

## Dept. of English Newsletter



*Student Indigo Brodie*



*Dr. Danila Sokolov*



*Dr. Tasha Hubbard*



*Dr. Sheri Benning*

*Our Department's vision is to be a place where many peoples come together to engage in mutually respectful relations and dialogues. We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty Six territory and traditional Metis homeland, and we acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples whose footsteps have marked this territory for centuries.*

## Notes from the Outreach & Engagement Committee

It has been a busy and fulfilling fall semester in the department and we are excited to share some recent successes and other good news with you. We were also delighted to welcome Dr. Sheri Benning and Dr. Danila Sokolov. We look forward to a wonderful winter semester in 2018.

Best wishes for the new semester!

Joanne Leow



Faculty and students making the most of the brilliant fall weather with some of their favourite books.

## The Department welcomes two new faculty members: Dr. Sheri Benning and Dr. Danila Sokolov

We were delighted to welcome Dr. Sheri Benning to the MFA in Writing this fall. Her third collection of poetry, *The Season's Vagrant Light: New and Selected Poems*, was recently published in the UK by Carcanet Press. She completed a PhD at the University of Glasgow and was most recently the Faculty of Arts Postdoctoral fellow at the University of Regina.

Dr. Benning had this to say about her first semester here: "I've more than appreciated the collegiality of the department and the warm support I've received from everyone. The creative writing program is wonderfully unique -- from lyric poetry in Newfoundland dialect to genre-bending horror set in rural Saskatchewan, the students continue to surprise and excite me. I have no doubt

that post-MFA they'll join the voices of new Canadian authors. One highlight for me this semester involves a conference I co-organized at First Nations University, *Land and the Imagination*, which brought together leading Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers and visual artists whose work is focused by rural landscapes."

The department was also thrilled to have Dr. Danila Sokolov join us. He works on early modern English literature, with particular interests in the lyric poetry of the period. His first book *Renaissance Texts, Medieval Subjectivities: Rethinking Petrarchan Desire from Wyatt to Shakespeare* (Duke University Press, 2017) explores the imaginative continuities between late medieval poetry and Renaissance Petrarchism. His current

book project, tentatively entitled *Uncourting Love: Eros and Law in English Poetry from Chaucer to Donne*.

Dr. Sokolov on his fall semester: "It has been a really interesting term, both challenging and rewarding. I particularly enjoyed working with students in my Shakespeare class. Many were very engaged and produced excellent work. I am thrilled to have had a chance to read several truly brilliant essays. Overall, USask students are not different from students on other Canadian campuses: you get the usual mix of hard-working and lazy, scared and saucy, focused and distracted, nerdy and cool. But that's what makes it fun, isn't it?"



## Dr. Lisa Vargo receives Distinguished Scholar Award

Congratulations to English faculty member Dr. Lisa Vargo, who was awarded the prestigious 2018 Distinguished Scholar Award by the Keats-Shelley Association of America at this January's Modern Language Association's conference. The award recognizes career-long excellence in scholarship devoted to the writers of the period and the culture in which they lived. The Keats-Shelley Association of America has since 1981 conferred a Distinguished Scholar Award on not more than two awardees per year. The Awards were presented at K-SAA's annual dinner at the Modern Language Association's conference.

Dr. Nora Cook's encomium for Dr. Vargo praises her openness to new worlds and her "leadership

combined with modesty, awesome energy, and above all, a down-to-earth egalitarianism, recognizing and nurturing excellence in all corners of the world." Her scholarly work was honoured as well by Dr. Cook, who praised it for its "originality, a readiness to follow unexpected paths and explore overlooked figures." Dr. Vargo's explorations were noted for their "sound and extensive research, and intellectual honesty."

