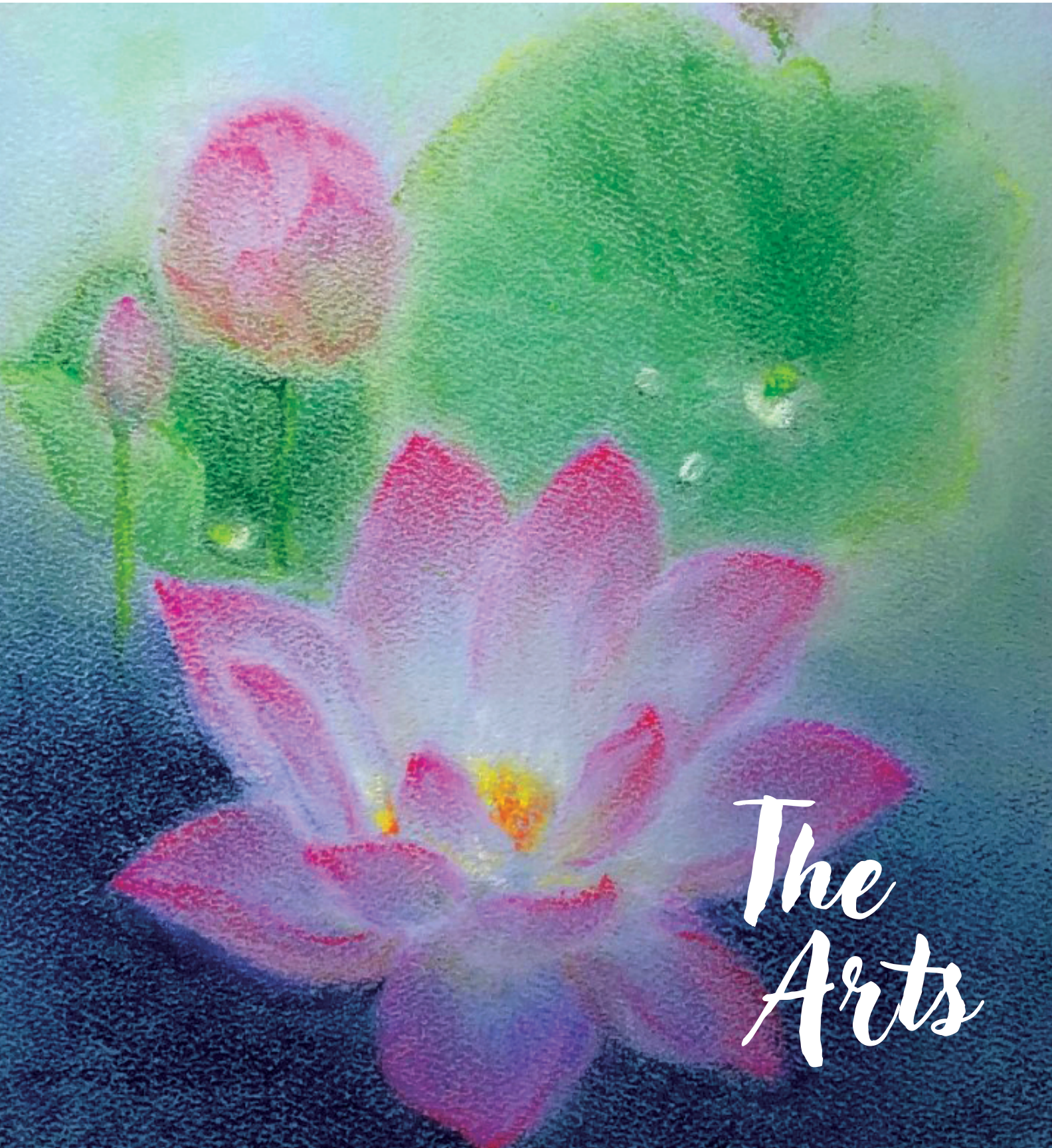


THE SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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# Connections







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## A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT VOLLENDORF



As a lifelong fan of the arts, I am excited to present this edition of Connections.

My personal artistic talent is extremely limited. I can basically carry a tune, and, in my younger days, sang in choirs. I even had a leading role in a high school musical. One of my brothers was a ski racer, and, in our teen years, he recorded a race from the 1988 Olympics over the only existing video of that performance. For which I thank him.

Suffice it to say that what I lack in talent I make up for in enthusiasm for the arts. I love visual and performing arts alike, and especially enjoy museums, dance, and music.

Some of my fondest memories stem from serving as dean of Humanities and the Arts at San José State University. I attended dozens (possibly hundreds) of student events annually, including art exhibits, concerts, plays, poetry readings, operas, lectures, recitals, and dance performances.

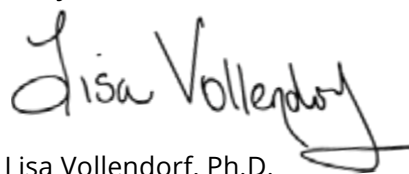
I had the deep privilege of reviving the Hammer Theatre in San José during that time. Today, the Hammer is a vitally important centerpiece of that city's dynamic downtown and serves as a

venue for the university and the community to enjoy a broad range of artistic experiences.

SUNY Empire alumni, faculty, and students love the arts, too. In these pages, we celebrate the photographers, musicians, artists, and performers among us who bring beauty to our world. We applaud the return of Dusk to Dawn, Terry Boddie's photography field trip through Manhattan, and recognize the talents of Broadway star Virginia Woodruff. We showcase Emmanuèle Phuon's lifelong career in modern dance and highlight the rock and roll talents of guitarist Elliott Murphy.

All of this is to say that I am deeply committed to the potential of the arts to lift, educate, and shape our society towards greater equity and inclusivity. Art has the potential to be a great educational tool and a great equalizer, enabling people from diverse backgrounds to share in creative expression and to understand each other's experiences. Art evokes joy, provokes thought, and enhances empathy.

Thank you for reading this issue of Connections, and for supporting artists in the SUNY Empire community and beyond. ■

  
Lisa Vollendorf, Ph.D.



# DUSK TO DAWN

By Winnie Yu

From the woodsy slopes of historic Fort Tryon Park to the sandy boardwalks of Coney Island, SUNY Empire faculty mentor Terry Boddie will lead his photography field trip through New York City again this summer.

After a three-year hiatus brought on by COVID-19, the popular outing known as Dusk to Dawn is back. The field trip is part of Boddie's course on night photography. The trip is also open to alumni, faculty, staff, and what Boddie calls "friends of the college."

For Boddie, the overnight excursion is a lesson in light — or the lack of it — and its role in the composition of a photograph. "Light is used in night photography to create a sense of place, affect mood and to literally paint within an image," Boddie wrote in a 2017 curator statement for the exhibit that's held to showcase images from the field trip.

The outing is also a chance to "spend time with the night," Boddie says. "The night can be a scary, threatening place," he says. "It doesn't have to be. The night presents some amazing possibilities in space and time, in a way that's quite different from what we can experience in the daytime."

*The Apollo Theater in Harlem.*  
(Photo by Anita Sillery '19) ▼

## NYC By Night

The first field trip took place in 2015. For the next four years, 12 to 20 participants signed up for each trip. Some were amateur photographers, others working professionals. All were intrigued by the imagery the city has to offer in the cloak of darkness.

Dusk to Dawn begins before sunset at Fort Tryon Park in Upper Manhattan. From there, the participants make their way to Harlem, Columbus Circle, Times Square, Greenwich Village, and Battery Park City, on foot and by subway, pausing to capture the scenes before them. They walk across the Brooklyn Bridge for a view of the Manhattan skyline, before boarding the F train for Coney Island, where they arrive before sunrise and find people walking, jogging, and fishing.

