



2020

THE FOLIO

FOR THE UTEP DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



Chair: Brian Yothers, Ph.D.

Director of Literature: Joseph Ortiz, Ph.D.

Director of English Education: Jonna Perrillo, Ph.D.

Director of First-Year Composition: Lauren Rosenberg, Ph.D.

Director of the Technical & Professional Writing Certificate Program: Terry Quezada, Ph.D.

Advising & Scheduling Coordinator: Levi Martin, Ph.D.

Administrative Services Coordinator: Ana Diaz

Editor of the Folio: Paul LaPrade

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from Dr. Brian Yothers	2
The Career of Dr. Tony Stafford	3-5
School Outreach Project	6-7
Notable Alumna Feature	8-9
The <i>Moby-Dick</i> Read-a-Thon	10-11
Student Highlight Feature	12-13
Notable Alumna Feature	14-15
The Career of Dr. Tom Schmid	16
Publications	17-19

LETTER FROM

Dr. Brian Yothers

W

elcome to the Spring 2020 issue of *The Folio*! I can confidently say that this issue of *The Folio* marks one of the more extraordinary moments in the history of this department, as

this spring has been an unprecedented period for us all. As massive as the disruption associated with the current pandemic has been, our pursuit of learning and discovery has continued. I have felt great pride in my colleagues and students as we have adapted to a situation that would have been unimaginable last fall.

We are also experiencing major changes among our faculty. Dr. Tony Stafford, the longest-serving faculty member in the history of our department, began phased retirement this fall (pp. 3-5). Dr. Tom Schmid, who has taught at UTEP for 30 years and who served from 2014-2019 as the Director of Literature, announced that he will retire at the end of the spring semester. Please see his reflections on his career (p. 16) and a story about how he and students from UTEP and EPCC infused British Romanticism into the curriculum of local schools (pp. 6-7).

Our alumni and students continue to do extraordinary things in our community, and we can read about three of them in this issue. Patty Tiscareño, our 2019 College of Liberal Arts Gold Nugget, has served for many years with great distinction as the Executive Director of the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation, and she shares her sense of the value of a humanities education for her successful career in the nonprofit world (pp. 8-9). Randi Bossie, meanwhile, an award-winning student and teacher in our department over the last decade, has launched a new career in the business world (pp. 14-15). Luis García provides evidence of the range of research and community outreach that our students engage in, as an undergraduate and then a graduate student (pp. 12-13). We continue to find new ways



to reach out to our community and to celebrate the written word in the public sphere, and one example of this commitment appears in our 2019 *Moby-Dick* Read-a-Thon (pp. 10-11).

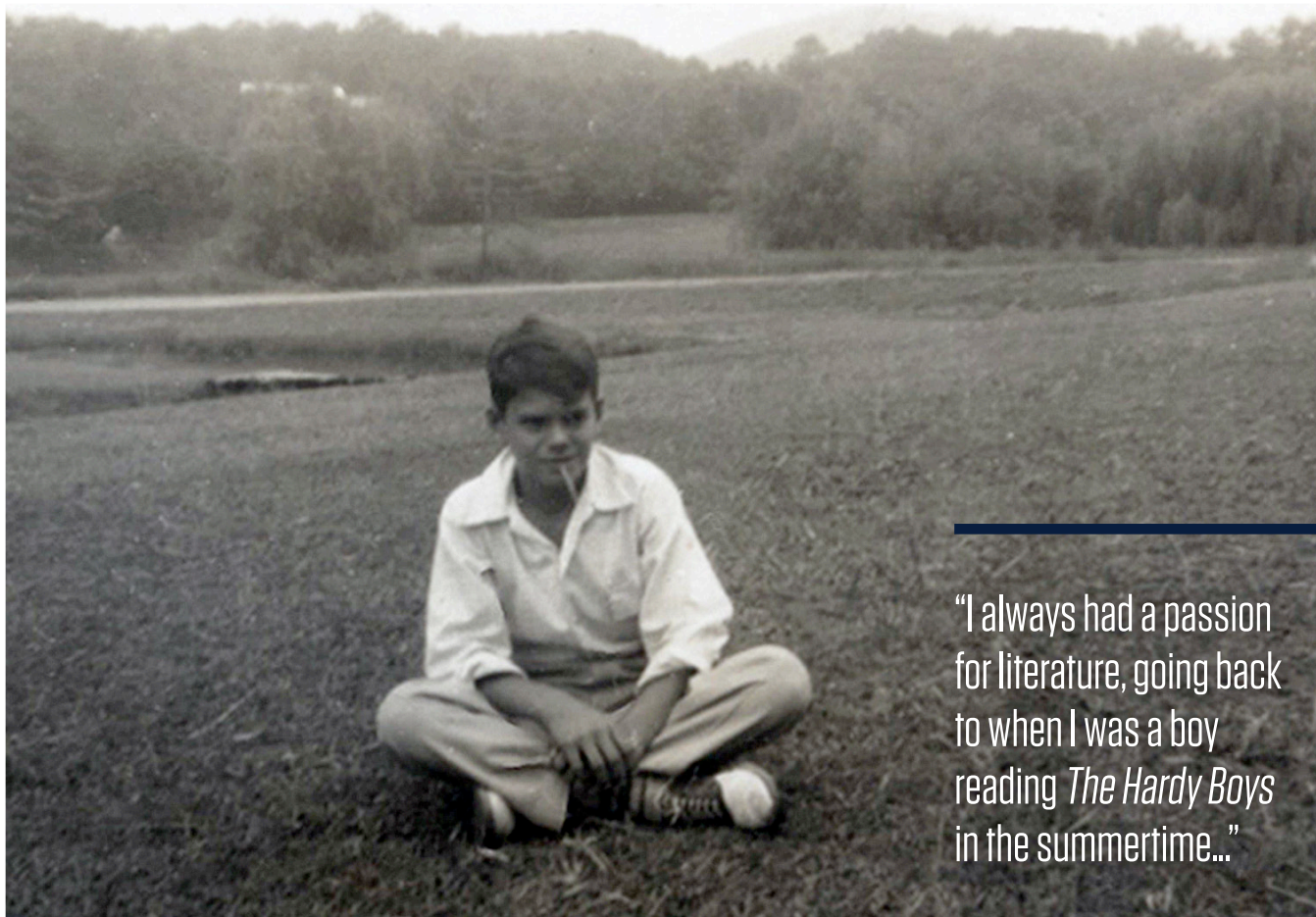
We are eager to maintain contact with our alumni and our retired and former faculty! Please drop us an email to let us know how you are doing, and please follow us on Facebook at English at UTEP. We look forward to continuing to build a strong and flourishing department alongside you!