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Vargo thanked her mentors, including Dr. Anthony Harding, professor emeritus from our department. Reflecting on the study of Romanticism, she added, "I feel a sense of wrong when scholars outside of our field blame romanticism for follies about literature or about life. As we well know this is a lazy misreading far too dependent upon those later generations who felt it necessary to define themselves against writers like Keats and Shelley. We know otherwise and know how crucial their thought is to our present age....It is hard to select a favourite line from Percy's poetry—'Familiar acts made beautiful through love' is balanced in my mind with 'To-day is for itself enough.' With respect to Mary Shelley the choice is more clear. Fanny Derham's speech near the end of *Lodore*, 'Words have more power than anyone can guess; it is by words that the world's great fight, now in these civilized times, is carried on' is as good an example of the importance of romanticism and our work that I can think of."

## Dr. Allison Muri and Dr. Joanne Leow receive SSHRC grants



Congratulations to English department members Allison Muri and Joanne Leow, who were awarded SSHRC grants for 2017. Joanne won an Insight Development Grant for her project "Water, Sand, Steel, and Glass: Urban Ecologies and Literary Speculations" while Allison was awarded an Insight Grant for her project "Topographies of Literature in 18th-century London, A Social Edition. More information about these awards can be found

at <http://artsandscience.usask.ca/english/research/awards.php>

## Dr. Yin Liu wins College of Arts and Science Teaching Excellence Award



Congratulations to Yin Liu, this year's recipient of the College of Arts and Science Teaching

Excellence Award in the Humanities. In addition to this College award, Professor Liu received the 2005 USSU Teaching Excellence Award and has been nominated for the same recognition a further five times. She is an outstanding teacher, a leader in experiential learning opportunities in the Humanities, and a highly valued colleague.



## Rita Matlock Wins Sylvia Wallace Award

The award recognizes Rita's extraordinary commitment as an instructor who has worked with students throughout the province, who has been a leader in

innovative instructional delivery methods, and who has played a crucial role as the Coordinator of the Writing Centre at the University of Saskatchewan's Centre for Continuing and Distance Education. Rita Matlock is an integral part of the Department of English and Distance Education, and a mentor who demonstrates an unwavering willingness to share her knowledge and her passion for teaching. Congratulations, Rita!

## Indigo Brodie wins Rose Litman Medal



Congratulations to English Honours graduate Indigo Brodie, who was awarded the 2017 Rose Litman Medal as the top graduate in Humanities at fall convocation held on

October 28, 2017. Indigo's first two years of study were at our affiliated college, St. Peter's in Muenster, where he earned a two-year Writing Diploma. One of his instructors here at the U of S has described him as "intuitive, impulsive, and bold in his reading and in his oral exchanges and written work."

## Congratulations to other

### Fall Term Awards Winners!

Honours student Jasmine Redford has received a Hannon Scholarship and the Rashley Award for academic achievement, as well as the Ronald and Mary Dyck Memorial Award for her essay on the value of a liberal arts education. Jasmine, an associate editor for the U of S undergraduate journal USURJ, commented, "my last undergrad year is turning out to be pretty exciting!"

Jana Mujkic has received a Hannon Scholarship for academic achievement, as well as the Mary Lou Ogle Award for the Study of Communications. An Honours student in her final year who is also an associate editor for USURJ, Jana plans to pursue her passion for creative writing.

Hannon Scholarships, which recognize university community service and strength of character as well as academic achievement, have also been awarded to Hannah Roberts, Alexander Edmunds, Paige Yellowlees, Ashley Clouthier, Carmen Holmes, and Andrew Wiebe.



*Jasmine Redford, winner of three Department of English Awards*

## CBC Saskatchewan Future 40

Tenille Campbell was recently named to the CBC Saskatchewan Future 40 list, which celebrates Saskatchewan's up-and-coming leaders, builders, and change-makers under the age of 40. Tenille is a PhD candidate in the department of English and author of *#IndianLovePoems*.

Click [here](#) to read the profiles of the CBC Saskatchewan Future 40.