"It really is the city that never sleeps, and we have the evidence," Boddie says. Participants on the field trip don't sleep either, except in short spurts on a subway train.

## Boddie Art

Boddie, who lives in Brooklyn, has taught at SUNY Empire since 2012. He works as a professional photographer and multidisciplinary artist. His creations blur the boundaries between photography, drawing, and painting.

A first-generation immigrant from the Eastern Caribbean, Boddie has a BFA from New York University and an MFA from Hunter College. While in graduate school, he met one of his great influences, the photographer Roy DeCarava, whose misty black-and-whites taught Boddie about the use of light, shadows, and tones in photography. "He had an impact on how I look at the photograph as an object beyond documentation and how a photo can become a creative pictorial space," Boddie says.

Boddie's works have been exhibited all over the world, at museums such as the Parc de la Villette in Paris, the Brooklyn Museum, the Philadelphia Museum, The National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Smithsonian, among others. Cyanotype images of slave ships, which are part of his 'Blueprints' series, were recently featured in an exhibit at Rutgers University's Zimmerli Art Museum about the political activist Angela Y. Davis.

Works from Dusk to Dawn will also get their day in the sun. Boddie plans to host an exhibition at 4 Park Ave. in Manhattan, where he is based, in the 2023-24 academic year and hopes to take the show to other SUNY Empire locations. ■

*Terry Boddie rides the subway during a field trip.* ►

*Early morning at Coney Island.*  
(Photo by John Barclay-Morton '21) ▼



*Pedro's Mexican restaurant in Brooklyn.*  
(Photo by Larry Henderson '19) ▲

**"It really is the city that never sleeps, and we have the evidence."**





# ELLIOTT MURPHY:

**Claiming His Place in Rock Music History**

By Winnie Yu



*Elliott Murphy '88.  
(Photo by Marcos Cebrián)*

Fifty years ago, Elliott Murphy '88 released his debut album, "Aquashow," producing a sound that earned him comparisons to Bob Dylan. Last fall, he released his 40th album, "Wonder." At 73, the Long Island native remains as prolific as ever. Murphy lives in Paris, where he continues to record music, write novels, and make movies.

**Congratulations on your new album and continuing to produce new music. How do you do it and what's next?**

When I pick up my guitar (which I try to do every day), song ideas start arising out of those six strings so at this point I've got a bit of a backlog of new material that I would like to record as soon as possible. I work with my son, Gaspard, who is now my producer, in his popular Paris studio, Studio des Murmures, so I must schedule my recording sessions well in advance!

When I begin to envision a musical concept for the next album, something very orchestral, almost majestic comes to mind in the style of an Ennio Morricone soundtrack. I think these cataclysmic and tumultuous times we are living through require major artistic statements.

**Touring has always been a big part of your musical career. Any plans to come to New York?**

I normally play 60 to 80 shows a year all over Europe and the U.S. (plus Japan) but during the last two years I've done very few, which drove me a little crazy. To stay in shape musically and mentally, I started web-broadcasting live Corona Couch Concerts on Instagram and with the help of my wife, Françoise, we did 94 of them. Now, real live shows with a real live audience are coming back slowly and I need to get back on a New York stage this year.

**Tell us about your 2020 film "Broken Poet."**

"Broken Poet" was inspired by a short story I wrote many years ago called "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," which concerned the mysterious suicide



of a Jim Morrison-like character in Paris in the 1970s. It features Marisa Berenson, Michael O'Keefe, and cameo appearances by Bruce Springsteen and his wife Patti Scialfa, and I'm in the principal role.

I'm not really an actor (although I did study acting at Nassau Community College in 1968) but to portray a disillusioned American rock star living in Paris was not too far a stretch.

**You've performed and recorded with Bruce Springsteen and Billy Joel. How did you wind up working with them?**

Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel and myself were all born in 1949 and grew up within 100 miles of each other, Billy and I on Long Island and Bruce in New Jersey. I met Billy when we were both on Columbia Records. I was opening shows for him and we became friends. Although I met Bruce in the early 1970s when we were being touted as the "new Dylans," we didn't really become close until much later.

Both Billy and Bruce have appeared on my albums (Billy played piano on "Deco Dance" from "Night Lights" and Bruce sang with me on "Everything I Do (Leads Me Back to You)" from "Selling the Gold"). Bruce has so very generously invited me on stage with him many times in Paris to sing "Born to Run." When I was inducted into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame by

Billy in 2018, he invited me to sing "Walk on the Wild Side" with him at Madison Square Garden. They're both superbly talented musicians, songwriters, and singers and still at the top of their game and just great guys. It's an honor to count them as friends.

**How did you wind up at SUNY Empire State?**

The mid '80s was a difficult time for me. Disco and punk were in, and singer-songwriters were out and personally I was at a low point. In a very serious way, I had to exorcise my demons and start over and figure out my next move. So I got a job in a prestigious Manhattan law firm and toyed with the idea of becoming a lawyer like my boyhood hero Clarence Darrow. To do that I had to get my undergraduate degree first.

Around 1985, when I was searching for a school to continue my degree, the name Empire State came up. SUNY Empire State was a perfect fit for me: it was cool, it was flexible and just the name itself projects a certain grandeur. Ultimately, music called me back and my lawyer scheme was dropped.

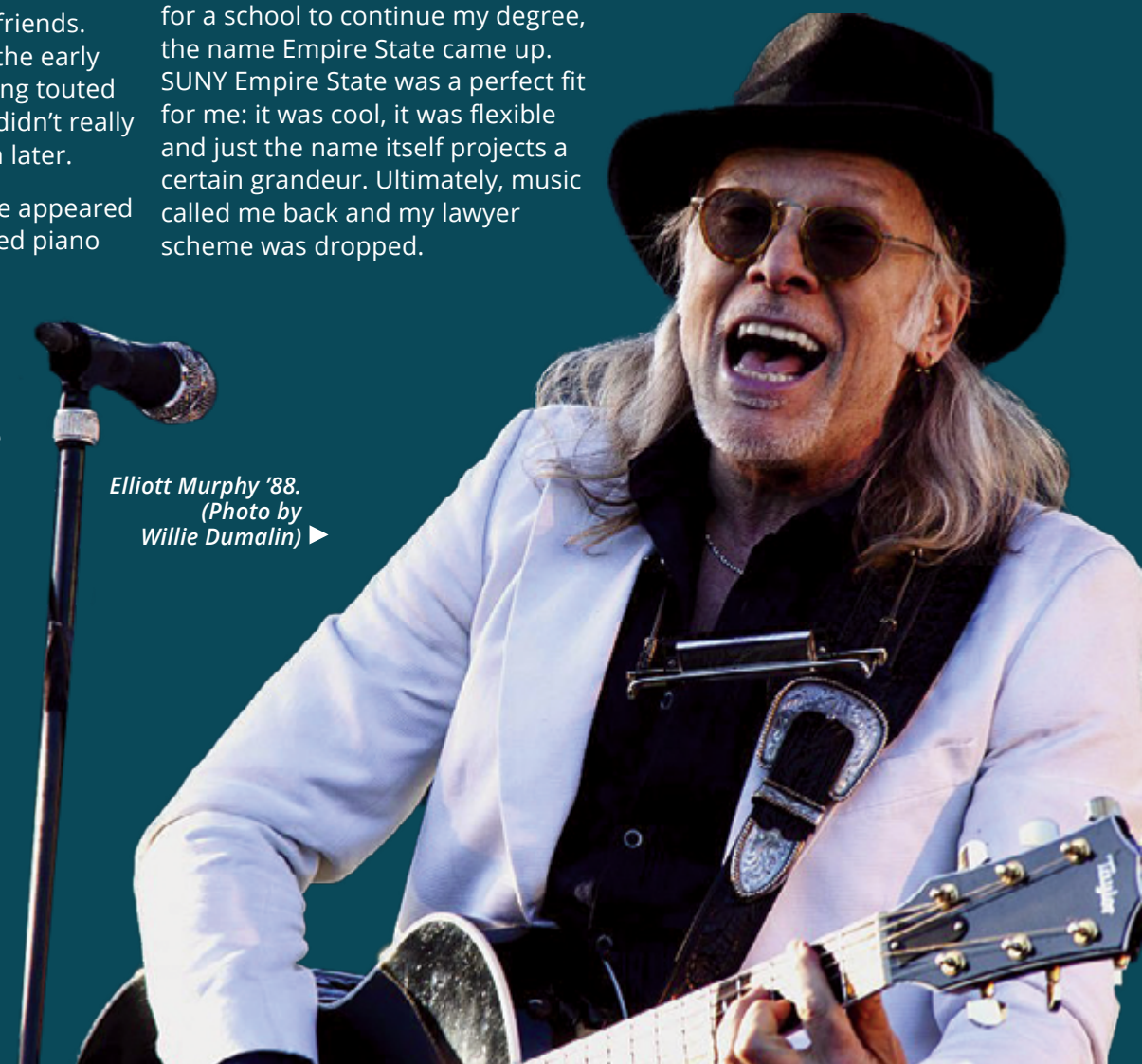
**What is your best memory of SUNY Empire?**