Very best wishes,

Brian Yothers, Chair

FACULTY PROFILE:

Dr. Tony Stafford



"I always had a passion for literature, going back to when I was a boy reading *The Hardy Boys* in the summertime..."

Dr. **Tony Stafford** was working at a Fort Bliss recruiting station in 1958 when, he recalls, "I found out there was a school here, so I came over to check it out, and I signed up for a class with Dr. Robert Burlingame," an accomplished poet. That Texas Western College class, whose main focus was novelist Herman Melville, was the first step in an ongoing journey that saw Stafford become the longest-tenured faculty member in the history of The University of Texas at El Paso's Department of English, where his singular contributions include four terms as department chair and a wealth of scholarship in dramatic literature, with specializations in William Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw.

Stafford's life-changing decision to visit the local college in 1958 stemmed from a love of reading that began during his childhood in Belmont, North Carolina. He reflects, "I

always had a passion for literature, going back to when I was a boy reading *The Hardy Boys* in the summertime; I was just an avid reader, and I said, 'Why don't I just do what I love? That's allowed.'" Stafford first recognized a possible vocation in his lifelong enjoyment of literature while reading poets from the Romantic movement during a senior English class at his small-town high school: "I realized you can study literature and enjoy it ... This is what I wanted to do."

After earning a B.A. from Wake Forest University in 1957 with a major in philosophy and minors in English literature and Latin, Stafford was drafted by the Army and sworn in during the last week of July. Stafford reflects, "I needed that time and space to get my bearings straight." While stationed at Fort Meade, Maryland, Stafford was in a philosophy class at George Washington University studying Immanuel Kant when he walked down the hallway and saw a big literature class that he recalls seeming "so much more



interesting than Kant." He thought, "I know where I'm going now."

In 1958, during his second year in the Army, Stafford was transferred to Fort Bliss, leading him to Texas Western College's Department of English where he would stay to work on an M.A. in literature following his release from the Army in the summer of 1959. The following year, while teaching Latin part time at Radford School for Girls and Cathedral High School, Stafford received a pivotal phone call from Dr. Joseph Leach, the department chair: "He called me and offered me a teaching assistantship. Well, that changed my life. It got my foot in the door."

Stafford would receive another call from Leach four years later, in 1964, inviting him to return to Texas Western following the completion of his doctoral exams at Louisiana State University. Stafford returned to El Paso with the intention of finishing his dissertation here: "Fifty-five years later, I'm still here. I came back and didn't want to go anywhere else; I loved the place."

Among the multitude of reasons why he loves El Paso – a list that includes the border culture, the weather, and the food – Stafford emphasizes UTEP's students: "I love my students. They're very eager, they're very respectful, and they're just a joy to teach. It's been that way from the beginning for me. What was there not to like?"

Stafford recognizes another consistent quality in the University he calls home amid its constant growth: "UTEP has always been very supportive, and scholarship was stressed from the beginning. 'If we're going to be a university, we're going to be a good university, and we're going to have a good reputation,' has always been their attitude. And the University has treated me very well." Stafford is grateful for the space he has been given to "teach and do scholarship because that's where the fun is; that's where the joy is."

During his time at UTEP, Stafford has "seen tremendous change throughout the whole University" as its enrollment has soared past the 4,000 to 5,000 students on campus when Stafford returned in 1964, three years prior to Texas Western College changing its name to The University of Texas at El Paso: "I've been on the campus for 55 years, and I think every single year during that period of time there was some kind of building under construction."

Stafford recalls vivid scenes of his early years when the English department was in the Liberal Arts Building: "The hallways were always jammed between classes. They said, 'We need to do something to reduce the student traffic in the

“Fifty-five years later, I’m still here. I came back and didn’t want to go anywhere else; **I loved the place.**”



halls between classes. Let’s move the English department to the outer fringe of the campus because they’re the ones with the most students.” He returned to campus just in time to attend every home game during the 1965-1966 Texas Western men’s basketball season, watching their historic championship victory on a black-and-white television set. The following year, Texas Western College’s change of name coincided with a new vision of becoming a university with distinct colleges, including the formation of a College of Liberal Arts led by Dean Ray Small: “Towards the end of the ’60s was a big turning point.”

Following a transitional period that saw Hudspeth Hall, Worrell Hall and Miners Hall renovated and converted from dorms, Stafford chose an office in Worrell Hall with memories of the Liberal Arts Building’s crowded hallways still fresh: “I decided that Hudspeth was going to have a lot of traffic, and Worrell is very quiet. Choosing to have my office in Worrell may have been a mistake because I don’t get to see my colleagues as much, but I’ve always been able to get a lot of work done here.”

Those colleagues have been at the core of the steady growth that Stafford has observed in the English department throughout his time here. “The secret to a good department

is its faculty,” he says. Stafford acknowledges a wide range of talented colleagues he has worked with, of whom there are too many to name: from Dr. C.L. Sonnichsen – whom he had the opportunity to know as a student, colleague, and next-door neighbor – to Dr. Elaine Frederickson, “one of my closest colleagues.” Stafford makes special note of Dr. Mimi Gladstein’s contributions to the department, saying “We go back a millennium.” He cites Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf’s leadership in establishing a successful Ph.D. program in rhetoric and composition, which “has become very stable and produces lots of PhDs.” Stafford smiles as he considers the number of former students who have become colleagues within the department: “That’s something to be really proud of, to see students go on to great things.”

Beyond his teaching and scholarship, Stafford continues to find new ways of contributing to the life of the English department and ensuring that it thrives long into the future. His generous gifts to the department include a \$25,000 scholarship for English majors and plans to establish a professorship in his name. He explains, “I want to give back to the University because the University’s really been good to me, so it works both ways. If I had more, I’d give more ... It’s important to give back in this world.”

