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# THE INTERLOCUTOR

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Newsletter of the Division of Humanities and Teacher Education (HUTE)  
Seaver College, Pepperdine University  
Fall 2019

## From the Divisional Dean

Greetings from the Humanities and Teacher Education Division! This academic year marks a time of many NEW things for us. Here are just a few changes:

- A NEW freshman class at Seaver College
- NEW images in our hallways
- A NEW Administrative Assistant in our office (Welcome, Lee Jackson!)
- A NEW Coordinator of the Humanities Program (Congrats, Dr. Bryan Givens!)
- A NEW Director of the History Program (Thank you, Dr. Sharyl Corrado!)
- A NEW Director of Clinical Practice (Welcome, Professor Somer Levine!)
- And, a NEW Divisional Dean (Me!)

I feel honored to lead a division that plays such a significant role in the General Education curriculum of Seaver College. Our outstanding faculty possess the ability to touch and inspire all students at Pepperdine University through our five majors of Creative Writing, English, Film Studies, History, and Liberal Arts for Education—or in our special programs of SAAJ, Great Books, Humanities, and Teacher Education. Additionally, we offer professional graduate programs: MA in American Studies and MFA in Screenwriting for Film and Television.

This year our division's theme verses are embedded within Psalm 23: "He refreshes my soul (v. 3); my cup overflows (v. 5)." We are experiencing a REFRESH in our division with new leadership, new faculty and staff, and new students.

Additionally we must focus on refreshing our spirits and our physical bodies throughout the year, and we must commit ourselves to protecting our own wellness so that we have energy to share with those at work and at home. At the end of the school year, my prayer is that we don't feel burned out or dried up from our work, but that we sense that our cup is overflowing with joy and gladness.

So may we press on together to begin a refreshing year, focused on preparing students for lives of purpose, service, and leadership, while taking care of ourselves and one another.

Blessings,  
Dr. Stella Erbes



# Digital Humanities and the Beauty of Dissonance

by Emilie Schutt (English major & Digital Humanities minor)

I bent down to fix the uneven tripod, which held a camera to film a 360° video of Pepperdine's Waves of Flags display—2,977 flags to represent each life lost on September 11, 2001. Along with Anastassia Kostin, Pepperdine senior and my project partner, I held a brand new \$500 Insta 360 One X camera with the goal of recording this special tradition. The grass was wet and the ground was slanted. The tripod had already fallen twice.



*Screenshot taken from 360 footage of the flag display*

“Make it happen” were our only directions. An idea traveled from President Gash’s office to Dean of Libraries, Mark Roosa, to Anna Speth, Librarian for Emerging Technology, and then to me and Anastassia.

This assignment came during the first week of my internship in the Genesis Lab—Pepperdine’s maker space where students come together to create through the use of emerging technology. I thought that this video would be a fairly straightforward task. I had made short films in iMovie before. I was wrong.

Working with 360° footage adds many layers to the process of making a video. We could not have expected all the problems which arose, such as how to combat motion sickness when viewing the video in virtual reality (VR). Google became our best friend.

Sixty-two distinct clips of footage taking 30 GBs of memory shot over four days. And that was just the beginning.





So much still needed to be done. The script was non-existent. Our team lacked the skills to edit out the tripod and shadows. We needed permission to contact President Gash to be our narrator. And that all had to be done before stitching the final video together could begin.

Trial and error was our only guide. It took at least ten attempts to completely cover the shadow and tripod in just one of our clips—we had six clips. It took two tries to convert all the footage to files accepted by Adobe Premiere. It took three drafts to get the video to a quality good enough to show President Gash before he could narrate.

The Waves of Flags video project was a group effort with Anastassia and me learning to be videographers, editors, and screenwriters. We both brought different

fields to help think of new solutions to problems. We had an International Studies major and an English Literature major (me). The need for differing fields and skill-sets to work together represents the essence of the Digital Humanities (DH), the kind of work we were doing.

DH is a newer academic field that is focused on how computational tools and methods can be applied to traditional humanities disciplines.

I learned about DH during my third year at Pepperdine. A DH class was added as a requirement for the English programs, so I enrolled. It completely changed how I view the world and what I want to do after graduation.