I was asked to sing at my SUNY Empire graduation ceremony in 1988 (my mother was there as well) and I had written a song called "Empire State Made a Graduate Out of Me." It was very enthusiastically received by my fellow graduates who gave me a standing ovation. My greatest hit!

**What do you want to be known for?**

I'd like to be remembered as a survivor and a true believer who never gave up on his artistic vision through good times and bad who played a part, however minor it may be, in the growth, acceptance and legitimization of the music that I love – rock 'n' roll. In other words, I'd like to claim my place in musical history. ■

*Elliott Murphy '88.  
(Photo by Willie Dumin)*



◀ *Murphy, center, on stage with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band at the Bercy Arena in Paris in 2012. (Photo by Patrick Dupon)*



# DANCING HER WAY INTO ACADEMIA

**Emmanuèle Phuon '18  
has a new role as a  
professor and writer.**

By Winnie Yu

Emmanuèle Phuon '18 has shared a stage with some of the most famous names in contemporary dance: Mikhail Baryshnikov. Elisa Monte. Merce Cunningham. Her choreography has been presented at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, New Haven's International Festival of Arts and Ideas, and the Spoleto Dance Festival in Charleston, among others. She's danced all over the world and choreographed works rooted in both European and Asian traditions.

Last fall, Phuon made a different kind of debut when she published a chapter on postmodern dance in a textbook called *Milestones in Dance in the USA*.

"I never imagined I would write," says Phuon, who splits her time between Brooklyn and Brussels. "I have never written in my life."

## A Lifetime of Dance

Phuon was born in Paris to a French mother and Cambodian father. As a child, she danced in the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. After graduating from the Conservatoire National de Danse in Avignon in 1985, she got a full scholarship to attend Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal. Two years later, she enrolled in the certificate program at the Alvin Ailey American Dance School in New York City.

At 21, she became a professional dancer in the Elisa Monte Dance Company. She went on to dance in Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project, which showcased American modern dance. Through the years, she worked with some of the leading figures in modern dance, including Trisha Brown, Martha Graham, and Neil Greenberg '03.

In 2010, she joined Yvonne Rainer's dance troupe. Phuon's mastery of Rainer's minimalist style and techniques made her one of seven "authorized transmitters" of Rainer's dance. Phuon has traveled the globe teaching other dancers who want to restage Rainer's work.

## Transition to Teaching

In 2018, Phuon was at a crossroads in her dance career. "It was getting harder to make a living," she recalls. "I was in a period of crisis. I was spending a lot of money to make dance pieces."

Phuon wanted to teach but needed a college degree. A friend suggested SUNY Empire. Phuon applied and attended from Brussels, where her husband and daughter still live. "I never thought the online experience

could be so rich," says Phuon, a recipient of the Richard Porter Leach Fellowship. "It really changed my life and opened up a whole new direction."

SUNY Empire showed her a new way of relating to dance. "I had done it physically and now I was studying it and reading about it through a different lens," she says. "It gave me the desire to go further, and it made me discover a whole area of dance I had not been aware of, the academic world. When you do both, it is extremely rich."

After getting her B.A. in dance in 2018, Phuon went to Montclair State in New Jersey for her MFA. She now teaches at Montclair, where her classes include a general ed course on "Dance in Cambodia." She also teaches at New York University.

Phuon continues to dance and choreograph. Together with Emily Coates, she has choreographed a new dance titled "WE," about mankind's relationship with nature and in particular, trees.

Phuon hopes WE will inspire a greater respect for nature, especially as we confront climate change. "Trees are a part of our history and we should honor them, the same way we honor our ancestors," she says. ■

Emmanuèle Phuon '18, dancing outdoors, as part of her choreographed work, "WE." (Photo by Ben DeFlorio) ▲

# LIVING LIFE IN COLOR

By Ivy Stevens-Gupta '08, '12

I have always been drawn to color. As a child, I would spend hours pondering the perfect color from my box of Crayola crayons to complete a picture. Orange is my favorite. I wear it when I want to feel confident and associate it with happiness. I love fresh squeezed orange juice, picking the perfect pumpkin for Halloween, and marveling at the changing color of leaves in autumn.

However, it wasn't until the death of my daughter, Cach'e Pelletier '12, in late March 2015, that color became a lifeline for me. As anyone who has lost a child knows, it feels as though your heart is irreparably broken. Consumed in the debilitating circle of grief, guilt, and gut ache, I started to explore holistic healing methods such as eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, adding more lighting to my interior living space, and using more color in my art. This coincided with intensive painting in my studio as though my life depended on it. I had all these emotions I needed to express in a creative and healthy way.

I started to take notice when visitors came to my art studio and walked directly to a painting that was predominantly one color. I discovered that shades

of blue seemed to soothe people while others were energized by red and yellow paintings. My curiosity about the effects of color eventually led me to become a certified color therapist in 2018.

I often get asked what color therapy is and how it works. My answers come from the lens of both an artist and color researcher. Color therapy or chromotherapy has been around for centuries. It is an alternative therapeutic modality, much like reflexology, acupuncture, or cranial sacral massage and helps heal physical and emotional imbalances in our bodies. It does so by taking advantage of various known photobiological processes that stimulate or mitigate the biochemical and hormonal processes in our bodies. An example is the use of blue light therapy to help with depression associated with seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

Looking back, I believe my immersion into the full color spectrum helped me survive the tragedy of losing my daughter. I could feel the energy and nourishment from making art begin to heal me. Eventually, the process of mixing reds, blues, and yellows into varying shades of

apricot, aqua and violet, became food for my soul and slowly brought joy back into my life.

I began to consider that if creating with color helped me, it might help others too. I started offering color therapy art workshops and lecturing at universities and hospitals. The paintings that the participants created were intended to focus on channeling specific color schemes that would help heal depression, anxiety, grief, PTSD, and other emotional issues. In the process, the participants were able to give their brains a reprieve from negative thoughts and instead be filled with joy, excitement, and a sense of achievement.

