

CommConnect

IN THE NEWS

- Graduate students **Beth Ruyak, Sage Beamon, Lucas Kaitsas-Wilson, Brittney Grotz, and Christine Shelby** presented “#communicationsowhite” at the Student Research Symposium on March 7. They were mentored by **Dr. Andrea Terry**. **Mariam Abbas** presented “The Token Trope: Turning a Blind Eye to Documented Reality.” Her research was mentored by **Dr. Michele Foss-Snowden**.

- Journalism student **Sara Nevis** was honored as the Outstanding Student from Communication Studies by the College of Arts and Letters.

- **Dr. Cheng Hong**, in collaboration with Dr. Jiangmeng Liu from Seattle University and Dr. Bora Yook from Fairfield University, has had a study accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, titled “CEO as ‘Chief Crisis Officer’ under COVID-19: A Content Analysis of CEO Open Letters Using Structural Topic Modeling.” Dr. Hong also co-authored, with Dr. Yi Grace Ji, a study accepted by *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* titled “Engaging Employees in CEO Activism: The Role of Transparent Leadership Communication in Making a Social Impact.”

- The J Street Film Festival returns to in-person screening on May 19, tentatively scheduled at the Outdoor Theater, between the Library and Capistrano Hall. The festival features selected films produced by students in the Film Program and is made possible in part by a grant from University Enterprises Inc. Screenings begin at about 7 p.m.



Professor Andrew Stoner, right, before the 2019 commencement, with, from left, Professors Robert Humphrey, Phillip Reese, John Williams, Jacqueline Irwin, Mark Ludwig, and Shawna Malvini Redden.

Tribute to Andrew Stoner

Public Relations professor died Feb. 9

Department Chair Mark Ludwig wrote this after the passing of **Professor Andrew Stoner**:

I am joining you in offering tributes to Andrew.

My last conversation with him was in mid-January, at the onset of his illness, a few weeks before the start of the fall semester. He was confined to his bed and was unsure when he might be well enough to return to campus. He was concerned about how his classes would be covered. Despite being seriously ill, his overarching worry was about his students. The conversation spoke volumes about what a great teacher and mentor he was.

Andrew and his husband, **Randy**, escaped the vicious winters of northern Wisconsin to join our Communication Studies faculty in 2015. His background as a public information officer brought a new perspective to a public relations program in a state capital.

He cared deeply about our students, and they cared about him, evidenced by the flow of tributes that came when word of his passing spread. **Emily Penrod** wrote, “Dr. Stoner was more than just a professor for his students, but a true mentor and a friend. I always looked forward to his classes and his lessons

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are what helped me grow into the PR professional that I am today. It was an honor to have my classes taught by him.” **Lauren Burke** said, “Dr. Stoner was clearly passionate about teaching, the success of his students, and his family, whom he loved telling stories about. He exuded happiness and positivity, and he will be missed deeply by many.”

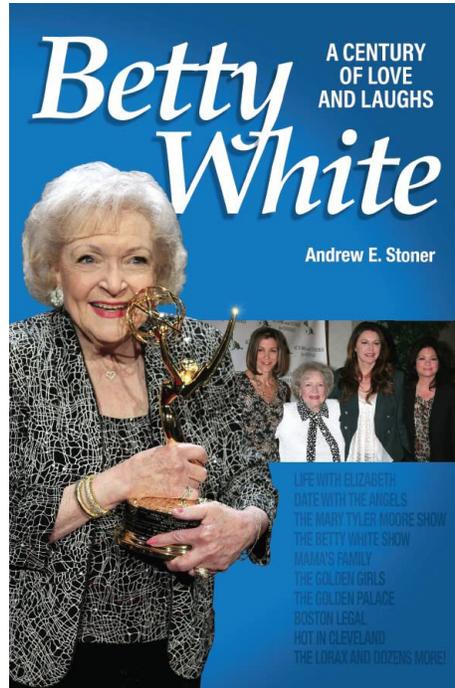
At his passing, Andrew was serving as a Faculty Fellow for Student Success, yet another way of helping our students.

Andrew was a prolific author. I sometimes wondered how he had the time to generate so much work. His most recent work included an update of his book *Betty White: A Century of Love and Laughs*. Among his other works are *Wanted in Indiana: Infamous Hoosier Fugitives*; *Dear Abby, I'm Gay: Newspaper Advice Columnists and Homosexuality*; *Courthouse Chaos: Famous and Infamous Trials, Mob Violence and Justice*; *The Journalist of Castro Street: The Life of Randy Shilts*; *Campaign Crossroads: Presidential Politics in Indiana from Lincoln to Obama*; *Cobra Killer*; and *Indiana's 200: The People Who Shaped the Hoosier State*. Another of his books, *Notorious 92*, was about infamous murders in each of Indiana's counties. I was delighted to talk with Andrew about one of the serial killers he profiled, because as a young reporter at an Illinois newspaper, I had covered the same killer, who committed his crimes in both states.