“WE WANT WORDSWORTH!”:

School Outreach through Poetry



W

hen Dr. Tom Schmid, professor of English, encountered the opportunity to contribute as a faculty fellow to The Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP – which is generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation – his thoughts turned to “Walking with

Wordsworth,” a summer study abroad class that since 2014 has offered students a wide-ranging exploration of Romantic Literature in the Lake District in northern England. Schmid developed a unique project designed to infuse the study of British Romanticism into the elementary school curriculum.

In the fall of 2018, Schmid collaborated with student fellows Matthew Foster from UTEP and Katelynn Hernandez from EPCC, who had participated in the previous summer’s “Walking with Wordsworth” study abroad course, to develop a project that could bridge the distance between English Romantic poet William Wordsworth’s home in Grasmere, Cumbria, U.K., and the present-day El Paso-Ciudad Juárez border region. These discussions led to the creation of “People, Place, Emotions & Connections,” an outreach project that immerses local elementary school children in the life and work of William Wordsworth. Schmid credits Katelynn and Matthew for this project’s community outreach focus. Eventually, two more student fellows – Sarah Lord and Mikhail Atayde – joined Schmid’s team.

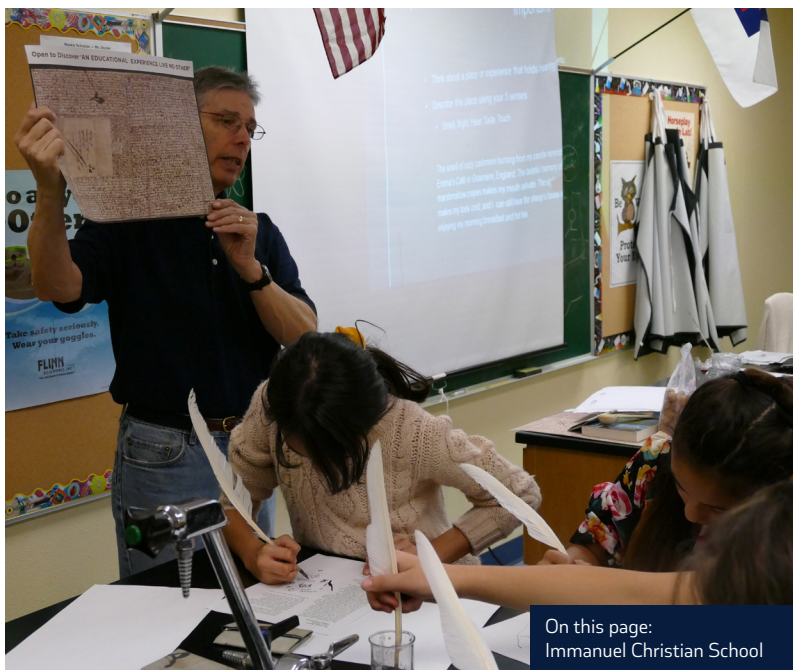
One overarching humanistic question shaped their plans: “How can the work of a poet born in 1770 in a remote mountainous region in the far north of England speak to the aspirations and inner lives of El Paso elementary school children today?”

This question has since led Schmid and his student fellows to conduct a series of workshops in fifth-grade classrooms at Barron Elementary School in Northeast El Paso and Immanuel Christian School in East-Central El Paso. In both cases, they met enthusiastic young learners who exemplify Wordsworth’s Romantic vision of childhood, family and the power of relationship.

Schmid explains that “the main purpose of this is to think about historical time and poetry” by asking students to engage with Wordsworth’s writings about childhood “as a springboard for writing their own poetry about nature and family ... We want to emphasize the idea of human sympathy and sympathetic connections among people, including between El Paso and Grasmere, which has become a rich way to think about it.”

The fifth graders of Barron Elementary and Immanuel Christian School have responded to this invitation for self-expression with zeal, as seen in the following excerpt from a poem by a Barron Elementary student: “I am a living piece of my culture / independent and wonderful / loud and proud ...”

Drawing inspiration from the innovative poetry outreach



On this page:
Immanuel Christian School



efforts of Lilian Simmonds – a member of LitHouses, a group that celebrates the great homes and museums of British literature – Schmid and his team of student fellows set about designing a series of hands-on workshops that bring William Wordsworth’s poetry to life inside local elementary school classrooms.

Thanks to Schmid’s established partnership with Jeff Cowton, curator of The Wordsworth Trust in Grasmere, students had a unique opportunity to interact with facsimiles of Romantic Period letters through forensic exercises that uncovered significant details such as the relationship between Mary Wordsworth’s meticulous use of space in an 1810 love letter and the economics and folding practices of 18th- and 19th-century correspondence.

Schmid praises the fifth-grade students for their ability to read and understand “late 18th- and early 19th-century script.” That skill helped the students to make connections between the 1798 Goslar Letter from Dorothy and William Wordsworth to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and vivid scenes of boat stealing and ice skating in Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*.

The fifth-grade students’ enthusiastic detective work is complemented by tangible opportunities for self-expression, as they created homemade ink using Dorothy Wordsworth’s recipe, wrote poetry with quill pens, practiced 19th-century letter folding, and even melted wax seals onto their letters, which were then shared with Jeff Cowton at Dove Cottage, William Wordsworth’s home in Grasmere.

“I can’t tell you how much fun it’s been,” Schmid reflects, adding that many students now dream of a visit to Grasmere in search of the enduring magic of William Wordsworth. “It’s just been absolutely mind-blowing and really rewarding, fun and entertaining. The kids have been great.”

As the organizers digitally recorded the Barron students after a workshop, the young learners broke into a spontaneous chorus of “We Want Wordsworth!”

Schmid thanks the many individuals and organizations that helped to make this meaningful project possible: Dr. Brian Yothers, chair of English and principal investigator for The Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP; Vincent Martinez, project manager for The Humanities Collaborative; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Jeff Cowton and the staff of The Wordsworth Trust; student fellows Mikhail Atayde, Matthew Foster, Katelynn Hernandez and Sarah Lord; and the teachers and administration at Barron Elementary School and Immanuel Christian School.