The pandemic has left many of us feeling overwhelmed. Whether it's anger over racial injustice, stress over financial struggles, or grief due to the loss of a loved one, it's important that we take care of our health. Color therapy via creating art, along with exercise and eating colorful food, helped me heal from the loss of my daughter. I hope it can do the same for others. ■

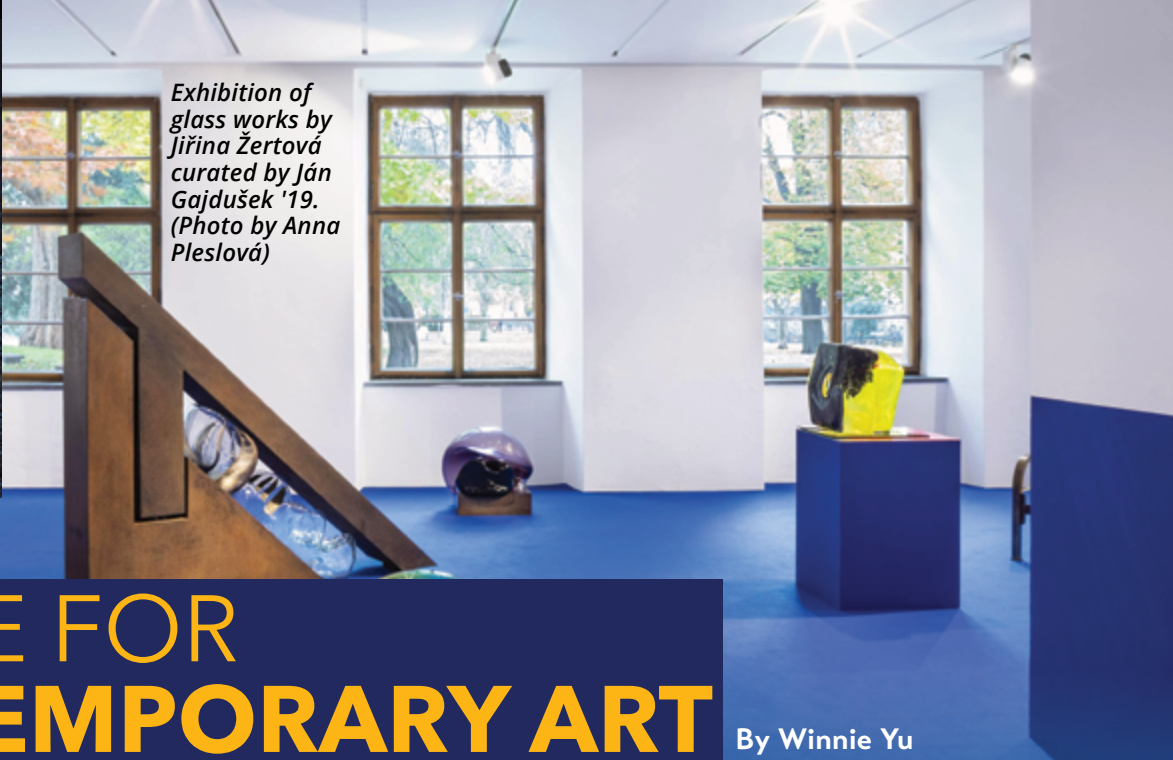
Stevens-Gupta outside her Ithaca, NY, studio with her painting "Blue Skies Ahead." (Photo by Sachin Gupta) ▲





▲ Ján Gajdušek '19.

Exhibition of glass works by Jiřina Žertová curated by Ján Gajdušek '19. (Photo by Anna Pleslová)



## AN EYE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

By Winnie Yu

Ján Gajdušek '19 didn't set out to be an art curator, though he always loved art history and going to museums. Instead, after high school, he went to the University of New York in Prague, SUNY Empire's partner school in the Czech Republic, to study international relations.

His passion for art history took over, and today, Gajdušek is an established curator, overseeing some of the most vibrant collections of contemporary art in Prague.

"What I love about this field is what I would call adventure," says Gajdušek, a member of SUNY Empire's Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors. "It's the surprising and never-ending exploration of human creativity that knows no bounds. Its complexity is ultimately just a reflection of problems, nuances, and layers of today's world."

### Going Modern

Gajdušek started as an intern at the Museum Kampa, a private institution founded by Jan and Meda Mládek, Czechs who fled the former Communist regime

and moved to the U.S. in the 1960s, where they supported progressive artists in Central and Eastern European countries. "Mrs. Meda Mládek was one of the most respected Czech art collectors and is the Czech equivalent of Peggy Guggenheim," Gajdušek says.

The experience helped Gajdušek narrow his focus on contemporary art. He spent three years curating a small private gallery in Prague and is now a senior curator at MeetFactory, one of the largest private galleries in Prague.

Since 2015, he's also been the curator of the Havrlant Art Collection, a private collection owned by Kateřina and Jakub Havrlant, which focuses on young artists under 40 from Central and Eastern Europe.

Gajdušek's knowledge of contemporary art resulted in a book he co-authored in 2018, titled "The Curator." The book is a guide to the gallery scene and architecture in Prague.

### Straddling the Past and the Present

Gajdušek calls curating contemporary art a "strange

job. One has to study art history and theory for a long time to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the field," he says. "Yet, if you focus on contemporary art like I do, one must continually educate oneself, know the art scene, and on a daily basis go to galleries and museums for openings and artists' studios."

Gajdušek credits SUNY Empire with helping him develop the skills and knowledge to understand the sociopolitical context of contemporary art. "So while art history is important, what was formative for me was the general education and international relations focus that I studied at SUNY Empire," he says.

Since getting his bachelor's degree in international and economic relations from SUNY Empire in 2019, he's enrolled in the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, where he is pursuing a master's degree in history and theory of modern and contemporary art. He plans to get his Ph.D. there, too. ■

## CAPTURING LIFE AS IT HAPPENS

By Lindsey Clark

This photo accompanies a profile of Rae in Harper's BAZAAR's Little Black Book: The Top Wedding Photographers in the World.

Judith Rae '04, '06 lives by the Brazilian phrase "se joga!" which literally means to throw yourself but is interpreted as fully immersing yourself in something you love.

For Rae, that's meant being a mother and running her own business, while working as a wedding photographer. Rae's been so good at it that in 2020, Harper's BAZAAR recognized her as one of the world's top wedding photographers.

Now, she's applying that same passion to her work as a volunteer with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, a nonprofit in Florida that mentors pregnant women and young mothers.

### A Young Mom

Rae knows firsthand the challenges of being a teen mom. Five days after her 14th birthday, she gave birth to her daughter Jessica in Brazil. Judith decided to raise her daughter in New York City at her father's home.

Though she had the support of family and friends, she often felt alone. "Strangers did not hold back, and openly shared thoughts like 'You've ruined your life' or voiced their opinion about my decision to become a young mother," Rae recalls.

The experience made her the woman she is today. "It helped me with my

fear of speaking up and voicing my opinion, which fueled the fire within me to prove people wrong," she says.

Rae grew up in New York City and planned to pursue early childhood education at SUNY Empire. A chance encounter with Professor Mel Rosenthal changed her career path when he suggested she take his photography class. "Mentors and professors such as Mel Rosenthal, Steve Gelber, and Alan Mandell always made me feel seen and heard, despite the fact I was a young mom," she says. "Somehow, they saw my potential."

### Increasing the Exposure

Rae also sees the potential in her mentee. "She's doing great in school and has now started a job, and I'm witnessing her thinking positively about the future," she says. "That brings me so much joy."

Rae's next project will merge her photographic talent with her passion for empowering young parents as part of a project to celebrate



the 140th anniversary of National Crittenton, an advocacy organization for young people. Her work will depict the lives of young parents and appear in a traveling exhibit and coffee table book in April.

Rae hopes her photos will help shift the mindset from shame to respect for young parents. "It's a very different format than capturing a wedding, but I must show up for these young parents so that they know there's hope no matter where they come from or what they have journeyed through," she says. ■



▲ A wedding photo by Rae.



