

**2007-2008 PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR  
RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY**



The President's Award for Research and Creative Activity was established in 1989 and is given each year to recognize extraordinary research and creative activity over the past five years by a member of the Sacramento State faculty. Nominees for the award must be in their first ten years of service at Sacramento State. This year's recipient is Dr. Joshua McKinney, Associate Professor in the Department of English. Professor McKinney is the nineteenth recipient of this award.

Dr. McKinney received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English, as well as his teaching credential, from Humboldt State University. His initial graduate work was also done at Humboldt State where he received his Master of Arts in the Teaching of Writing degree. He pursued further graduate work and received his Ph.D. from the University of Denver in 1992. His dissertation was entitled The Novice Mourner. It was a book-length collection of original poetry with a critical preface discussing his poetics. He is a member of the Academy of American Poets and the Modern Language Association.

McKinney joined the faculty at Sacramento State as an Assistant Professor in the fall of 1999 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2003. He previously taught at Valdosta State University, Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado, and the Colorado School on Mines. He has received grants from the Georgia Humanities Council and from Poets & Writers, Inc.

In the last five years he has published two outstanding books of poetry: The Novice Mourner, published by Bearstar Press in 2005, and Saunter, published by the University of Georgia Press in 2002. Both books were reviewed in the prestigious Colorado Review. In addition to these books he has published thirty-six poems since 2000. His poetry has been published in The Antioch Review, A Journal of Contemporary American Poetry, Kenyon Review, American Literary Review, and the Colorado Review. One of his recent poems, "In Ernest," was published in the Tebot Bach Anthology of California Poetry 2006.

He has given numerous poetry readings and professional presentations. He has been invited to read at Sonoma State University and CSU, Chico, as well as at Writers and Literary conferences such as the Wiregrass Literary Festival (Valdosta, GA 2006), the Mendocino Writers' Conference (Fort Bragg, CA 2006), and the Twentieth-Century Literature Conference (Louisville, KY 2005).

On campus Dr. McKinney has received the College of Arts and Letters' Outstanding Teaching Award, has served as the English department's representative on the Faculty Senate, and chairs the department's Personnel Committee. Currently he serves on both the Festival of the Arts Committee and the Sacramento State Writers' Festival Board. McKinney has served as academic advisor for many students and has directed more than two dozen poetry master's theses and has served as second reader of numerous other master's theses.

### **“PEN & SWORD IN ACCORD: A POETICS”**

Joshua McKinney, Associate Professor  
Department of English

Abstract: The Japanese phrase *bunbu ichi* refers to the unity of literary and military arts, one of the ideals of the samurai class. For many years now my understanding of poetry writing has been inextricably linked with my understanding of swordsmanship. As these disciplines have been two of the primary activities of my adult life, I have found that Japanese swordsmanship has influenced my writing, providing an analogue for poetic composition as well as a philosophical context for artistic expression in general. Containing representative poems from each of my books as well as from my new manuscript, my presentation will trace the development of my poetics, noting the tensions and paradoxes that have informed my work, especially the often troubling relationship between my interest in poetic form and the avant-garde.