I was learning about the process of digital preservation in that class when the Woolsey fire hit the Pepperdine community last fall. I fled the wildfire at 3 am on Friday, November 9, 2018. I learned that I lost my house at 10 am on Saturday. My perspective on what I was learning and why changed after experiencing how quickly a fire can cause devastation. Wildfires do not pick and choose their victims. They do not care if the victim is a Shakespeare folio or not. They just destroy everything in their path.

Woolsey did not just take my physical home. It took my ignorance in thinking that we will always have the things that we care about. I am not talking only about the objects that were in my house but about pieces of history which live in libraries and museums around the world.

Woolsey came too close to ripping our special collections from the safe hands of the Payson librarians. This fear of loss changed my worldview. I now know that we have a job as humans to preserve our history. With the introduction of the DH, we can now preserve our history using tools that do not seem to belong to the humanities field.

Since I added a minor in the Digital Humanities, I often get the question, “Why are you in this class?” My peers do not understand why a literature student is taking computer science classes. I explain to them that it is this dissonance in study that helps to not only preserve history but to create projects that spread the access of historical artifacts. I find the dissonance to be beautiful.

## An Interview with Stephen Parmelee

*Prof. Parmelee in the Film Studies Program retired at the end of the academic year 2018-2019. In April, student editor Makenzie Daggett conducted the following interview in his office. On one of the walls was an autographed photo of Jimmy Stewart.*

**Daggett: Reflect on your time here at Pepperdine. How did it all begin?**

**Parmelee:** My experience at Pepperdine began when I was an undergraduate. At the time, I had never heard of Pepperdine before. I assume we must have gone to the library—this was before the internet of course—and got out a book of universities in southern California. We said, “This looks like a possibility.” I applied, was accepted, and ended up going here back when the campus was in south central Los Angeles. I graduated in 1974. It was sort of strange that I ended up being a student and working at the same place for all these years.

Corline (my wife) and I were missionaries to Brazil. We were supposed to be there for two years, but they kicked us out of the country after a year. It wasn’t anything scandalous! Just one of those bureaucratic things; we never really knew why they did it. But then we came back to Pepperdine. We went under the office of the University Church of Christ. If you count from when I started in 1974 as a student here, it’s really 49 years coming this fall. As an employee, it’s been 44 years.

When I was a student—I think it was in my senior year—I worked as a maintenance or janitorial worker in the men’s dorms. While I was gone in Brazil, the university started this experimental program where they hired somebody to run the program, but everyone who worked in the dorms during the school year and during the summer—those were all students. I would imagine there were probably 40 students working in the men’s and women’s dorms. When I came back from Brazil, that was in full swing, but they needed somebody to run the place. I interviewed for that. My wife and I just got an apartment in Thousand Oaks, I needed a job, and this one opened up. I spent the next five years working as the director of SMS, Student Maintenance Services. I directed a part time crew during the school year and a full time crew during the summer. During the school year, the students would destroy the dorms and during the summer, we’d try to put them back together! *(laughs)*

After that I became Director of Student Housing. We lived on campus in an apartment that was attached to what was, at the time, Dorm Tau, above the track, where they built Seaside. Then I went to work for Dr. John Watson, who at the time was Vice President of Student Affairs. I was his assistant for five years. Then I worked for the provost, Dr. Adrian, for a year or two.

In the middle of all this, I got my masters degree from Pepperdine. There was a Masters in English program that doesn’t exist anymore. Then, one day, as I was walking across the parking lot, I bumped into



*Fellow faculty awarded Dr. Parmelee for his many years of service at the Sigma Tau Delta Honors banquet, Spring 2019.*

Frank Novak. He said he was looking for some people to teach some classes; would I be interested? I said “sure” and that was my first teaching position! In 1983 or 1984. I was an adjunct professor at first. In 1985-1986, I was teaching full time as a visiting prof for a few years. In the meantime, I got my PhD at Claremont. Once I got my PhD, David Baird was interested in my becoming a full time professor. It took me a long time to get my degree because I was a part time student. I had 3 kids and I didn’t have the time or the money to go full time anywhere. But I finally finished! After which I took the tenure track, and I’m still here! It’s not very exciting, but methodical, I guess!

**It’s interesting that your first teaching job came about because you bumped into Dr. Novak on campus.**

I think he had been looking for me with that in mind, actually. I don’t think he ran into me and thought, “Hey, I have an idea now that I’ve run into you!” More along the lines of, “Since we’re here, I’ve been meaning to talk to you.”