▲ Eric, a teenage dad, and his daughter Elliana.



# Postcards With Purpose

**Joseph Khoury '06's labor of love lands Beirut's heritage houses on a global preservation watch list.**

By Winnie Yu

In 2016, Joseph Khoury '06 set out to photograph the historic heritage houses of Beirut, the city where he was born and raised. Many were Ottoman-era houses built for the city's business elite in the 19th century. Others were constructed during the country's French mandate in the first half of the 20th century.

Khoury, who studied graphic design at SUNY Empire's Center for International Education in Lebanon, found the houses visually arresting, and wanted to capture the beauty of the facades and preserve the architecture.

The images later became a series of postcards he named "Bouyout Beirut," which literally means "houses of Beirut." They also became the basis of his first solo exhibition.

## Changed by a Blast

The postcard project took on greater significance, when a large amount of ammonia nitrate exploded at the port of Beirut, killing 218 people, injuring thousands of others, and causing \$15 billion in property damage. The blast was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded and shook the entire nation of Lebanon and several surrounding countries.



▲ *Photographer Joseph Khoury '06 and his wife and business partner, Gabriela Cardozo, an architect.*

A few days after the explosion, Khoury and his wife Gabriela Cardozo went back to revisit the heritage houses, original postcards in hand. "It was sad, seeing all that destruction," Khoury told a reporter. "We didn't know the exact location of each postcard, so we walked around the streets trying to find them again."

The couple took comparison photos with the original postcards placed over the newly damaged structures. They also left postcards under corresponding façades in the hope that the houses would be rebuilt. The photos attracted a lot of attention. The couple seized the opportunity to raise money by selling postcards and prints, donating some to the Lebanese Red Cross.

## A Wake-Up Call

In 2022, the World Monuments Fund placed the Beirut heritage houses on the organization's biennial watch list, which highlights 25 sites around the world of "extraordinary significance,

facing pressing challenges, and where WMF's partnership with local communities has the potential to make a meaningful difference." Since 1996, the WMF has worked to preserve architectural and cultural sites around the world.

Khoury thinks his photographs may have helped bring attention to the heritage houses. He had provided photos and videos of the houses to the Beirut Heritage Initiative, a group credited with getting the historic architecture on to the WMF watchlist.

For Khoury and Cardozo, the explosion also served as a "wake-up call" to try something new. In 2021, they moved to Ghent, Belgium, where they both finished postgraduate studies in digital storytelling at the KASK School of Arts in Hogent.

Today, the couple describe themselves as "storytellers" working on different creative projects. Khoury continues to do photography, with assignments ranging from travel and food to portraits and weddings. ■

*Beirut's historic heritage houses became the subject of Joseph Khoury '06's photo project in 2016, which he turned into a series of postcards and later, his first photo exhibition. After the 2020 explosion of ammonium nitrate at the port of Beirut, he and his wife, Gabriela Cardozo, went back and held up the original postcards in front of the damaged structures. These images, shown above, captured the attention of media outlets and preservation organizations. They also helped bring the heritage houses to the attention of the World Monuments Fund, which placed these historic structures on the 2022 watch list of sites that merit preservation.*





# FROM PERFORMER TO PLAYWRIGHT

**After getting her degree at SUNY Empire, Broadway singer Virginia Woodruff '19 takes on a new role behind the scenes.**

By Morgan Morris

Virginia Woodruff '19 grew up in a large family that loved to sing. Her mother and aunts formed a singing group, and her brother went to Broadway after returning from the Vietnam War. "I sat shyly in the background wanting the boldness it took to acquire such skills," she says.

In 1985, while singing in a gospel choir, Woodruff auditioned for "Freedom Train," the story of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, at the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera. Despite never auditioning before, Woodruff got the part.

A year later, she went to see "Let the Music Play Gospel" in New York City. Her friend suggested Woodruff bring her professional photo and her resume. After the show, the producers announced they were having auditions for "Mama I Want to Sing" that evening.

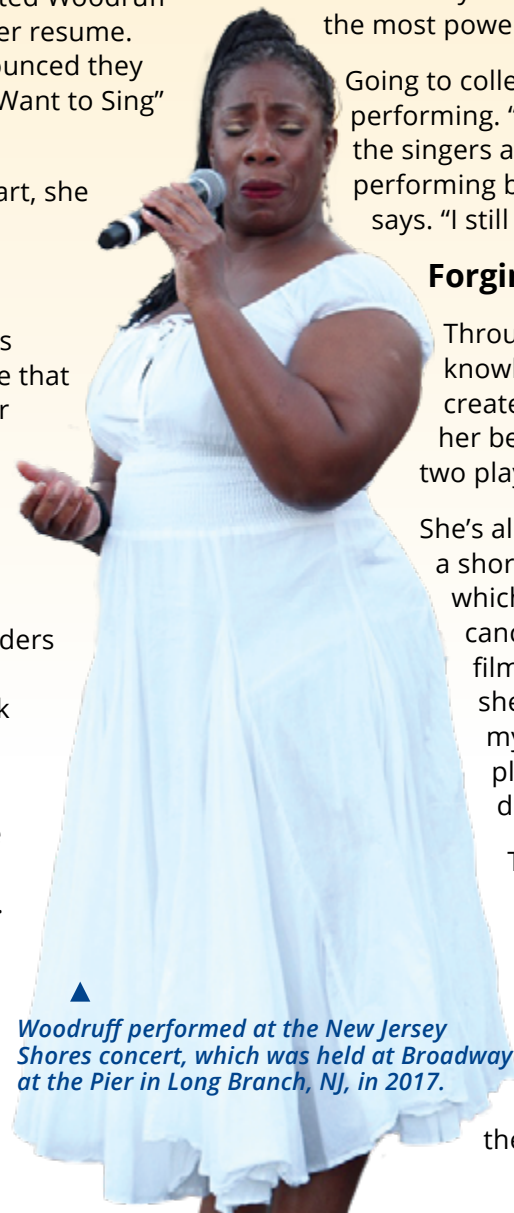
A week after learning she got the part, she moved to New York City.

## The Great White Way

Woodruff's first Broadway show was "Smokey Joe's Café," a musical revue that showcased the works of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Five Broadway shows followed.

"I'll never forget the excitement on Broadway's 'The Color Purple,' meeting stars, and seeing the lines almost two blocks long of ticket holders to see this show," Woodruff says. Another favorite play was "All Shook Up," featuring the music of Elvis Presley.

Woodruff has since starred in more than 50 productions, including regional theater and national tours. She sang with symphonies and performed as a back-up vocalist. She was also a singer in Michael Jackson's last live concert recorded for CBS's 30th anniversary.



▲ Woodruff performed at the New Jersey Shores concert, which was held at Broadway at the Pier in Long Branch, NJ, in 2017.



▲ In 2012, Woodruff won "Outstanding Lead Actress in a Musical" at the Midtown International Festival of Theatre for her role in the off-Broadway show "A Taste of Chocolate."

## Dreams of College

After 27 years in the business, Woodruff wanted a college degree. That's when Woodruff found SUNY Empire, where she received the Richard Porter Leach Fellowship for performing artists. "It's the best thing I have ever done for myself," Woodruff says.

While at SUNY Empire, Woodruff learned about the origin of theater and how powerful a play can be. "Lives can be changed, inspired, and healed from the brokenness incensed by the world around them," Woodruff says. "To come to understand that truth was the most powerful tool I was missing."

Going to college didn't stop Woodruff from performing. "I love the camaraderie amongst the singers and getting to meet new people and performing before appreciative audiences," she says. "I still enjoy the learning aspect of it all."

## Forging New Paths

Through SUNY Empire, she acquired the knowledge and clarity she needed to create characters. Writing classes helped her become a playwright, and she now has two plays under her belt.