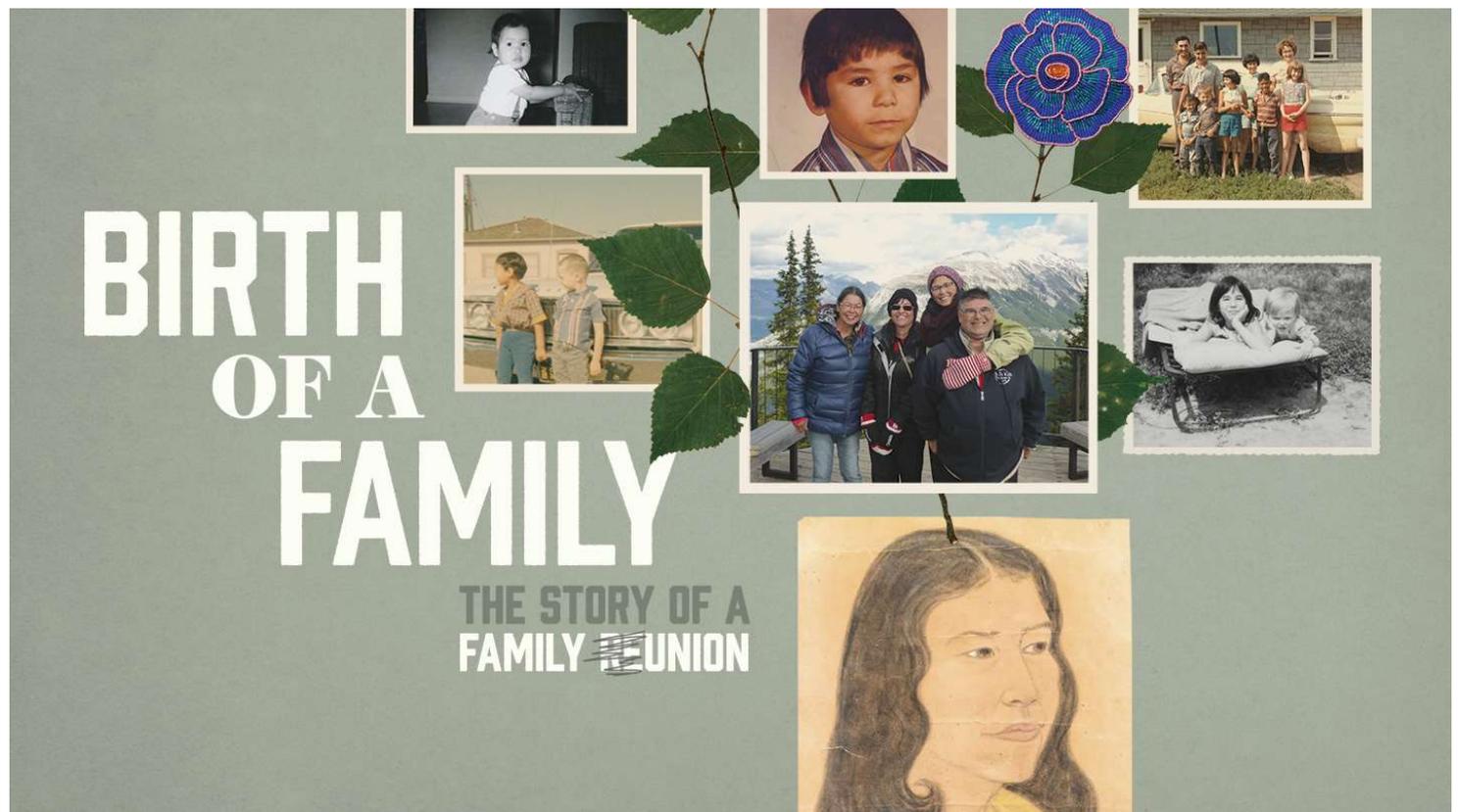
*Tenille Campbell, PhD candidate and author*

# Dr. Tasha Hubbard's film enjoys nation-wide success!



*Birth of a Family* premiered in the spring at the Hot Docs Film Festival, and was also part of the fall festival circuit, with screenings at the Calgary International Film Festival, Edmonton International Film Festival (won Audience Favourite for Feature Documentary), ImagineNATIVE Film Festival (won Moon Jury Special Jury Prize), Zonta Film Festival (won Audience Favourite), and Montreal International Film Festival (won the Student Jury Prize). A short version of the film was broadcasted on CBC's POV Docs program on November 19. It has been screened in communities across Canada as part of the National Film Board's Wide Awake

tour. It was also recently invited to screen in Parliament by Senators Kim Pate and Lillian Dyck.



