

“Black Print Unbound” wins national award

Eric Gardner, professor of English, won his second Book Prize from the Research Society of American Periodicals. The prize awards the best scholarly book on American periodicals published in 2015 and 2016.

Gardner received the honor for his community-minded scholarly work “Black Print Unbound: The Christian Recorder, African American Literature, and Periodical Culture.” “Black Print Unbound” chronicles the development

of the African Methodist Episcopal Church’s newspaper, “The Christian Recorder,” during and just after the Civil War. The book was one of the first full-length studies of an early black newspaper. As an exploration



Eric Gardner

Brother’s disease leads to student’s research project

SVSU exercise science major Geena Militello gained a unique perspective on life by growing up with a brother living with muscular dystrophy, a group of diseases that cause progressive weakness and loss of muscle mass.

The Essexville native’s experience with her sibling inspired her academic passion: researching health and the human body.

Using a \$5,000 grant awarded to her from SVSU’s Undergraduate Research Program (UGRP), Militello purchased 10 Hexoskins, which are shirts able to record the wearer’s physiological data such as heart rate, lung expansion and G-force exerted on the body. Now she plans to use the technology to measure the physiological responses of student-athletes on the SVSU women’s volleyball team during off-season workouts.

Militello was one of more than 100 students whose UGRP-supported research

was featured during the University-Wide SVSU Student Showcase Friday, April 21.

The students are advised in their research by faculty mentors. Working alongside Adam Coughlin, associate professor of kinesiology, Militello’s goal involves recording trends showing the different physiological responses experienced by the volleyball players during practices. She plans to compare and contrast the data from each athlete at different points in time.

Militello plans to present some of her findings at an American College of Sports Medicine conference in the fall. With plans to one day working in a hospital alongside patients with skeletal-muscular disease, Militello hopes to gain insight into the health field through this hands-on research opportunity.

For more information regarding the UGRP projects, please visit svsu.edu/ugrp.

of a periodical created by African Americans for African Americans, Gardner’s book details the newspaper’s history, composition, publication, distribution, reception and place in American literary history. Gardner drafted the book with the support of a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship.

A panel of three scholars chosen by the Research Society judged the books eligible for the prize. The prize committee said “Black Print Unbound” offers “magisterial vision and imaginative force that will set new standards for periodical scholarship.”

Gardner received the same award in 2010 for “Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth Century African American Literature.” He will formally receive this year’s award at a ceremony at the American Literature Association’s annual conference in May in Boston.



A \$5,000 UGRP grant enabled Geena Militello to purchase “Hexoskins” for measuring physiological responses of athletes during workouts.

Carolyn Wierda

Executive Director of STEM • March Staff Member of the Month

Before volunteers signed up for the FIRST Robotics statewide competition at SVSU, Carolyn Wierda had a decision to make: How many T-shirts to order for those anticipated helpers.

Wierda ordered 400, thinking there was a good chance she would have a surplus of 100 after the event. Instead, she came up 25 shirts shy.

“We were hoping for 300 volunteers,” said Wierda, who served as the volunteer coordinator for the FIRST Robotics event. “So having 425 people offer their help was a remarkable statement made by our students, staff and faculty.”

What added to the remarkable nature of FIRST Robotics was the short amount of time Wierda was afforded to organize a large-scale volunteer effort for an event that was expected to — and did — bring more than 7,000 visitors from across the state to the Ryder Center. “I’m not sure we’ve ever had a volunteer effort of that magnitude,” she said. “It was a challenge, and people stepped up.”

The outpouring of support was a testament to one of SVSU’s defining characteristics: its hospitality. “The people who visited were able to see how beautiful our campus is, how modern our facilities are, and how welcoming we are,” Wierda said. “This event brought together people to an event that really emphasized what we have to offer.”

Outside of those personable offerings, FIRST Robotics

also helped highlight another SVSU strength Wierda understands well: its STEM programs. High school students and parents were exposed to the university’s faculty and students, along with the many STEM-based programs at SVSU.

Wierda has served as executive director of STEM since January 2015. Since then, she has worked to build upon — and market — the STEM programs already available at the university. Those initiatives extend beyond courses and classrooms for undergraduates, and include initiatives geared toward improving K-12 student interest in the sciences.