She's also written, directed, and produced a short film titled "Not an Ordinary Day," which explores the challenges of COVID, cancer, and systemic racism. Making a film was something she never thought she would do. "I was encouraged by my mentor Lucy Winner to take a playwriting class and I'm so glad she did," Woodruff says.

These days, Woodruff continues to perform and write. She's submitting her play, "Antoinette: Lost in a Changing World," to different festivals, after it was staged at the 2019 Emerging Artists Theatre's New Works Series Festival. "I hope it inspires others to give good to the world," she says. ■

# CREATING CHANGE THROUGH HIS CANVAS

By Lindsey Clark

◀ "Field of Dreams," by Raul Manzano '05.

When Raul Manzano '05 came to the U.S. from Colombia, South America, in 1980, he was seeking freedom and opportunity for all. While living in Colombia, he had witnessed social injustice, discrimination, crime, and abuse.

To his surprise, he observed these same issues in the U.S. and decided to use his art to call attention to them. "I like to think of art as a channel of communication to raise consciousness, provoke thought, and encourage social change to bring awareness to people's rights," says Manzano, a visiting assistant professor at SUNY Empire's Brooklyn location.

## A Palette for Social Awareness

Raising awareness of injustice and promoting cultural equity have been central themes of Manzano's work. Among his favorite icons is the Statue of Liberty. As a symbol of freedom, the statue embodies irony, he says, since many immigrants do not feel that it accurately represents their experience.

Manzano reflects on his 2006 painting titled "Field of Dreams," which features an image of the Statue of Liberty in chains, representing a migrant who has come to the U.S. in search of a better life only to be confined to manual labor in the farm fields.

"This painting is very meaningful to me because it represents the migrants who do not speak English or have specific skills," Manzano says. "They are often mistreated by patrons who own the companies and exploit those who need the work."

## Expanding the Arts

Manzano's activism has been evident in other roles, too. As the former president of the New York City-based arts organization, West Side Arts Coalition, he presented exhibitions that echoed important messages about those affected by HIV and AIDS, the impact that 9/11 had on bringing America together, and some of the most pressing issues of the environment.

Manzano has also spoken out about the lack of access to artworks in museum exhibits in New York City for non-English speaking visitors. While doing his doctoral dissertation on multicultural exhibits in the city, Manzano discovered that few museums there presented exhibitions in languages other than English or Spanish. Since publishing his dissertation, his research has been cited in

many scholarly articles, and advances in technology have expanded language options.

## Diversifying the Arts at SUNY Empire

Manzano's enthusiasm for diversity and inclusion is also evident in his work at SUNY Empire, where he helped found the Livingston Gallery at the Brooklyn location. In 2011, Manzano introduced Livingston's first Black history exhibition. Other cultural exhibitions soon followed.

Manzano felt it was important to celebrate the history and culture of underrepresented groups, while showcasing the works of Black, Latinx, and Caribbean students in SUNY Empire's Manhattan and Brooklyn locations.

"I always want to acknowledge different cultural backgrounds and diversify the arts at SUNY Empire," Manzano says. "I want everyone to feel welcome to our cultural events." ■





# In Memoriam

**Esther J. Bellitto '78**  
**Charles H. Boehm '77**  
**Chuck R. Booth '78**  
**Norman R. Brahm '97**  
**Joan Carton '95**  
**Marilyn Conley '86**  
**Lyle Copeland**  
**Alfred Di Giacomo '80**  
**Dorothy E. Dinolfo '02**  
**Arnetta Frazier '20**  
**Brian P. Gallagher '97**  
**E. Margaret Garvila '97**  
**Michael A. Kvasnak '91**  
**Rhoda F. May '88**  
**Rebecca L. Moran '19**  
**Steven M. Myers '91**  
**Maureen K. O'Donnell '90**  
**Eric J. Olsen '92**  
**Daniel C. Olson '96, '97**  
**Judith A. Parsons '83, '87**  
**Margaret Regan '83**  
**Robert R. Russell Jr. '97**  
**James G. Schell '94**  
**Evelyn F. Schwind '85**  
**Thomas J. Stone '95**  
**Max Thwaits '15**

**Kathryn G. Boyer '78** of Peterborough, NH, passed away at age 93 on March 13, 2022, surrounded by her loving family. Kay was the wife of former State University of New York Chancellor and U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest Boyer, who was instrumental in the founding of SUNY Empire State College. Kay was among the first decade of SUNY Empire graduates in 1978 and was an example of the college's founding vision to offer an education at times and places convenient to students of all ages. She later served on the board of directors for the Empire State College Foundation.

Kathryn Garis Tyson was born Oct. 16, 1928, in Creamery, PA. After graduating from nursing school, she moved to Florida with her husband where he was the pastor of a small church. When he was offered a teaching position at Upland College in CA, they moved across the country. They moved to Albany, NY in 1965 when he joined the SUNY system, eventually becoming its chancellor. She recounted their 40 years together in her 2014 memoir *Many Mansions*.

After receiving her SUNY Empire degree, Kay fulfilled a lifelong dream of training to become a midwife. She was president of the American College of Nurse Midwives Foundation and received an honorary degree for her service from Hood College in Frederick, MD.

Ernest and Kay moved to Princeton, NJ in 1981, when he was named president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. After his death in 1995, she was active in the Princeton community until moving to Peterborough, NH, where she spent the last years of her life at RiverMead Lifecare Community.

She is survived by her sister, children, 15 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

**Mary Klinger** of Elmira, NY, passed away on October 7, 2022. She is survived by her husband, two children, and two great grandchildren. Mary earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Elmira College and her Ph.D. from Union Institute and University of Cincinnati. She retired as an associate professor emerita from SUNY Empire after teaching for 21 years. Mary enjoyed crocheting, traveling, and hiking. She hiked several national parks in the U.S.

**Janice A. Pastizzo '98, '00, '04** passed away in July 2022 at age 70 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. She passed in the comfort of her home in Halfmoon, NY, with her loving family by her side. Born in Ballston Spa, NY, she was happily married to Angelo Pastizzo for 51 years. In 2016, Janice and Angelo established the "Janice A. Pastizzo '98, '00, '04 and Angelo C. Pastizzo

Scholarship" to assist SUNY Empire State College students from the Capital Region who are studying community and human services. Janice held three degrees from SUNY Empire – an associate, a Bachelor of Science, and a master's degree.

After graduating from the Academy of the Holy Names, she attended Albany Medical Center School of Nursing and began her lifelong pursuit of helping others while working in the AMC's intensive care unit. She continued her education later in life, while raising a family and running a business. Her education culminated in a Master of Arts degree with a concentration in health psychology in 2004.

After many years as the health and fitness director at the Southern Saratoga YMCA, Janice opened her own business, Fit for Life Wellness Center, in 1998. For more than 20 years, she served as an inspirational and charismatic leader, counseling and motivating others to lead healthier lifestyles. Janice thoroughly enjoyed celebrating and living life to the fullest; she made a lasting impact by encouraging others to embrace and adopt her philanthropic values.

**Andrew J. Di Nitto** of Gloversville, NY, passed away last July at the age of 79. He served as professor of political science and public policy at SUNY Empire from 1985 until his retirement in 2010. His collegiate academic career began at Orange County Community College, where he studied political science and garnered All-American honors as a star soccer player. From there, he went on to SUNY Binghamton, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees, and then to the University of Albany to earn his Ph.D. in 1978.

Andrew was a wonderful mentor to his students, an amazing soccer coach, and a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He was also a world-class horse racing enthusiast, offering his thoroughbred handicapping tips at SUNY Empire's annual "Alumni Day at the Races" event, where he entertained the entire audience. He will be missed.