NOTABLE ALUMNA:

Patty Tiscareño



“Any time you can inspire someone to reach their own potential, that’s your job. That’s what a leader does.”

Patricia “Patty” Tiscareño’s graduation from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2004 with a B.A. in English and American Literature marked a significant personal milestone in a life of extraordinary achievement and service. As executive director of the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation since its inception in 1996, Tiscareño oversees “\$13 million in foundation assets, creation of the foundation’s major programs and initiatives, and the grant making operations.” As a 2019 College of Liberal Arts Gold Nugget honoree, Tiscareño was recognized as an exceptional UTEP graduate whose contributions to her community “serve as an inspiration for future generations of Miners.” For Tiscareño, these accomplishments are inextricably tied to her humanities education in UTEP’s Department of English.

Tiscareño explains that her UTEP journey started straight out of high school and continued in support of a 15-year banking career that culminated in a position as vice president of investments with State National Bank. After moving into the nonprofit world where directors often wear many hats and operate on shoestring budgets with small staffs, Tiscareño valued the opportunity to return to UTEP. Earning a degree in English held a special appeal for Tiscareño, who recalls thinking, “I’m reading all the time anyway; I might as well get credit for it.”

What followed were 33 credit hours of almost exclusively English classes, a time that Tiscareño remembers fondly: “I had the opportunity to become immersed the last three or four semesters before my graduation in English classes ... that augmented what I do here in many ways.” Tiscareño says, “All the tools I received from UTEP I’ve used in one capacity or another ... if you can speak, read and write well, it opens every door.”

Tiscareño now relishes the chance to share her experiences as a Professional-in-Residence with The Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP, including a presentation at UTEP in April 2019 titled “Humanities in the Real World: Unexpected Journeys.” She says, “I was so proud to do that. It’s imperative to attract community college students and tell them the value of

a humanities degree in our culturally diverse, connected world. The Humanities Collaborative has been such a joy and pleasure.”

As “the study of the things that make us human,” the humanities resonate deeply with Tiscareño’s life-affirming work at the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation. Tiscareño emphasizes the value of thoughtful communication, listening and compassion in her work. She says, “most cancer patients that I’ve encountered want to talk about it ... every journey is as unique as the individual themselves.” Tiscareño cites “the compassion of the humanities” as a source of inspiration for her dedicated efforts to listen intently to others for “things that come through on a humane level.”

Her studies in the English department have also contributed to Tiscareño’s diverse skill set as a communicator when “speaking to groups, talking to donors,” writing in various forms, and even organizing conferences and recruiting speakers: “Those are gifts you get from having spent time in the humanities realm.” Tiscareño sees special versatility in humanities degrees, as employers “want someone who can think logically, creatively, and be welcoming.”

“There’s something about the English department that’s just special,” Tiscareño says: “The teachers have been there a long time; they’re dedicated.” Tiscareño has fond memories of her “very last class, an Edgar Allan Poe class with Dr. Brian Yothers. It was his first semester, so my last class was his first.” She remarks that her connection to Yothers has “come full circle” through her involvement with The Humanities Collaborative. Tiscareño makes special mention of Dr. Robert Bledsoe, professor emeritus, with whom she took three classes: “He inspired me to go back and read Dickens every year.” She also notes her friendship with Dr. Robert Esch, associate professor emeritus, a fellow parishioner with whom she shares a bond through the “nice little community” represented by the English department.

Reflecting on her vital work with the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation, Tiscareño highlights the progress being made: “Cancer is now categorized as a chronic disease, which simply means that it is not curable, but it is treatable

WE ARE THE COLORS of CANCER

Rainbow: Cervix
Gray: Brain, Lung
Dark Purple: Pancreatic, Leukemia/Leukemia
Dark Blue: Anal, Colon and Rectal
Emerald Green: Gall Bladder, Liver, Kidney
Teal: Ovarian, Cervical, Uterine
Pink: Breast
Light Green: Lymphoma
Light Blue: Prostate
Penicillin: Esophageal, Stomach
Gold: Childhood Cancer
Black: Melanoma
Burgundy: Multiple Myeloma
Lavender: All Cancers
Yellow: Bladder
Orange: Leukemia
Red & White: Head and Neck
Black & White: Cervical

RIO GRANDE
CANCER FOUNDATION

Reflecting on her vital work with the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation, Tiscareño highlights the progress being made: “Cancer is now categorized as a chronic disease, which simply means that it is not curable, but it is treatable and survivable.”
Photos courtesy of the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation.

and survivable, and in my tenure here I’ve seen people living longer with cancer than ever before.” She explains that “the whole focus of our message is that when you’ve had a diagnosis of any chronic disease, the opportunity to change your lifestyle is paramount ... it’s about moderation, and it’s about living every day fully and enjoying the simplicities of life.” Looking forward, Tiscareño is “so proud of how many young people, especially UTEP grads, are coming up through the next phase of leaders. It’s your turn to shine ... I like to talk to young leaders. Any time you can inspire someone to reach their own potential, that’s your job. That’s what a leader does.”

The 2019 *Moby-Dick* Read-a-Thon

Over three days in November 2019, a diverse group of UTEP and EPCC faculty and students gathered with community members to celebrate the power of the written word 200 years after Herman Melville's birth. The *Moby-Dick* Read-A-Thon, held from Nov. 14-16, featured more than 70 readers and 130-150 total participants, true to the event's promise of "Three Days! Many Readers! One ... White ... Whale!" The marathon's 25 hours of shared reading were spread across three venues: the UTEP Centennial Museum, the EPCC Rio Grande Little Temple, and a closing Saturday session that ended at 9:45 p.m. in Hudspeth Hall.

Sponsored by the Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the 2019 *Moby-Dick* Read-A-Thon drew inspiration from annual events at Connecticut's Mystic Seaport Museum and Massachusetts' New Bedford Whaling Museum. Dr. Brian Yothers, chair of English and principal investigator for The Humanities Collaborative, notes that such events are "done frequently enough in cities that have ports," and not so often "by cities in the middle of the desert." In the bicentennial of Melville's birth, Yothers saw an opportunity for the El Paso community to participate in the "rich history of people gathering around the written word, specifically with this

novel that's meant so much to so many people."