I knew Frank already from working on campus, and we knew each other at church. But I had not been a student of his when I was an undergrad or in my master’s program. We didn’t have any professional connections before that, but that conversation is where they started.

**The job that Novak offered you: was that teaching English classes or film classes?**

English classes. There were no film classes at that time.

**So how did you start teaching film classes?**

I had always included film as a component in most of my classes whenever possible. I always had an interest in film and I was somewhat knowledgeable about film history, even at that time. I had done quite a bit of reading about film and particularly its history over the years for my own interest and edification. When I went tenure track, Marie Mullins was the chair of the Humanities division and she asked me if I would be interested in becoming one of the professors in the Film Studies major, which was about to go live. I said, “yes!” Joi Carr and I were the main full time professors to start with, then Leslie Kreiner came on later. That’s when I started teaching film courses. There had been a minor for a few years and Mike Gose was involved in that. But the major was created around 2006 or 2007.

**It’s nice that film has always been a passion of yours.**

It was very fortuitous. It was never something that I expected or anticipated, but I was very pleased to be able to teach film. It just sort of fell in my lap.

**What kind of research have you conducted as a professor here at Pepperdine?**

My dissertation was in Los Angeles literature, specifically novels that were written about Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s that were lesser known. There had been a lot of stuff written about people like Nathaniel West, Daniel Locust, Raymond Chandler—but there were some other writers who hadn’t been written about academically very much. My dissertation was titled, “*Trouble in Paradise: Nine Los Angeles Novels, 1927-1940.*” Each chapter was about a different writer and one of his or her novels, like “Fast One,” a real hard boiled novel by Paul Kane—the hardest of the hard boiled novelists. I’ve always been interested in Los Angeles as a place and its literature and its culture, and of course film dovetails with that as well. It was always fun to see when I could combine the two literature and film in some ways. Often more in presentations rather than in writing. I was able to present at a conference a few years ago at which the topic was how European filmmakers of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1960s—famous ones like



François Truffaut—had been fascinated by the American hardboiled novel of the 1940s and 1950s. They adapted a lot of them into their own films. Truffaut adapted *The Bride Wore Black* into his own film. But there are a lot of others that are lesser known: *The Postman Always Rings Twice* was adapted back in the early 1940s by Luchino Visconti into a film he called *Ossessione*.

I also have presented a few times and written about faith in film. Later today, we'll finish watching *Men With Guns*. I did a presentation on that film two or three years ago at the conference hosted by Film & History.

**You mentioned that you really enjoy Los Angeles as a topic in film and literature. What is your favorite thing to teach about film in the classroom? You teach such a wide variety of classes.**

What comes to mind is not so much the topic of the course that interests me most. Though obviously some are a little more interesting than others, I enjoy everything that I teach, generally speaking. What I really enjoy is being able to watch films with students who in many cases have never heard of the films before, don't know that maybe it is a film that they might even be interested in, that might be worth knowing more about in some way. I love watching those films and hearing students say, "That was really good!" They don't always react that way, of course. You can't always predict that. Still, there are a lot of students that say, "I never expected that I would enjoy a French film, or a black and white film." Whenever you can introduce people to films, it's fun watching them with people who are seeing them for the first time and gauging their reactions. My answer doesn't have so much to do with my favorite topic so much as that interaction in the classroom. It's always fun.

If you read a book of short stories, you're not going to love every one of them, but there may be a few that you love. I don't expect my students to love everything they see, but they'll love some of them.



*Following the senior capstone presentations, Film Studies majors honored Dr. Parmelee and his many years of service to Pepperdine, Spring 2019.*

**Along the same lines, if every short story is exactly the same, you're going to get bored. But I never feel that with the films you show, even if they might explore similar topics. The variety keeps the experience fresh and new.**

A side note: the Los Angeles in Film class you took last semester was the first time I was actually able to teach that particular class. I'd taught Los Angeles Literature in Film before, but that semester was the only time I taught Los Angeles in Film. Fun fact.