**Joseph Baque '78** died last fall at the age of 100. As a pianist, he played with leading jazz artists, including Louis Armstrong and Stan Getz. He also

This list includes updates on alumni and other members of the SUNY Empire State College community as reported by family members, newspapers, and other sources. To submit a name for In Memoriam, please contact [alumni@esc.edu](mailto:alumni@esc.edu).

performed at Carnegie Hall, and appeared on the Tonight Show, the Morning Show, and the Merv Griffin Show.

Joe was well known in his hometown of Olympia, WA, and frequently played at community events. In 2017, Baque was given the "Award for Excellence in the Arts" from Olympia's Washington Center for the Performing Arts. He is survived by his wife Carol and their son John. He was also a foster parent to more than 70 children.

**Joseph L. Mancino '80, H'06** passed away unexpectedly on his 85th birthday on September 14, 2022.

Joe was a longtime member of the Empire State College Foundation Board, serving until his death. He and his wife Laurel of 61 years established the Joseph L. Mancino '80 Family Scholarship for students from Long Island who demonstrate academic promise and perseverance but need financial assistance to complete their degrees.

Joe and Laurel were past recipients of the Nassau County Make a Difference Award for making profound and positive differences in the lives of those less fortunate. Joe served as a member of the board of directors for The Interfaith Nutrition Network (past president), Helen Keller Services for The Blind, Nassau County Boy Scouts Theodore Roosevelt Council, the National Center for Disability Services, Long Island University and Winthrop Hospital/NYU Langone Long Island. He was also a recipient of the 1998 Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the Boy Scouts of America Good Scout Award by the New York Boy Scout Council.

Joe spent more than 45 years in the banking industry, eventually rising through the ranks to become president, chairman of the board and CEO at Roslyn Savings Bank. Joe received his bachelor's degree from SUNY Empire in 1980. He also received an honorary doctorate from SUNY Empire in 2006.

In addition to his wife, Joe is survived by two children and five grandchildren. ■



# ALUMNI NOTES



## 1970s

**Peter Monacelli '77** is exhibiting his artwork in a show titled "Thirty Eight and Eighty" at the Mercer Gallery at Monroe Community College, where he is adjunct faculty.

**Kenny Barron '78, '13** was elected to the DownBeat Jazz Hall of Fame in late 2022.

**Paul Dodd '79** and his band Margaret Explosion have been performing live at the Little Theatre Café in Rochester, NY.

## 1980s

**Martin Baicker '81** was named chief operating officer of SCO Family of Services in Glen Cove, NY.

**Sally Steinwachs '82** had three paintings in the 62nd annual Irondequoit Art Show last spring. The show is sponsored by the Irondequoit Art Club in Rochester, NY.



**Christopher Erikson '83, '85**, business manager of Local 3, the New York City chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, was named in City & State's NYC Labor Power 100 list.

**David Shakes '85**, a writer, director, and actor in Rochester, NY, was part of a virtual discussion on Amiri Baraka's "Blues People: Negro Music in White America."

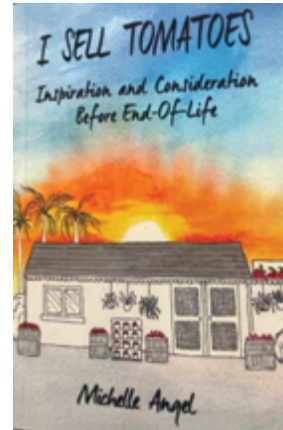
## 1990s

**Timothy J. Cosgriff '93**, was featured in the Rochester Public Library's 2022 International Art of

the Book show with his entry, "Alice in Wonderland: Told in Three Chapters."

**Larry Quinn '94, '97** of Troy, NY has launched a new record label called Third Son Records and is recording songs with his group, the Larry Quinn Band.

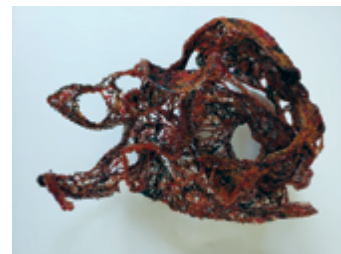
**Michelle Angel '98**, a full-time guide and consultant for the dying and their loved ones, has published "I Sell Tomatoes, Inspiration and Consideration Before End-Of-Life."



**Lindsay Glover '99**, has written a children's book, "Candy, the Cat," which was featured at the 2022 American Library Association Annual Conference & Exhibition in Washington, DC.

## 2000s

**Barbara J. Murak '00** was featured in an exhibit at the Kenan Center in Lockport, NY, last spring, titled "Extraordinary Forms VI: Focus on Fiber."



**Wendy Perron '01** teaches dance history at The Juilliard School and is editor-at-large for Dance magazine.

**Neil Greenberg '03** is the head of the dance department at the Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts (The New School).

**Jeffrey Hunter '03**, a senior program manager with the National Parks Conservation Association, was recently named Wildlife Conservationist of the Year in the North Carolina Wildlife Federation's Governor's Conservation Awards.

**Angela Lee '03**, vice president of human resources and chief diversity officer at Baxter, has been appointed to the board of the Tompkins Community Bank in Central New York.

**Cynthia L. Cowley '05** was featured as a guest artist at the Brown and Hound downtown art show in Rochester, NY.

**Kelly Wofford '05** is the director of the newly created Office of Health Equity in Erie County, NY.

**Edward Friedman '06** is an author and playwright whose anthology "Short Plays for Long Lives" features six 10-minute plays for seniors and senior theater groups.

**Sady Alvarado-Fischer '07, '10** was promoted to vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion officer at Excellus BCBS.



**Joseph Badalamente '06** has written his debut novel, "The King and Me: A Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy."

**Shelly Stam '08**, a costume designer and fabric artist, was a consultant on a commercial that won the Coca Cola Refreshing Films grand prize in April. Stam also designed the costumes for a George Bernard Shaw play, "Saint Joan," which was staged at the Multi-Use Community Cultural Center in Rochester, NY.

## 2010s

**Dawn M. Barclay '10** wrote her eighth book, "Traveling Different: Vacation Strategies for Parents of the Anxious, the Inflexible, and the Neurodiverse." It is her first work of nonfiction.

**Lakeisha Smith '10, '14** is a certified personal trainer who owns Inspired By Fitness, an exercise facility for small group and personal fitness training in Rochester, NY.

**Charles Baldwin '12** of Painted Post, NY, won a bronze medal from the Global Music Awards, for a video of the rock band Dakota, performing "Leaves You Sitting There." He also won an award for Best Documentary from the Christian Online Film Festival for the film "A Wonderful Conversation with Bucky Geter."

**Robert Graves '13** has published a book titled "I, Rob Graves: My Struggle With Childhood Trauma, Homosexuality, and Bipolar Disorder."



**Karllen Lawrence '14** has written a children's book, "Caribbean ABCs," which takes kids on an alphabetical journey throughout the Caribbean.

**Gerianne Puskas '14** is the recipient of the 2022 Robert A. Clinger Outstanding Fundraising Professional Award by the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

**Lavie Margolin '15**, a graduate of SUNY Empire's Master of Arts in Adult Learning, is a student in SUNY Empire's Ed.D. program and program officer for the City College of New York's Jay Levy Fellowship for Future Leaders.

**Donna Moran '15** is a native New Yorker who is making a comeback as a comedian. Her work appears on podcasts and live on stage.

**Gail Talmadge '15, '16** of Amsterdam, NY, taught plein air style painting as part of the New York Power Authority and state Canal Corporation's "On the Canals" programs.