## MFA highlights: Class of 2017 graduate, Katherine Lawrence wins Moonbeam award, while classmate Cassi Smith awarded the 2017 RBC Taylor Prize for Emerging Writers



Katherine Lawrence (MFA in Writing '17) has won a 2017 Moonbeam Children's Book Award in the category of Children's Poetry for her young adult novel-in-verse, *Stay* (Coteau Books). The book takes readers into the heart and mind of a young girl on the verge of discovering an ancient truth. Lawrence is also the Saskatoon Public Library's 2017/18 writer-in-residence.

The Moonbeam Children's Book Awards recognize exemplary children's books and their creators, and support childhood literacy and

life-long reading. The contest is open to authors, illustrators, and publishers of children's books written in English or Spanish for the North American market. Katherine will also be the Saskatoon Public Library's Writer in Residence from September 2017 to May 2018.

Pictured here, left to right, a powerhouse cohort of graduating writers:

Shannon McConnell, Cassi Smith, Katherine Lawrence, Danielle Altrogge, Julianna McLean. Pictured in centre: Program Coordinator Jeanette Lynes.



Cassi Smith, a current MFA in Writing student who also received her BA at the U of S, has been awarded the 2017 RBC Taylor Prize for Emerging Writers. The award consists of a \$10,000 prize and mentorship by author Ross King, who was this year's Taylor Prize recipient.

Read more about Cassi's award in *The Globe and Mail* [here](#) and a story from Global News [here](#).



## Remembering Claud Thompson (excerpts from a Tribute by Robert Calder)

The Rev. Dr. Claud Thompson died at his home in Nanaimo, British Columbia on July 3, 2017. Claud was a member of the Department of English for twenty-eight years, and he served as the Department Head, the Associate Dean for Fine Arts and Humanities, and the Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Science. He retired in 1998.

Claud was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and, after completing his AB at Ripon College, in Wisconsin, he went to London to do volunteer work in an Anglican inner city parish. On the voyage over, he had the good fortune of being invited to tea with a fellow passenger, the distinguished poet T.S. Eliot, and it profoundly changed his career. Claud told Eliot about his love of literature but also his intention to study for the Episcopalian priesthood. Eliot advised him to do a Masters first because, he said, once you put on the collar everything changes and people react to you differently. It is better to study literature unencumbered by any expectations. Claud followed the poet's advice and took a Master's degree in literature from Columbia University and then a Bachelor of Divinity from Seabury Western Theological Seminary in Illinois. Finally, he earned a PhD in English at the University of Wisconsin. For the remainder of his life, he would be guided and shaped by these two important elements: religious faith and literary scholarship.

Coming to Saskatchewan in 1970, Claud quickly became a much respected and loved teacher, specializing in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century literature, particularly the works of Shakespeare and Milton. His love of literature was, however, broad, and he enjoyed exploring the writing of Charles Dickens, William Faulkner, and, of course, Eliot with his students. His teaching was not marked by pyrotechnics and showmanship, but rather thoughtful and careful observations, and he possessed that most important quality of the great teacher: a passionate love of his subject and a love of sharing that passion with students. More than forty years after taking one of his classes, a student wrote to thank him for what she called his "gentle consideration" of his students. "You taught me," she said, "what it is to love knowledge."