For the special topics I've taught over the years: I've taught several topics such as British, French, and German film, and Great American Directors. Because I was already teaching Los Angeles Literature in Film, I felt it wasn't a good idea to teach Los Angeles on Film as well, but the more I thought about it, I realized: that's really dumb! There's no reason I *shouldn't* do that! A lot of students take Los Angeles Literature in Film as an upper division GE literature class. Some film students do take that class, but most students take it for a GE credit because it's film related. So I taught Los Angeles in Film last fall and really enjoyed the chance to look at some films I haven't been able to look at before with students who were also interested.

**Could you please share a favorite memory about a past student or students?**

There was a student named Tahmina Rafaella. She was from Azerbaijan, and I think it's safe to say she's the only Azerbaijani film student I've ever had. She was a very good student who was interested in screenwriting in particular; she took screenwriting with Leslie Kreiner and a couple of film classes from me. After she graduated she went back to Azerbaijan. She took a screenplay she'd written while she was here, put together a proposal to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Culture for funding, and got a big grant to make this film. So she wrote and starred in this film called *Inner City* (2016), and it was shot on the streets of inner city Azerbaijan, in Baku. That city apparently has two areas: the old inner city, and the newer places that have spread out around it.

She took it to some film festivals in the U.S. and internationally. It was nominated for several awards. She was able to bring it to the U.S., rented Fox Wilshire theaters for the evening, and invited Pepperdine students and several teachers to come to the screening. A bunch of people got to see her film in a theatre in west Los Angeles! It was a very good film; I was very impressed. It was really nice to see the fruits of her labor within a year and a half or two after she graduated from Pepperdine. She had a feature film under her belt and had success with it. She'd also done some acting in a couple of American TV series as well, prior to that.



***Left:*** MFA students at the Austin Film Festival.

***Right:*** Profs. Darlene Rivas, John Struloeff, and Joi Carr at the majors fair during NSO.





***Spring 2019***

***Top:*** Divisional Dean Michael Ditmore welcomed graduates and their families at the HUTE reception.

***Middle:*** Prof. Jennifer Smith and President Andy Benton after Prof. Smith delivered the sermon at the baccalaureate service.

***Bottom:*** History faculty welcome three new initiates into the History honor society Phi Alpha Theta.







**Fall 2019**

**Top:** New Divisional Dean Stella Erbes welcomed first year students to HUTE.

**Middle:** Office manager Genny Moore took a selfie with the new president and first lady at the HUTE celebration for the Gashes.

**Bottom:** English faculty having a light moment at the first divisional meeting of the school year.





## International Programs Then and Now

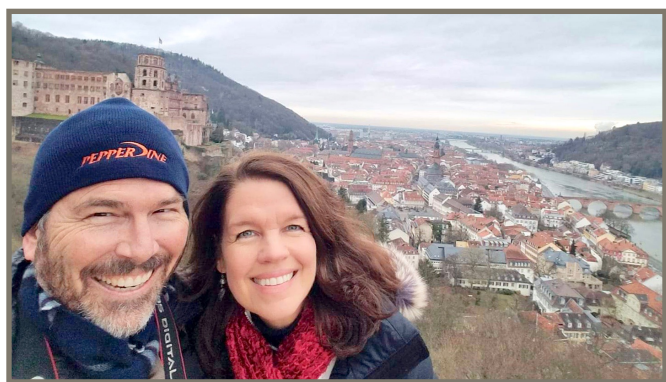
by Carrie Wall

Participating in International Programs (IP) at Pepperdine is a family tradition in the Wall and Giboney families dating back to the 1980s. Nine of the eleven Pepperdine IP alumni in my extended family have called the Moore Haus their home over the years. My husband Andy (below) experienced the magic of living in Heidelberg as a student in 1983 and I then followed in 1986 (photo on right). While some family alumni remember calling home on the single pay phone secured to the Moore Haus wall, others have enjoyed the convenience of Facetiming those they love. Regardless, we all are bound together by a shared love for the Moore Haus. It was abroad that I discerned my vocational calling to teach (with the help of Dr. Michael Gose) and confirmed that Andy was the one for me. Little did I know that my daughters would also live in the same beloved Moore Haus decades later.



In light of this Wall family IP history as students, it was particularly meaningful to return in spring 2019 as the faculty-in-residence in Florence, Italy. Andy and I strengthened relational and cultural connections while forging new ones as well. We reconnected with fellow alum and friend, Elizabeth Whatley, the Florence Program Director. We visited our second daughter, Jessica, who was a Fulbright scholar in Athens, Greece. We celebrated our thirty-first wedding anniversary in a city that captured our hearts and shaped our vocational callings: Heidelberg, Germany. We returned to Glyfada, Greece where Andy grew up as a child of missionary parents and savored the language, culture, people, places, and foods that shaped him.