**Adam J. Bojarski '16** was promoted to senior manager, business development at SRC, Inc. in Syracuse, NY.

**Daniel DeBrucker '17** graduated in May with a master's degree from Union Theological Seminary Master of Divinity, and a Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia University. He is the founding pastor and community leader of Cross Street Community of NYC, in Queens.

**Steven D. Falitico '17** has started a new job as public communication and web design specialist, for Genesee County in Batavia, NY.

**Sandra Pérez '17** is the executive director of NYC Pride, an advocacy organization that plans the annual LGBTQIA+ events in the city. She served as a moderator at the SUNY Spectrum Conference last September.



**Dora Cervantes '18**, general secretary-treasurer of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and a member of the SUNY Empire Foundation Board recently received the United Latinos of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Champion of Justice Award.

**Kelly DiCarmino '18, '21**, president of the SUNY Empire Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors, has been promoted to director of design and construction for Price Chopper/Market 32 in Schenectady, NY, where she will oversee construction project managers and the store planning team.

**Edison O. Fraser '18** has been appointed Air Transport Territory chief of staff of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

**Angela Hadfield '18, '20, '22**, earned her third degree from SUNY Empire last spring, this time an MBA in healthcare leadership. The degree helped her land a promotion at her job at MTF Biologics where she is donor development coordinator.



## 2020s

**Emily Burns Perryman '20** has recently been named senior marketing director of Techbridge, a

national nonprofit based in Atlanta that's committed to breaking the cycle of generational poverty using technology.

**Tomer Raanan '20** is Lloyd's List's senior maritime reporter in the U.S. He is based in New York, where he enjoyed a decade-long career in private security before joining Lloyd's List in 2022.

**Christopher Sorrentino '20** was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2022. His sixth book, "Now Beacon, Now Sea," was named a New York Times Notable Book in 2021.

**Albert Culler '21** has joined Beacon Mobility in New York City, as senior vice president of operations.



**Christina Callahan '22** was recently named director of human resources of the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey.

**Robin Hodges '22** is vice president and vice chairwoman of the board of directors of the first-ever African American Veterans Monument in Buffalo, NY. The project recognizes African Americans who have served and are currently serving in all six branches of the military, during war and in peace times.

**Jody Wood '22** was certified as a surgical services manager and works as a registered nurse at Oswego Health. ■

# STUDENT ART CAPTURES IMPACT OF PANDEMIC

Last summer, SUNY Empire students were challenged to portray the impact of the pandemic in creative ways. They responded with drawings, photographs, creative writing, and other media. John Lawless, Ph.D., MPH, a professor in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences who led the project, collected the artworks and presented them in an exhibit titled "COVID-19: Crisis and Resilience" that can be found online at [www.esc.edu/covid-works/](http://www.esc.edu/covid-works/). Shown here are two of those works:



**Richard Calore Jr. of Washingtonville, NY, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in public affairs, with a concentration in emergency management.**

"I took this photo at the funeral for a local firefighter who died of COVID. I always take a camera wherever I go and like to capture moments others might overlook. This frame, black and white, the cross ahead down the narrow passage of two firetrucks speaks to me. It portrays a somber image of reflection."

**Yoko Uchima '20, of New York, NY, is pursuing a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies.**

"In spring 2020, I was hospitalized for COVID-19. Even after my physical recovery, my mental shock from fear was still great. To free myself from the depressive mood, I applied myself to art therapy. Drawing the lotus flower, a symbol of purity as it grows beautifully from murky water, purified my mind and redirected my consciousness to the pleasure of life. The petals are anchored by the leaves which represent my family who supported me. That support brought back a feeling of security and gave me great satisfaction. Through this activity, which resulted in 17 pastels over 10 months, I was able to retrieve my mental balance and energy to accept changing realities and move forward to the next chapter."



*"It is my hope that by making a bequest to SUNY Empire, I can help future adult learners feel supported in reaching their goals and experience the joy of completing their education."*

Sandra Pérez '17  
Boyer Legacy Society member



The Boyer Legacy Society honors Dr. Ernest L. Boyer and his vision of accessible and affordable higher education for students of all ages and backgrounds.

Membership is open to all who notify us of their decision to include the college in their estate plans.

Contact Toby Tobrocke ([Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu](mailto:Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu)) to explore ways you can join in supporting the future of Empire State.

Visit [www.esc.edu/plangifts](http://www.esc.edu/plangifts) or scan the QR code to learn more.





# NEW PARTNERSHIP WILL SUPPORT DANCERS

SUNY Empire State College has entered into a partnership with the José Limón Dance Foundation.

The José Limón Dance Foundation supports the Limón Dance Company and the Limón Institute, an educational and archival resource center. The Limón Dance Company was among the first modern dance repertory companies in the U.S.

José Limón was a Mexican immigrant who came to the U.S. as a child in 1915 and became a dancer and choreographer. Together with Doris Humphrey, he founded the José Limón Dance Company in 1946.

*Limón Dance Company performing a work called "Psalm" by José Limón. (Photo by Christopher Jones)*

The dance company has been at the forefront of American modern dance ever since.

"Dancers are nothing if not disciplined and lifelong learners who accomplish a lot at an early stage in life through a lot of drive and a lot of sweat," said Ivan Sacks, chairman of the José Limón Dance Foundation board of directors. "But that's not their only career. It can never be their only career. So we are a perfect organization and ready to sponge up this idea of being in partnership with SUNY and the opportunities that it creates for us to collaborate together."



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**Every gift.**  
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On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of SUNY Empire, we thank our generous donors for their support in 2022.

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# PRESIDENT VOLLENDORF CELEBRATES THE ARTS

*Dusk in the Sierras by Lisa Vollendorf.*

SUNY Empire State President Lisa Vollendorf loves the arts — in all its glory and all its forms. Within weeks of her arrival in upstate New York, she became a regular at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. While in New York City over the summer, she visited the Museum of Natural History and Museum of Modern Art. And she never travels without stopping somewhere to hear live music or catch a play. Here, Vollendorf shares some of her favorites.



## BEST CONCERT EVER ATTENDED:

Celia Cruz in a parking lot in south L.A.

## LAST CONCERT ATTENDED:

Escher Quartet at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center

## FAVORITE BROADWAY PLAY:

"Hamilton"

## FAVORITE TYPE OF MUSIC:

I have eclectic tastes. I love salsa, Latin jazz, '70s and '80s nostalgia, Motown, and all things upbeat and danceable.

## FAVORITE ARTISTS:

Remedios Varo, Jacob Lawrence, and Roxanne Swentzell

## FAVORITE PAINTING:

"Las Meninas" by Diego Velázquez

## LAST MUSEUM EXHIBITS I SAW:

Northwest Coast Hall at the American Museum of Natural History and Matisse: The Red Studio at Museum of Modern Art

## BEST BOOK EVER READ:

That's not an easy question for a literature professor, but I do love "Don Quixote" and "One Hundred Years of Solitude."

## FAVORITE MOVIE OF LAST FIVE YEARS:

"Wonder Woman"

## FAVORITE DOCUMENTARY:

"Twenty Feet from Stardom"

## THE SONG I SING IN THE SHOWER:

"Respect" by Aretha Franklin

## LAST SERIES BINGED:

"The Bear"

## FAVORITE DANCE VENUE:

I love the Joyce Theater in Manhattan.

## FAVORITE KIND OF DANCE:

Flamenco, modern, ballet—all of it! I love dance!

## BEST PHOTOS I EVER TOOK:

Dusk in the Sierras in California





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INAUGURATE

We look forward to the inauguration of  
**Lisa Vollendorf, Ph.D.**  
as the sixth president of  
SUNY Empire State

Please join us via livestream  
at [www.esc.edu/esc-tv](http://www.esc.edu/esc-tv)

Thursday, March 23, 2023  
4 o'clock in the afternoon



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