

SVSU honors late educator Bobby Ann Robinson

With her commitment to community service and willingness to help others, the late Bobby Ann Robinson made a lasting positive impression on SVSU colleagues who worked alongside her.

Her family and SVSU honored that legacy Monday, Sept. 17 by naming a space on campus for the Saginaw native and one-time SVSU

educator with the dedication of The Dr. Bobby Ann Robinson Presentation Hall, located in SVSU's Groening Commons.

"She would never refuse a call to serve," said President Donald Bachand. "She had a passion for her students and her university."

Robinson, an adjunct faculty member in SVSU's Department of English from

1998-2010, was remembered fondly by friends and family during a dedication ceremony. The naming recognition was part of a gift commitment from her sister, Ruby Robinson, an SVSU alumna.

"SVSU is like a family to us," Robinson said. "I wanted to honor Bobby's memory here."

The gift from Ruby Robinson will support the SVSU First For Business campaign, which was recently initiated to support construction of a 38,500-square-foot expansion to house the university's

Scott L. Carmona College of Business & Management.

"We are grateful to Ruby for her generous support of SVSU and deeply appreciate that she has chosen SVSU to honor her sister's legacy" said Andrew J. Bethune, executive director of the SVSU Foundation.

Bobby Ann Robinson also worked for the former Buena Vista School District in Saginaw County as a teacher and administrator. She served as executive director of the Saginaw-Bay Substance Abuse Services Commission. Robinson also was a member of the NAACP as well as Zonta International, a global organization empowering women through service and advocacy.

Robinson died in 2015 at the age of 75.



Ruby Robinson, an SVSU alumna and the sister of the late Bobby Ann Robinson, smiles as she speaks with President Donald Bachand following the dedication ceremony for the Dr. Bobby Ann Robinson Presentation Hall at SVSU Monday, Sept. 17. The late Bobby Ann Robinson taught English at SVSU from 1998-2010. Ruby Robinson also gave remarks during the dedication ceremony [right photo]. Photos by Michael Randolph.

SVSU freshman class rises by 28 percent; student retention rate improves

SVSU saw a dramatic increase in the size of its freshman class for the 2018-19 academic year, as the number of first-time students rose by 28 percent over the previous year.

SVSU enrolled 1,576 freshmen for the 2018 fall semester, compared to 1,229 last year. The current cohort is SVSU's largest entering class since 2013.

SVSU-sponsored scholarships and financial aid also played a role in attracting new students, as 88 percent of the freshman class received financial assistance other than loans.

The academic preparedness of the 2018

freshman class mirrors last year's class with an average high school GPA of 3.4.

SVSU also has seen a sharp rise in its student retention rate, which has improved to 77.4 percent, up from 74.4 percent last year.

"We are making great strides in student retention, as we continue to offer outstanding opportunities focused on student success."

— DEBORAH R. HUNTLEY
PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

8,662 in 2017. SVSU has seen large graduating classes in recent years, which is a main reason for the decline.

The rate has risen for five consecutive years, up from 70 percent in 2014.

Overall enrollment at SVSU dipped slightly with 8,535 students taking classes for the current term, compared to

2018 RUSH LECTURE



Joni Boye-Beaman
Professor of Sociology

"Experiential Learning: Building Community & Competence through Civic Engagement"

Thursday, Oct. 4
4 p.m.

Founders Hall

For more information, visit svsu.edu/publiclectures

John Flores

Assistant Director, Academic Advisement Center • July Staff Member of the Month

When John Flores gazes out of his first floor Wickes Hall office window, he can see the way his world has changed at SVSU — and he can see the way it's stayed very much the same.

His view of the west end of the courtyard often reveals the enthusiasm and energy of the university's student life as well as some of its most scenic outdoors features. On a sunny day in 2018, the view arguably is SVSU at its most picturesque. But when Flores first arrived at SVSU as an undergraduate in the early 1980s — long before he inhabited his office — that corner of campus was a parking lot for a university in its teens with a student population about half the size of today's enrollment.

"It was a lot different back then," said Flores, now an assistant director of the Academic Advisement Center, "but I've always believed in this place. That has never changed. That's why I've never left."

Flores earned his bachelor's degree in accounting in 1990. He was in the midst of studying for his CPA exam when he was offered a grant-funded, part-time position working with Delta College students transferring to SVSU.

"For the first years of my existence as an employee here, we weren't sure how long the position was going to last because we weren't sure if we were going to get the grant funding, year-by-year," he said.

In the meantime, Flores became more involved on campus by joining the Hispanic Student Association as a co-adviser. Eventually, he enjoyed more secure employment when he accepted a full-time permanent staff position in the Minority Student Services office. He joined the Academic Advisement Center in 2002.

In all those roles, Flores helped guide the lives of students on a 1-on-1 basis. He still relishes the opportunity for that type of interaction.

His family shares in that school pride. His son, Anthony, is an alumnus. His other children, Lena and Vincent, are students now.

SVSU's growth since Flores' undergraduate days strengthened his allegiance to the university and the students who define it.

"It's really turned into a lively campus over the years," said Flores, who also earned a master's degree in educational leadership in 1997.

"The different cultures, the different interests and different personalities — it's easy to feel energized by all of that. They make this job easy and enjoyable."