Claud punctuated his teaching with a sly, understated sense of humour, and, in Gwenna Moss's words, he "would often inject a bit of his dry wit" into administrative meetings to move things forward. His sly humour, for example, came out at an Annual General Meeting of the Canadian university English teachers association. In the discussion of one particular issue, Claud was preceded by his very good friend Len Findlay. Len, as he always

does, had thought carefully about the question, prepared a thorough argument, and, it must be said, vigorously laid it out at some length before the meeting. When he finished, Claud stood up and began his somewhat briefer remarks by saying, “In other words . . .” It brought down the house. Soon after arriving at the U. of S., Claud began publishing his scholarship, most notably as a contributing editor of the massive volume *A Concordance to the English Prose of John Milton*. He wrote articles on Milton’s *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Lycidas*, as well as on Plato’s *Phaedrus*, William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*.

Standing at just five feet, seven inches, Claud was not physically imposing, but more than one colleague made the mistake of thinking that he could be intimidated in Department and College deliberations. As an undergraduate at Ripon College, he had joined the wrestling team – as a way of making a statement to the world and a challenge to himself, I think - and he became known, he would recount with amusement, as “Killer Claud.” It didn’t take long for the English Department to learn that he could stand up to and take down the biggest bully. On one notable occasion, an overbearing English Department Head attributed one of his own poor decisions to the administrative assistant prematurely sending out a memorandum. “It is an act of cowardice,” Claud told him in a full Department meeting, “to blame one’s mistakes on one’s assistants.” It was a courageous act of defiance in the time before the Collective Agreement, an era when senior professors could – and some did – sabotage the careers of junior faculty, particularly those in the same field as them.

As a department head himself, Claud was especially considerate of junior faculty, whom he knew would flourish with encouragement and reassurance, but he treated everyone with respect and with an even hand. Paul Bidwell spoke for a great many people when he called him “the fairest man I know.” These qualities marked his service as Associate Dean and then Acting Dean, and he worked very hard for the interests of his College. Gwenna Moss, however, viewing him from her position in the University’s senior administration, has said that, unlike some college administrators, Claud always considered the well-being of the University as a whole. He was particularly involved in the activities of the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad, and he sat on the academic board of St. Andrew’s College.

Phyllis, and their much-loved son, David, can be assured that Claud will never be forgotten by those whose lives he touched.

# College Outreach: Summer Institute on Social Justice



Nine delegates from the University of Saskatchewan’s College of Arts & Science, including English Department members David Parkinson and Lisa Vargo, lent their expertise at an intensive summer workshop in India June 19-30 to help the next generation of researchers there advance social justice.

Titled *Social Justice: Practice and Research*, the workshop was jointly organized by the College of Arts & Science and the host university, the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) in Gujarat, India. Social sciences and humanities experts from both universities, along with guest speakers, led sessions attended by about 60 participants from India. The institute was based on the premise that teaching key research skills can be “a powerful tool to understand and address issues of inequality and injustice and to bring in social change,” said Ambika Aiyadurai, an assistant professor of anthropology at IITGN and a coordinator of the workshop.

The workshop is the latest in a series of efforts at building international “collaborative activities” between the U of S and IITGN, said Raj Srinivasan, head of the college’s Department of Mathematics & Statistics and one of the local coordinators—along with Professor of English David Parkinson—of the event. IITGN and the college worked together on a similar summer institute on the theme of global health in 2015, and faculty and students from IITGN have made several visits to the U of S.

The College of Arts & Science’s relationship with IITGN and its experience in this research area made it an ideal partner for the summer institute, said Aiyadurai. “[The U of S’s] mission of commitment to community and valuing diversity, equality and human respect and dignity connects with IITGN’s goal of achieving academic excellence while continuing its contribution to the development of humanity at large.”

Professor of English Lisa Vargo, who taught writing at the workshop, said she was eager to return to India after her experience living there for a month as a delegate at the 2015 summer institute. “There were some really exciting and fulfilling things that happened at the workshop. Meeting these students and talking to them and seeing what their lives were like was quite inspiring.” Like many of the delegates to the previous summer institute, Vargo has kept in touch with students and colleagues she met in India.

— Chris Putnam, College of Arts & Science