Wierda was quick to share credit for the development of SVSU’s STEM opportunities with campus leaders, faculty, staff, students and regional partners. “There are so many people here and in our community who are doing tremendous things for STEM,” she said. “With the relationships SVSU has with local businesses and the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance, there are many more opportunities that could come our way. There are a lot of people who are helping to make this happen.”

Wierda also serves on Gov. Rick Snyder’s STEM Advisory Council.

“That has brought a number of opportunities for our university,” she said. “We’re really doing everything we can to improve STEM education in the state of Michigan.”



Sue Brasseur

Director of the Conference Center at SVSU • April Staff Member of the Month

Sue Brasseur did not have the luxury of Tinkerbell pixie dust when helping organize the FIRST Robotics statewide competition in April, but that didn't stop her from helping a show earn magical reviews.

At least one of the 7,000-plus visitors during the four-day Robotics event compared SVSU's hospitality to a "Disney-like" experience. Plenty more compliments poured in to the campus following the contest, but the Disney analogy was the most touching and flattering compliment for Brasseur, who has strived for such excellence since attending a Disney workshop on hospitality.

"I wanted to make sure FIRST Robotics was the best experience for these first-time guests, and that the university would shine," she said. "To bring all these people onto campus and have it fail ... that was not something I was going to settle for. To have a 'Disney-like' experience means you are going above and beyond the expectations of someone. They were expecting 'A,' you gave them 'A,' and then you also gave them 'B, C and D' and so on."

The accomplishment was especially satisfying considering the degree of difficulty involved. Hosting an event the size of FIRST Robotics ideally involves two years of preparation time and planning, she said. SVSU had 17 weeks to gear up for the gathering after organizers committed to the venue. The difficulty of that quick turnaround was compounded by the fact that FIRST

Robotics represented what Brasseur considered the most complex event planning operation in university history.

"Bigger than the Lions," said Brasseur, referring to the Detroit NFL franchise that hosted its training camps at SVSU's campus in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Along with other FIRST Robotics' organizers, Brasseur helped coordinate accommodations for 160 high school teams that competed and appearances by high-profile guests such as Gov. Rick Snyder and U.S. Senator Gary Peters.

Tackling all those elements involved many people working massive amounts of hours during the days and weeks leading up to the event. During the four days of set-up and four days of the event, Brasseur logged 125 hours of work. There are 192 hours in an 8-day span.

"It was a lot of work, but you just do what you've got to do," she said. Brasseur said the effort involved coordination between several branches of the university. "Things like this can't happen without a team environment," she said. "My team at The Conference Center at SVSU is exceptional. All the departments and offices that helped make this happen were exceptional."

And they might need to pull it off again, albeit next time with much more advance notice. Brasseur said the university is already in discussions with FIRST Robotics to return next year.



Professional Profile

- **Geoffrey V. Carter**, assistant professor of English, was part of a 10-year retrospective of collaborative video scholarship titled "Cultivating Cinematically, Composing Collectively" at the 2017 Conference on College Composition and Communication in Portland, Oregon. The significance of these efforts were reviewed in Alexandra Hidalgo's (MSU) recent video book, "Cámara Retórica: A Feminist Filmmaking Methodology for Rhetoric and Composition."
- **Diane Deacon**, ESL specialist; **Amy Cook**, assistant director of the English Language Program; and **Kate Scott**, director of the English Language Program, co-presented "Taking the Pain Out of Assessment: Specifications Grading" at the annual TESOL convention, March 23 in Seattle. In addition, Scott co-presented "Breaking the Unwanted Stepchild Curse: Elevating the Image of ESL" on March 22 at the same convention.
- **Jesse Donahue**, professor of political science, presented "Back to the Future: The New Politics of Elite Access to Exotic Captive Animals" at the McMaster University Zoo Workshop, Dec. 2-3 in Hamilton, Canada. Also, Donahue's forthcoming book, *Increasingly Legal Rights for Zoo Animals: Justice on the Ark*, will be published by Rowman and Littlefield in June. Donahue also gave an invited public lecture titled "Increasing Legal Rights for Zoo Animals: Justice on the Ark" at the Unitarian Universalist Church, March 12 in Midland. She had a chapter titled "Back to the Future: The New Politics of Elite Access to Animals" accepted for publication in *Zoos and the Humanities*, forthcoming from Toronto University Press, 2018.
- **Veronika Drake** and **Natalia Knoblock**, assistant professors of English, coordinated the very first session of the Linguistics Section at the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters' annual conference. The Linguistics Section attracted close to 20 presentations by undergraduate students as well as faculty from seven Michigan universities. Several SVSU faculty members and students gave presentations.
- **Susan L. Hillman**, professor of teacher education, presented a Research Report titled "Characterizing MTE Feedback: Learning from an Instantiation of Practice" at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Research Conference, April 3-5 in San Antonio.
- **Sara Beth Keough**, associate professor of geography, and **Scott M. Youngstedt**, professor of anthropology, in April presented "The Story of Water Vending in Niamey, Niger" at the American International School of Niamey. Also, Keough and Youngstedt presented "Étude sur la vente de l'eau à Niamey," at the Centre Culturel Américain in Niamey, Niger, April 2017. The presentation was attended by two of Niamey's five mayors and several professors of Université Abdou Moumouni, and was covered by six local television stations.
- **Holly Little** and **Katherine A. Cottrell-Donahue**, lecturers of biology, will collaborate with **Gary Lange**, professor of biology, on the project selected for a 2017-18 Dow Professor Award.
- **Peggy Mead-Finizio**, assistant professor of theatre, attended the annual Region 3 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Jan. 10-14 in Indianapolis. She was the written responder for five Allied student Design projects, presented two workshop sessions titled "Collaboration is the Name of the Game" and helped facilitate the "Tech Olympics." She mentored SVSU student designers and stage managers who also presented at the conference. Also, Mead-Finizio served as designer and presented a workshop for Con Moto, an interdisciplinary creative team, March 15, hosted by the Department of Theatre. More information about Con Moto can be found at conmotoartists.com.