While the view through his office window becomes less active during the summer months, Flores said his anticipation of the next generation of students arriving in the fall keeps him excited about the work ahead — and the continued evolution of the university.



Amy Koch

Communication & Enrollment Specialist • August Staff Member of the Month

Amy Koch's hard work at SVSU is paying off for future generations — including for her own kin.

The communication & enrollment specialist spent the last academic calendar coordinating the overhaul of SVSU's student application system. It was a huge project that required collaborating with multiple departments and offices across campus. Koch stayed late on many occasions.

Since the university made the system available for student use in early August, she has received positive reviews. And one of those reviews comes from inside her home.

"My son approves," she said of Joshua Koch, who now is a senior at Bay City Western High School and has plans to attend SVSU next fall. "He's been my guinea pig."

Koch and her peers at SVSU began building the new application software — called Radius — into SVSU's system in September 2017. The following 11 months were spent building the new platform from the ground up and preparing the campus for the program's launch with students this summer.

"I became much more familiar with people in a lot of offices," Amy Koch said of the process.

The Radius program is better equipped for the modern student, she said. The new system allows students more access to the application process, including on their smart phones and tablets.

"We wanted to meet them where they're at," she said.

"This software allows the student to more actively monitor the application process. We can send them communications much faster now than we could before."

Koch said installing the program was hard work, yet made easier by a collaborative spirit across campus.

"People genuinely care about each other here, and that makes it a wonderful environment to work in," she said. "SVSU is like a family."

In some ways, she means that literally. Her father, Joel Gougeon, worked as a community liaison at SVSU.

"I grew up with SVSU everywhere," she said. "It was already a familiar place when I started working here."

Koch joined SVSU in November 2015 after spending time working for The Dow Chemical Company and Delta College. She started as an administrative secretary for Admissions before moving to her current role in December 2016.

"This new job raised what I was doing to another level," she said.

"It allows me to engage more with the campus community and be more involved in the decision-making for the application process. This is a perfect fit for me because I like to be able to dig in, solve problems and help people in that process."



SVSU prides itself on its commitment to offer a diverse, inclusive environment. The university has been recognized for that effort recently by *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. The magazine announced SVSU was a recipient of the **2018 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award**.

Lenore Pearlstein, the magazine's publisher, said the award was the result of SVSU "showing an exceptional commitment to recruiting and retaining students and employees through their unique programming and initiatives."

Examples of these initiatives include SVSU's sponsorship of the annual Great Lakes Bay Region's MLK Celebration; the creation of The Pride Center at SVSU; and the establishment of the Great Lakes Bay Regional Youth Leadership Institute.

This marks the second time SVSU has earned the HEED Award in the last three years.



Professional Profile

- **LaCreta Clark**, professor of educational leadership & services, has been selected by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation to serve as an annual report reviewer. Her appointment extends through April 1, 2021.
- **Julie Foss**, associate professor of modern foreign languages, presented the workshop "Differentiated instruction in the language classroom" June 27 at Michigan State University's Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR). CLEAR is a national Title VI-funded Language Resource Center.
- **Eric Gardner**, professor of English, has an essay titled "African American Literary Reconstructions and the 'Propaganda of History'" in the Fall 2018 issue of *American Literary History* (30.3: 429-449).
- **Susan L. Hillman**, professor of teacher education, recently co-presented two papers with different co-authors at two different conferences, including: "Building questioning as a relational practice through self-study," presented at the 12th International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP), Herstmonceaux Castle, Hailsham, UK, July 15-19; and "Understanding quality education better through school self-review," presented at the 2018 World Congress of the World Education Research Association, Cape Town, South Africa, Aug. 3-5.
- **Poonam Kumar**, director of the Center for Academic Innovation & Online Learning, in July presented "Big Data in Higher Education: Opportunities and Pitfalls" as part of a panel at the Global Information Technology Management Association Conference in Mexico.
- **David Littell**, adjunct instructor of art, has had a piece accepted into the Michigan Watercolor Society's 71st Annual Juried Show, which premiered at the Saginaw Art Museum over the summer. The watercolor, "Blumen II," received a Travel Award selection and will continue with the Traveling Exhibition to the Studio 1219 Gallery in Port Huron, Gallery 194 in Lapeer and the Greater Flint Arts Council in Flint.

- **David Nichols**, associate professor of philosophy, presented two papers — "Transcendence and the Ineffable in Scorsese's Silence" and "The Last Portrait: Jaspers, Heidegger, and the Death Mask" — at the 24th World Congress in Philosophy, Aug. 13-20 in Beijing.
- **Khandaker Abir Rahman**, associate professor of computer science, published an article titled "On enhancing serial fusion based multi-biometric verification system" in *The International Journal of Research on Intelligent Systems for Real Life Complex Problems*, Springer, volume 48, number 7, July 2018 issue.
- **Bill Stec**, interim director of Career Services, is serving a one-year term as past-president on the board for the Michigan Career Educator and Employer Alliance, an organization of more than 400 human resources and career services professionals.
- **Stephen Taber**, professor of biology, has a manuscript titled "A New Nearctic Species of Docosia Winnertz Fungus Gnat (Diptera: Mycetophilidae) from Michigan" accepted for publication in *Southwestern Entomologist*.

New Cardinals

- **Matt Meissner**, police officer, announced the birth of a son, Logan Meissner, Aug. 27.

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.

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