In addition to rekindling our love for these people and places, we also cultivated new friendships and experienced new places. Each weekend we zipped up our jackets, threw on our backpacks, and headed out the Villa door for adventures in Italian cities such as Rome, Assisi, Sienna, Lucca, Pompeii, Positano, Sorrento, Venice, and Cinque Terre; European cities such as Barcelona, London, Athens, Heidelberg, and cities in Croatia; and Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, where we spent our Educational Field Trip.



Between our broader adventures, we savored the small and simple things about life in Florence. Tiny toddlers, well-dressed elderly people, and everyone in between wove walking into the fabric of their days. By taking to the road on foot, we were granted the gift of slowing down, enjoying face-to-face encounters, and appreciating the sights, sounds, and smells of our beloved Florence. Our quest to be fully present in the moment was enriched by lingering conversations over frothy cappuccinos at Café Liberta, talking with students about life, faith, relationships,

vocation, family, mental health, and hardships. Such sweet small moments stood in stark contrast to America's coffee-to-go mentality, in which we often drink coffee to caffeinate instead of converse-- to amp-up instead of slow down.



Our time in Florence provided us front row seats to the transformation of 54 anxious tentative teenagers to well-traveled, confident, culturally sensitive, relationally connected, reflective adults. They now join the burgeoning group of IP alumni who savored a semester or year abroad and long to return one day.

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**Top:** Prof. Elizabeth Yomantas led a group of Pepperdine students during a month-long summer service trip at the Mission at Natuvu Creek on the eastern coast of Vanua Levu, Fiji.

**Right:** Teacher Education faculty and five students from the Fiji group at the HUTE celebration of the new president and first lady.





## Interview with Dr. David Holmes



*Faculty editor Tuan Hoang sat down with David Holmes, Associate Dean of Curriculum and General Education at Seaver College, for an interview prior to his departure from Pepperdine to become the dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Lipscomb University.*

**Hoang:** You've spent so many years at Pepperdine. Tell us about your first few years at Seaver College, and how would you compare it to today?

**Holmes:** I came here in 1993 as a visiting instructor. Before I came here, I had taught middle school and high school for about eight

years, and then got an opportunity to be the head of a special program called Irvine Fellow. So I was one of the first—the second crop of Irvine Fellows. We were to teach what was initially four classes, and that became three, while we worked on our PhDs. And the way that program worked, we weren't guaranteed a job: we were guaranteed an interview. That's the way that worked.

So the first few years were very interesting for me because I think I was more nervous than I should have been. You know, you think the leap between teaching in high school versus teaching in college is a big leap—and it is a big leap—but I thought that the students' abilities were going to be dramatically different from high school students, and that myth was dispelled when I read their first batch of essays. And I found out, okay, they definitely need the kind of help that I can offer.

I think it was interesting because that first few years, there was me acclimating and scaling a learning curve, but there was also understanding the environment of Pepperdine. My initial connection with Pepperdine had been when I was a high schooler coming to the campus for youth rallies they would have. Things like that. So the first few years were really about my adjustment, and also understanding that, as great as Pepperdine is and was, I didn't see as much diversity in the student body, and certainly not among the faculty as I would see later. I didn't see, other than people like Thomas Martinez, I didn't see Latino faculty. I don't remember seeing any Asian faculty when I got here. I don't know if that was just Seaver or the entire university. There was only one other African American I knew of at Seaver, maybe two. Probably more like two.

### Who were they?

Calvin Bowers would be one, and I'm thinking Kylie James. Ira Jolivet came in 1993. So the diversity was a huge question for me because any time you're in state schools or urban schools, whether it's high school or college, you see more diversity. That was on the side that said "needs to be improved" and on the side that said "celebrate," it was great to be at a place where you can share your faith in the classroom and you can pray in the classroom. That was exciting. Pepperdine has changed now, and it's more diverse. I think there's an increasing emphasis on scholarship, and I was a part of that transition when scholarship was becoming more and more important. I've benefited from that.