When considering why *Moby-Dick* continues to capture readers' imaginations, Yothers reflects on his own experiences: "my first encounter came when I was about 11 years old ... my dad was an English teacher, my mom was an elementary school teacher, both avid readers, so I wanted to read everything. I picked up *Moby-Dick*, and at that point I really didn't get into it." Following his first year of college, Yothers recalls, "it really came to mean a great deal to me because it came to reflect questions I was having about the nature and meaning of suffering, about matters of religious faith and doubt, about the tension between authority and rebellion; all those issues are dramatized so vividly in *Moby-Dick*." Yothers adds, "It's also one of the funniest books I've ever read ... it brings together the comic, the tragic and the epic in ways that a lot of people might not expect."

"It's a book that awakens a lot of echoes, particularly among people who value language," Yothers observes. The novel's widespread appeal and enduring significance were evident in the diversity of the read-a-thon's participants. Yothers says, "It was nice that we (brought) people together across disciplines, that we had people from political science, psychology, and sociology; (not) only English." From the event's youngest reader, 11-year-old Frances Gunn, to UTEP President Heather Wilson, the marathon showcased a variety of distinct voices



"*Moby-Dick* is a book that awakens a lot of echoes, particularly among people who value language."

Image designed by Jorge Baeza

celebrating “a shared enthusiasm for language, its sound and the particular blend of humor and pathos that you find in *Moby-Dick*.”

Patty Tiscareño, executive director of the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation and UTEP English alumna, relished the opportunity to lend her voice: “I felt privileged to step that far back into classic literature, and I was amazed at how many people were so interested in it. We live in a desert; the last thing I’m going to get on is a whaling ship, but the experience of doing that through reading, that’s what it’s all about.”

Among the cross-disciplinary group of readers were Dr. John Wiebe, provost; Dr. Denis O’Hearn, dean of Liberal Arts; Dr. Stephen Crites, dean of the Graduate School; Dr. Charles Boehmer, chair of political science; and Dr. William Durrer, a retired UTEP physics professor who read multiple chapters, staying for nearly the entire marathon. Jorge Baeza, program adviser and lecturer in the College of Business Administration, designed a striking promotional image featuring Captain Ahab and *Moby Dick*. Yothers says, “We were really grateful to him; it showed how this (event brought) people from a lot of different corners of UTEP together.”

EPCC and UTEP English faculty also participated enthusiastically. EPCC’s Margie Nelson Rodríguez and Brian Kirby, associate professors and co-principal investigators for The Humanities Collaborative, read and helped organize Friday’s session at the EPCC Rio Grande Little Temple. Joining Yothers in being present for the entire marathon were UTEP’s Dr. Maryse Jayasuriya, professor and associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts, and Dr. Tom Schmid, professor. Dr. Robert Gunn, associate professor, and Dr. Keith Polette, professor, contributed readings of several chapters. Among the many other readers were Dr. Mimi Gladstein, professor, and Dr. Deane Mansfield-Kelley, who retired a few years ago. Yothers credits Vincent Martinez, program manager for The Humanities Collaborative, for doing “an extraordinary amount of work and making all of this come together.”

Following this event’s success, Yothers notes that The Humanities Collaborative continues to “build outreach to the community and opportunities for students to get involved in research and programming ... to make sure people across campus and across town are being reminded of how important the humanities are in our lives.”



Photos courtesy of the English at UTEP Facebook page



“There is a rich history of people gathering around the written word, specifically with this novel that’s meant so much to so many people.”

Luis Felipe García González



Luis Felipe García González, a master’s research fellow for the Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP, is driven by the romantic notion of “being able to live off of what you love.” For García, that would mean “being able to teach people the way I’ve had the opportunity to be taught.” As he strives toward this goal, García has embraced opportunities to immerse himself in literature and language as a Humanities Collaborative fellow and as a member of the 2017 cohort of the HSI Pathways to the Professoriate program.

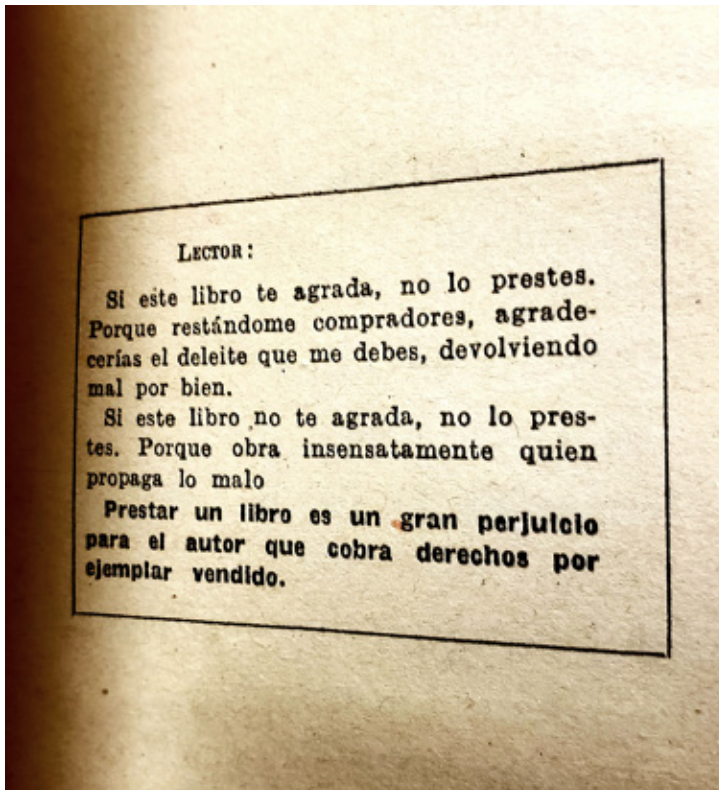
Reflecting on his experiences as an HSI Pathways fellow, García says the program exceeded his expectations through its wide range of resources, especially its emphasis on mentorship. García says, “I thought maybe they would just help with applications, but it was so much more than that.”