Mead-Finizio attended the annual United State Institute for Theatre Technology conference, March 6-11 in St. Louis, Missouri.

- **Andy Pandian**, assistant professor of mechanical engineering and ETM director, attended a one-day workshop on Foundations of 3D Printing Workshop & Technology Demo, March 6 in Lawrence, Georgia. Pandian obtained a certificate of completion and earned a certificate of proficiency in the field.
- **Thomas Renna**, professor emeritus of history, presented: "Holy Roman Empire and the German Nation, c. 1500" at the Michigan Academy, March 10 in Kalamazoo; "National Identity in America and Germany, 1870-1914" at the Missouri Historical Association, March 23 in Springfield; and "Translation as a Weapon in German Humanism" at the Renaissance Society of America, March 31 in Chicago.
- **Ruth Sawyers**, assistant professor of English, served on the Teaching Academic Survival and Success (TASS) proposal review committee for the March 2017 conference in Ft. Lauderdale.
- **David Schneider**, professor of communication, conducted a flash session on "Bridging the Relationship Between Academic Preparedness, Institutional Attachment, and College Student Success" at the Higher Education Conference of the National Education Association, March 17 in Dallas.
- **James Sullivan**, professor of English, presented "The shifting ecology of Padraic Colum's first theatrical production for children," as a panelist at the 2017 conference of the Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature Friday, April 28 at Dublin City University in Ireland.

New Cardinals

- **Jeremy and Michelle Knous** announced the birth of a son, Drake Z. Knous (8 lbs., 1.6 oz., 20 in.), April 13. Jeremy Knous is an associate professor of kinesiology and Michelle Knous is a clinical coordinator.
- **Kadie Schultz**, fieldwork coordinator/simulation laboratory associate, announced the birth of a son, Austin Thomas Schultz (6 lbs., 7 oz., 19.5 in.), March 30.

Briefly Speaking

- Faculty and staff may present the diploma jacket to graduating members of their immediate family during the Commencement ceremonies at 7:30 p.m., Friday, May 5, and/or at 11 a.m., Saturday, May 6. Please call Jim Dwyer at ext. 4209 to make arrangements.
- Spring/Summer 2017 Zahn Library hours and closing exceptions can be found at svsu.edu/library (click the red "Library Hours" button). No changes to the schedule are anticipated due to the ongoing renovation project. For more information, contact Access Services staff at ext. 4240.

The Interior is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU. University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

J.J. Boehm
Director of Media &
Community Relations
jjboehm@svsu.edu • 964-4055

Tim Inman
Director of Marketing Support
tmi@svsu.edu • 964-4086

Submission Deadline:
Noon on Wednesday before the publication date
Please email submissions to: jjboehm@svsu.edu