### **Scholarship among the faculty?**

Scholarship among the faculty. And the students have improved as well! I've been a part of a lot of these transitions upward in terms of faculty quality and student quality. I've enjoyed that.

### **Was it during David Baird's time as Seaver Dean?**

David Baird was actually my chair of the Humanities division about the time I was finishing up my dissertation, from the time I came in 1993 until I defended my dissertation on Friday, December 13, 1996, and actually started on tenure track in Fall 1997. So I was here from 1993 to the later part of 1996 as a visiting instructor, then in Fall 1997 I got my tenure. By the time I transitioned to tenure track faculty, Baird had transitioned into the deanship.



### **So there was a confluence of things: leadership, greater expectation of scholarship, shifting from an all-teaching institution to a more liberal arts setting.**

It's liberal arts, but I think what we've tried to emphasize is that in the liberal arts, scholarship, and teaching are hand in glove. You don't sacrifice one for the other. One influences the other. Scholarship feeds teaching and teaching feeds scholarship.

### **Please speak of your experience of teaching rhetoric.**

A lot of disciplines deal with rhetoric, but there are two major disciplinary traditions in American rhetoric. One is Communication rhetoric, and the other is English Composition rhetoric. I'm on the English Composition rhetoric side.

I won't give the full complicated answer, but let's start with the classical folks in rhetoric. Whether you're talking about Aristotle or Cicero, their discussions on rhetoric are very different, because the Greek emphasis is very different from the Roman emphasis. The debate in the 1960s was: can the principles that we see in the classical rhetorical tradition be expanded to talk about issues that arise in composition and writing, or is it something that's only confined to the oral? I remember one of my communication rhetoric colleagues when I first started teaching here, but who is no longer here, sort of teased me, saying, "Well, composition rhetoric! As if Aristotle had a composition class in mind." And I replied, because I always have a reply, "As if Aristotle had a television or radio studio in mind!" So the principles of rhetoric are a little more elastic and the potential to be applied in different contexts. So that's the basics of what you'd call the disciplinary foundation for what I do.

It goes in a lot of different directions. In the past, it's been about rhetorical literary analysis and things like that, but for me lately, it's ironically been a return to looking at oratory as it relates to rhetoric. What I've said up until now is how rhetoric can be stretched beyond oratory, and should be, to think about how those techniques inhabit a number of different kinds of media. That's pretty much rhetorical studies, whether you're talking about communications or the English side.

But lately, I've ironically returned—a renaissance, if you will—to oratory as I've done my work with the civil rights mass meetings, which are speeches. I've looked at some of the speeches which are rare and have not been examined rhetorically. I've returned to the oratory as I've sort of examined that narrow purview of rhetoric. That's why a lot of my scholarship has been focused on great orators from the civil rights movement in the past thirteen to fourteen years.



*Prof. Holmes (right) and Seaver College faculty at the Institute on General Education and Assessment, June 2019 at the University of Vermont*

**I have two more questions. One has to do with the division to which you've belonged for so long: Humanities and Teacher Education. Can you reflect on any memories you have from being a HUTE faculty?**

Oh my goodness, so many great memories. When I was a visiting instructor, I was beginning to look around because I assumed I wouldn't get to teach at Pepperdine. A visiting instructor does not a tenure track professor make, or guarantee. I didn't know if that was going to happen. But I do know that there were some people who influenced my decision. I never will forget: I wrote a rough draft of a cover letter to send out to some other universities that I was applying for. I had Connie Fulmer proof it for me and give me some recommendations. I remember her giving me all the kind of detailed insight that Connie Fulmer can give you, and I remember her saying at the bottom of the letter, "Please don't leave. Stay." I've had really good relationships with a lot of people here. I think at the top of the list would be Connie Fulmer. She's one of the reasons that I decided to apply. I'd say in general, the reason I decided to apply for tenure track here was the people. I'd already developed a relationship here as a visiting instructor. I never felt like I was less than some of the tenure track people. It's really been about people like Connie and James Thomas, and so many different people who have been very much encouragement to me. John McClung, who's been gone for a number of years now. He and Steve Sale were historians, neither of whom shared my political proclivities or positions, but we got along really well, and they coached me. When I first got on tenure track, they said things to me like, "You were a visiting instructor and you did this. These are the things you need to do to get tenure." They kind of took me on as a project; I appreciated that.