Through his time with the HSI Pathways program, García heard diverse perspectives from UTEP faculty about the presentation of conference papers, publishing and university visits. García recalls that UTEP professors generously shared their valuable insights into how they cultivated their research

interests, their experiences in Ph.D. programs, and their approaches to teaching during an intensive HSI Pathways summer program. “You absorb that energy,” García says.

The HSI Pathways program offered García a chance to be mentored by Dr. Brian Yothers, chair of UTEP’s Department of English. García relished the opportunity to learn from Yothers as they exchanged ideas across a broad spectrum of literary interests. García praises Yothers for helping him articulate ambitious long-term scholarly goals while identifying a six-month project to focus on first. García leans “towards the creative side of writing,” and he credits Yothers with helping him infuse his project with formal academic qualities while maintaining his distinct voice as a writer.

In January 2020, this mentorship experience contributed to García’s publication of “From Poe to Cortázar: Spheres of Influence and Circles” in *Pathways: A Journal of Humanistic and Social Inquiry*. García explains, “It talks about Edgar Allan Poe and his influence on 20th-century Latin American writers, specifically Julio Cortázar. I focus on a short story called ‘Axolotl.’” In this article, García makes thought-provoking connections between numerous works, including Poe’s



“The word value really made me uncomfortable ... How can I judge what is valuable in literature, especially here where the community (is so culturally diverse)?”

Eureka, as he builds “bridges from 19th-century North American literature to 20th-century Latin American literature.”

Reflecting on his experience as García’s HSI Pathways mentor, Yothers remarks that García completed a “fascinating and intellectually adventurous project.” Yothers says, “I enjoyed working with him ... he is able to follow his intellectual curiosity in different directions as an English major who is also widely read in Spanish-language literature. He brings together the literature of England and the United States with the literature of Spain and the Americas more broadly, which makes his work really exciting” in its incorporation of “different linguistic and literary traditions.”

García’s interest in Latin American literature and love of books found another meaningful outlet in the fall of 2019 through a Humanities Collaborative project that tasked him with examining the almost 1,500 volumes in the McNeely book collection at the UTEP Library’s Special Collections Department. García recalls, “I felt a great sense of comfort in not knowing 90% of the authors; there is still so much to learn.” Special Collections only had enough space to keep a small portion of these books, and García’s role was to catalogue them and identify books that hold special value.

García says, “The word value really made me uncomfortable ... How can I judge what is valuable in literature, especially here where the community (is so culturally diverse)?” As he confronted this question, García drew from his experiences in a theory course taught by Dr. Barbara Zimbalist, assistant professor of English, whom he credits with changing his perspective by inviting him to critically examine the Western literary canon: “She gave me the tools to develop my own aesthetic ... She let me know it’s okay not to like a particular piece of literature, but it’s important to have an informed opinion.”

What followed were four months of meticulous research in the Library’s fifth-floor cage, which contains a small aisle between bookshelves extending to the ceiling. As he immersed himself in the McNeely collection, García felt like he was discovering uncharted territory. He gained a newfound appreciation for the importance of preserving books in analog form: “I hadn’t realized how much literature is not on the internet because people didn’t pay attention to the authors.” García credits Claudia Rivers, head of the special collections department, and her assistant, Abbie Weiser, for being very invested in what they do and always being available to share expert advice.

As he pursues his dream of doing what he loves as a scholar and teacher of literature, García also wishes to acknowledge the mentorship and support of Zimbalist and Dr. Tom Schmid, professor of English.

NOTABLE ALUMNA:

Randi Bossie



The education and training that Randi Bossie received as a humanities student and lecturer at The University of Texas at El Paso have led to a job with a Fortune 500 company that allows her to impact her community.

Bossie, who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in English and American Literature at UTEP, joined El Paso-based Helen of Troy as an associate corporate trainer in January 2020. The company, which has offices around the world, develops and markets multifaceted consumer products such as DryBar, Vicks, Revlon, OXO, and Hydroflask. Bossie is part of the company's Global Training and Development team.

Most of Bossie's contributions so far have involved communication. She developed a writing course that draws on user-centered design and accessible document design, and she also has developed and delivered a webinar on virtual communication.

Among her team's exciting initiatives was an event for some students who attend Ysleta Middle School, which was organized by fellow UTEP English alumna Amanda Sanchez.

The program for these girls who are at risk included kindness and mindfulness activities, a tour of corporate headquarters, and lunch in the executive dining room. During the lunch, women who work at Helen of Troy spoke about their experiences growing up in the El Paso region and what they had to focus on to succeed.

"I think those of us in the humanities take our skills for granted," Bossie says. "My time as a literature student made me more analytical, more confident, and more compassionate."

She points to the importance of summary and synthesis in a job that "entails researching and adapting research into results ... I would struggle with that if I hadn't gone through a literature program that focuses so heavily on deep reading, research, and synthesis."

While at UTEP, Bossie earned an outstanding graduate student award from the English department in 2012, and made immense contributions to the First-Year Composition (FYC) Program during her more than six years as a lecturer. The department recognized her work with its 2019 Excellence in Teaching Award. She also worked at the University Writing Center. Bossie said these experiences prepared her to support

the learning needs of Helen of Troy associates.

The UTEP alumna reflects fondly on her time in the FYC program. She calls it a time of great personal growth. She met students from all backgrounds and disciplines, and she remarks that she got to work with exceptional people such as Paul LaPrade, a department lecturer who went from being a fellow student to a professional peer. She says he was one of her most important friends at UTEP because they supported one another.

"I learned a lot of 'soft skills' by being a writing tutor," she says. "I learned patience, effective communication and time management."

Bossie says she draws on various skills developed as an instructor and former editor of *The Folio*, an annual magazine for the Department of English, to be successful at Helen of Troy. For example, she uses Adobe InDesign and creates videos and infographics. She also stresses the importance of multimodal writing.

Reflecting on her time in UTEP's English department, Bossie praises various professors who had a special impact.

"Dr. (Shelley) Armitage gave me very detailed feedback, which helped me become a better writer. Dr. (Maryse) Jayasuriya gave similarly helpful feedback, and challenged me to consider perspectives outside of my own experience. Dr. (Marion) Rohrleitner's classes allowed for very unique creativity. Dr. (Brian) Yothers and Dr. (Robert) Gunn both taught some of the most challenging and thought-provoking courses I've taken. Dr. (Tom) Schmid approached every class with an extreme amount of passion that I wish I could replicate. I took a pedagogy class with Dr. (Beth) Brunk-Chavez that literally changed my goal in life. It made me realize that I truly enjoy working in learning and development."

Bossie says that one of the most important lessons she learned at UTEP was as an undergraduate in a class taught by Dr. Rohrleitner. The self-described "shy" student submitted a written assignment and the professor returned it during the next class with a note that encouraged her to participate in class.

"It was a really important moment in my academic career because I made the conscious choice to speak up the rest of the semester," Bossie says.

The UTEP alumna also praises Dr. Maggy Smith, a former chair of the English department, for her ability to inspire confidence.

"She is supportive and intelligent, and provided clear feedback," Bossie says. "Working with her made me realize how much feedback can be important to one's career."

Bossie adds that she appreciates the helpful advice and words of wisdom she received from department professors such as Dr. Ruben Espinosa, Dr. Gunn, and Dr. Isabel Baca that helped guide her through UTEP and continue to help her today.

"I love the UTEP English department so much," Bossie says.

"My time as a literature student made me more analytical, more confident and more compassionate."



Celebrating the Career of Dr. Tom Schmid



After 30 years of dedicated service to the Department of English and its students, Dr. Tom Schmid, professor of English, is embarking on a new journey in retirement. Schmid's vast contributions to the department include time as the director of literature, significant scholarly achievements with an emphasis on British Romanticism and a deep commitment to teaching across a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses.

Schmid received his Ph.D. from the University of Utah in 1990, joining the UTEP Department of English that year. Schmid says, "I've loved El Paso since I got here. One of the things that always struck me about El Paso is that sense of community, and this is a community that welcomed me."

In the classroom, Schmid had a memorable experience early on that set a positive tone: "In my very first semester at UTEP, I had one of the most extraordinary student interactions in class that defined El Paso for me." Schmid was teaching a poem by William Wordsworth called "The Thorn" – in which an unreliable narrator describes seeing a woman repeatedly go up a hill and wail "Oh misery! oh misery! / Oh

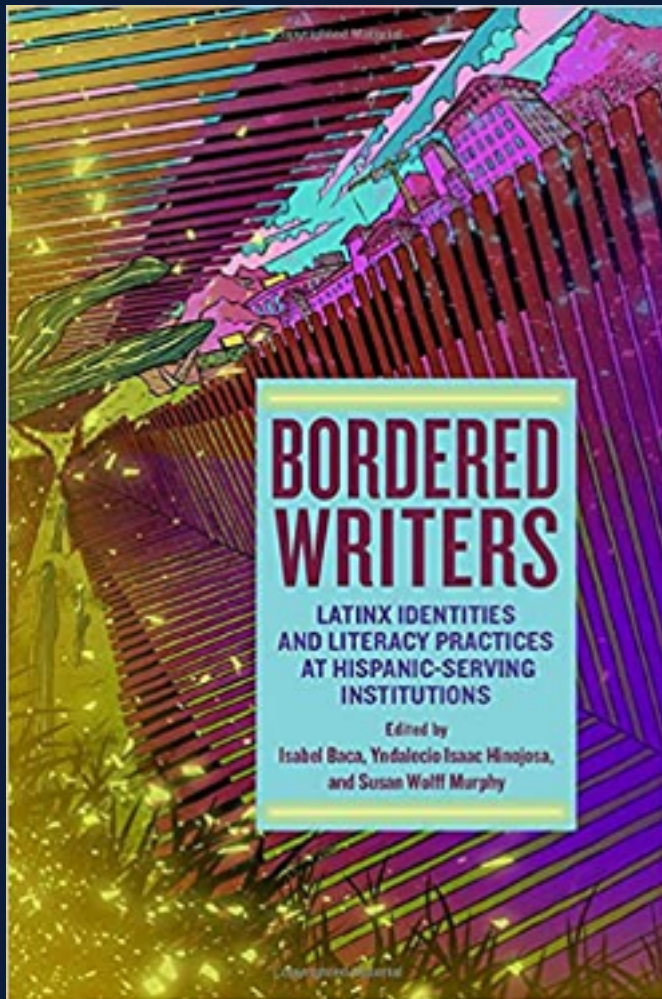
woe is me! oh misery!" – when a student raised her hand and asked, "Have you ever heard of La Llorona?" Schmid enjoyed learning about this figure in Mexican folklore, whose legend bears a resemblance to Wordsworth's poem. Schmid reflects, "I think Wordsworth would have very much appreciated that kind of recognition of cultural difference, of course, but also cultural continuity ... That was a wonderful takeaway for me."

Reflecting on his career at UTEP, Schmid emphasizes the terrific range of colleagues he has worked with. He says, "I've watched UTEP grow, and I think I was able to grow as a scholar here in many ways ... UTEP has always been a nice fit for me. I had a really blessed career here."