The students have been wonderful. This has been very much like a family. I've been here long enough that I've been through a lot of life changes. Our boys were very young when I started on tenure track. They were seven and six and used to run around on this campus. But even tragic things like the premature death of my brother in law at age fifty-five. The death of my mom and then my mother-in-law. I've grown up and gone through a lot of things here and the Humanities division has been right there.



I've never once felt, even when I was in fierce disagreements with my colleagues, that there was not anyone in the Humanities who genuinely wished me well. Even when we butted heads, they care about me. I'll be saying this until I leave: when I leave Pepperdine, I'll leave a part of my heart here, because I've developed as a teacher, a scholarship, and I think I've developed as a human being and a Christian in ways I would not have if I had not been in this place.

**You're moving to Tennessee, and you've said that this is the right time and the right move. You'll be close to your family and your granddaughter. There are some Pepperdine people who have moved and are there as well. How do you look forward to seeing them again?**

In terms of the Pepperdine's connections, even though I'm twenty-six years older than when I started here, and I feel more secure and comfortable in my skin, it would be good to see some familiar faces. There at Lipscomb, there will be some people like Andrea Zaller and Nate Barton. Those are the younger people. Then, Caleb Clanton, who will be a colleague. I'll actually be his boss! I'm going to relish this rhetorician being the boss of philosophy! He's a dear friend, and a philosopher, and you know the tension between rhetoricians and philosophy, so we'll get to play that out. That'll be good. Al Sturgeon is there. Al's a good friend. I think that's going to be an anchoring of its own because I know these people. When I'm missing Pepperdine, I'm not completely missing Pepperdine because some of Pepperdine is still there. If I find myself wanting to complain about something that only Pepperdine people can understand, I have them there.

**I can see you and former Pepperdine people at Lipscomb reminiscing about life by the beach!**

"It's a Pepperdine thing! They don't understand!" I think what I'm looking for is sort of what brought me to Pepperdine. I was a high school teacher not even thinking about teaching college. I was also an assistant minister at a church where Jim Smithe, the minister, ironically passed the day after my granddaughter was born. Jim was a fellow who was very pleasant and didn't take no for an answer. After he saw me teaching Sunday school and preaching, he said, "You *really* need to work on a PhD." That wasn't in my orbit. I had no aspirations for that; I had never dreamt that. But he kept bugging me about it, so I applied for the PhD, eventually became a visiting instructor here, left the security as secure as a high school teacher can be and tenure and medical and dental benefits of a high school teacher to come here as a visiting instructor with less money and benefits that were not quite as secure, all while my boys were still under five years old. What it taught me though was, providentially, how the Lord stretches us. He stretched me. I'm sure I could have had a fine career teaching high school and gotten a sense of worth and fulfillment, so on and so forth.

But that taught me a lesson about how the Lord stretches you in ways you don't expect. This Lipscomb thing wasn't on my radar. I was asked three times to apply for this position. The third time, I finally said, "You know, let me at least try it." I thought I had no chance of getting the position. Eight candidates. Then there were four. There were two. Then there was me. It seems to me that it's God's way of at least inviting me to stretch myself. So what I expect is a fire hydrant learning curve, and I expect a fire hydrant, but as I told people: at fifty-seven, with over thirty years of experience in education, and about twenty-six years in college education, this may be a fire hydrant, but I'm really thirsty! Because I realized that at this juncture in my life, the window is closing on my life. I probably won't live to be 114.

**That's okay! But it's your latest act!**

You've heard me overuse this quote many times, but Ralph Waldo Emerson writing to his friend Thomas Carlyle: "Men live on the brink of mysteries and harmonies to which they never enter, and with their hand on the door latch, they die outside." For me, this unrequited growth opportunity is something that really drives me.



***More photos from Fall 2019 (from top)***

*Prof. Katie Frye presented on the fiction of Eudora Welty at a HUTE faculty symposium.*

*Prof. Julie Oni (second from left) and three other HUTE faculty attending a performance of her play Sown produced by the MaiM Theatre Company & Son of Semele Theater.*

*Technology Liaison Terence Anderson and his daughter Catherine, who had a role in the fall musical Ragtime, before one of the performances.*

*Prof. Heather Thomson-Bunn and her daughter Story before a division meeting in the fall.*