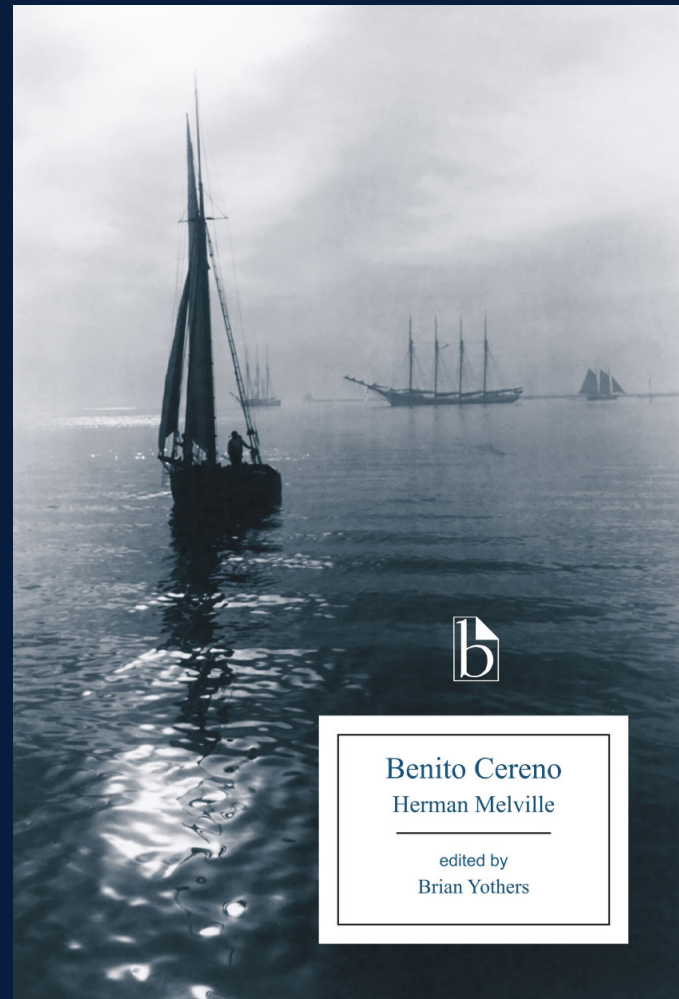
Schmid and his wife, Joanie Ericson, will move to Southbury, Connecticut, to be near family. Schmid describes that western part of the state as "lots of farms and rolling countryside and old colonial houses." As he looks forward to this new adventure, Schmid says, "I'm hoping to keep hiking, maybe still do a little bit of writing on Wordsworth, maybe write another novel ... We hope to come back to El Paso regularly. I've been here 30 years, and we've definitely set down roots here ... I'm going to miss UTEP and the people here and the students more than anybody knows."

Edited books from 2019-2020

Isabel Baca's edited
collection
Bordered Writers

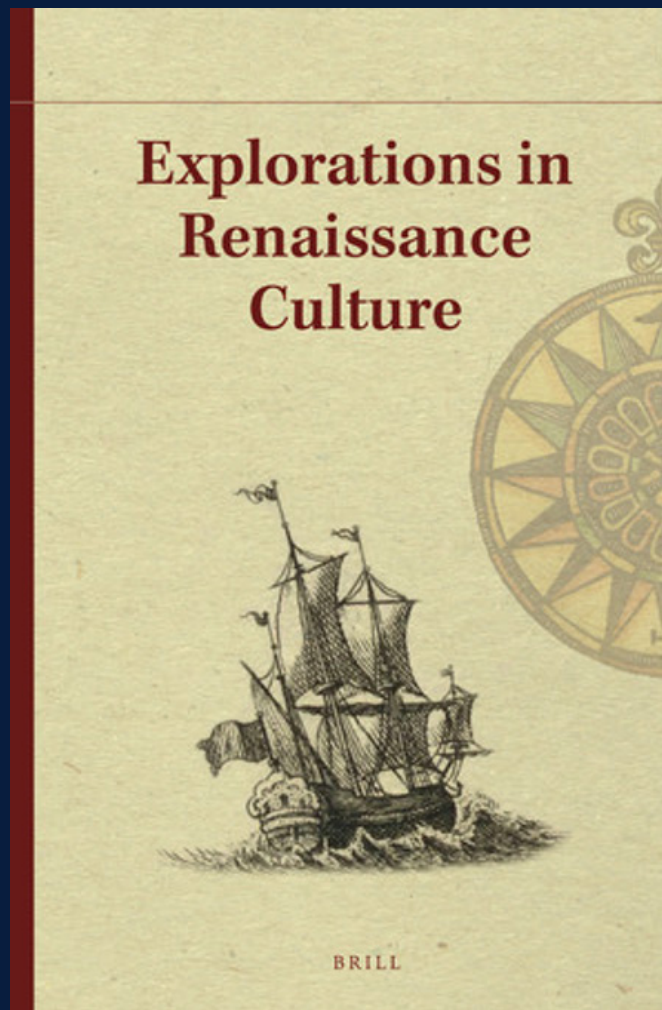


Brian Yothers's
scholarly edition of
Benito Cereno



Journals for which faculty in our department play major editorial roles:

Explorations in Renaissance Culture,
edited by Andrew Fleck



South Asian Review,
Associate Editor,
Maryse Jayasuriya

Leviathan:
A Journal of Melville Studies,
edited by Brian Yothers

South Asian

REVIEW



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

sala
www.southasianreview.com



LEVIATHAN

A JOURNAL OF MELVILLE STUDIES
Volume 22, Number 1 March 2020

MELVILLE AT 200

ARTICLES

Édouard Marsain on *The Eremenos* in *Billy Budd*
Matthew Knip on *Melville's Queer Hauntology*
Robert K. Wallace on *Art in the Melville Society Archive*

REVIEWS

Peter Riley on *Kevin Hayes's Critical Lives: Herman Melville*
Jeffrey Hole on *Brian R. Pollar's Moby-Dick and Melville's Anti-Slavery Allegory*
Jonathan A. Cook on *Yoshiaki Furui's Modernizing Solitude: The Networked Individual in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*

EXTRACTS: A SPECIAL SECTION

Melville's Origins

The Twelfth International Melville Conference
held in New York City
17–20 June 2019

Mary K. Bercow Edwards, *All Astir*

Keynote Addresses by Wyn Kelley and Rodrigo Lozo

Conference Reports by Ralph James Savarese, Jaime Compomar,
John Rocco, Pilar Martínez Benedí, and Shelley Piasecki

A Photo Gallery

2018 Bezanon Archive Fellowship Report by Elizabeth Heinz Swails



Department of English
The University of Texas at El Paso
Hudspeth Hall, Room 113
500 W. University Ave.
El Paso, Texas 79968



We would love to hear from our alumni and friends. Feel free to drop by any upcoming events, or interact with us on social media. Please ensure that our faculty and students continue having opportunities to showcase their extraordinary teaching and scholarship. For information on how you can support the Department of English, visit our website or contact

Ana Diaz

Administrative Services Coordinator
Department of English
Hudspeth Hall, Room 113
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas 79968-0526

The Folio is published by The University of Texas at El Paso's Department of English. Special thanks to the Dorrance D. Roderick Foundation for partially funding this publication. All comments, suggestions, and contributions should be addressed to the Department of English—Folio.