As you can see, his work reflected his love for his home state, Indiana. He graduated from Goshen High School in 1982 and earned his bachelor's degree

NEWSLETTER OF DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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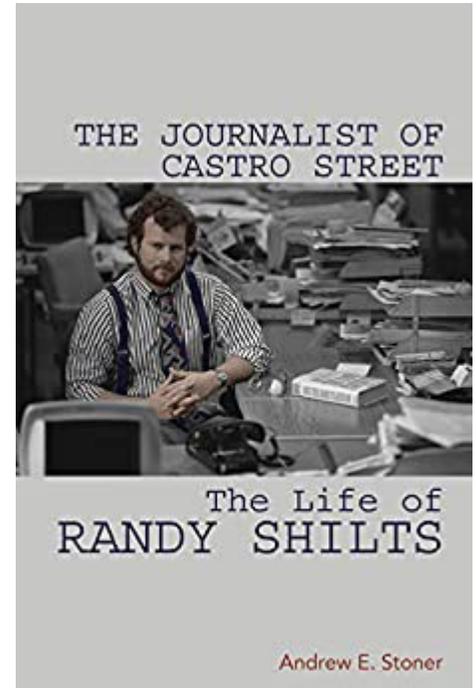
Two of Dr. Andrew Stoner's books

at Franklin College. He worked for a time as a reporter and then moved into public relations, working for the governor of Indiana, the Indiana Department of Health, and the Indianapolis Police Department.

Andrew returned to school and earned a Ph.D. at Colorado State University, after which he joined the faculty at the University of Wisconsin's Stevens Point campus.

His accomplishments since coming to Sac State have been many. In 2020, he received the College of Arts and Letters' Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activities. In his application, he wrote, "I remain surprised and pleased that research and creative activity has come to mean so much to me – when I first set out to become a professor, I was certain that teaching would be all-encompassing and research would just be a necessary component on the side."

In a letter of recommendation for the award, **Dr. Gerri Smith**, then the department chair, noted, "The multifaceted and varied foci for Professor Stoner's work is testament to his true scholarly and academic passion, as well as to his



commitment to telling the stories that need to be shared.” **Dr. Jacqueline Irwin** wrote, “Andrew consistently works to bring to light stories and histories of those that have been suppressed by the hegemonic society in which they lived.”

His research interests included the examination of intersection of mass media and the role of LGBTQ individuals in society.

He served on numerous committees within the department, including the Curriculum and Lecturers committees. He was the founding editor of the department newsletter, which clearly was a labor of love. The last time I talked with him, he told me the latest edition was about ready to be published.

Andrew also was instrumental in the establishment of Public Relations as its own major within our department. He was very active in other parts of the university and in the community. He was an active member in the United Church of Christ/Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and a volunteer for Meals on Wheels.

This truly is a great loss. We will surely miss his presence in Mendocino Hall.

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- **Dr. Shawna Malvini Redden** received the Outstanding Faculty Award for Scholarly and Creative Activity for the College of Arts and Letters. Dr. Malvini Redden also finished her extended term as the Second Vice President of the Western States Communication Association after successfully facilitating the Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference and other graduate program events at the annual convention in February in Portland, Oregon.

- Journalism alumnus **Brandon Gardner** is working as a video journalist WALA in Mobile, Alabama, his hometown. In a note of thanks to **Lecturer George Warren**, Brandon wrote: “I played football at a community college which brought me out to California. I found Sacramento State after football ended and got my degree. After Sac State I found 49ers Cal Hi Sports, which airs on NBC Sports California. I freelanced during the 2021 football season working the camera. The experience paid off, and now I just received a video journalist position here at Fox 10 in my hometown. Thank you for everything you taught. I definitely feel prepared!”

- **Adria Watson**, BA Journalism 2020, has been named the digital producer for the *Boston Globe’s* Great Divide enterprise team. The team examines issues of race, class, and opportunities in K-12 education in Boston and state-



Brandon Gardner at WALA.

wide.

For the past two years, Watson has been an education reporter for *The Connecticut Mirror* in its Report for America position. Watson was an intern and reporter for CalMatters while she was a student at Sac State.

- **Lecturer Timi Ross Poeppelman** spoke as a panelist at the Directors of Educational Technology/ California Higher Education 36th annual conference in December. The title of the session was “Fostering Community for Flexible Teaching: How to Facilitate Conversations about the Next Phase of Teaching with Technology in Higher Education.”

- A selection of film students will screen their work at The Verge Center for the Arts at 5 p.m. April 21 as part of U-Create for the Festival of the Arts. The screening is called “J Street Films, in Real Life.”

- The Communication Studies’ Film Program and Theater and Dance will host actor **Missi Pyle** during the Festival of the Arts in the University Theater from 1:30-4:30 p.m. April 20.

- Communication Studies interns **Sofia Plasencia**, **Kimberly Jackson**, and **Chase Abbott** worked at the California School PR Association annual conference, where **Lecturer Trinette Marquis** is the executive director. They assisted with checking in conference attendees, took photos at sessions and generally helped folks with questions they had about the program and event locations. The conference was held at the Hyatt Regency March 9-12 and hosted 300 school communicators throughout the state.

- Professor Kathy Kasic’s film, *The Lake at the Bottom of the World* will go On Tour with Wild and Scenic Film Festival, the largest Environmental film festival in the United States. It will tour many towns as part of the traveling programming.

The film screened in February as part of the Association for the American Advancement of Science and the Frozen



Sofia Plasencia, Kimberly Jackson, and Chase Abbott.

River Film Festival.

On Earth Day, the film will have a screening and Q&A with nine scientists and filmmakers for the LMI Women’s Forum. LMI is a consultancy dedicated to powering a future-ready, high-performing government, drawing from expertise in digital and analytic solutions, logistics, and management advisory services.

The Lake at the Bottom of the World will also screen in the International Competition of the 57th International Festival of Science Documentary Films Academia Film Olomouc, taking place from April 26 to May 1, in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Alumna **Molli Fagan** is helping with social media and distribution for the film.

- Film undergraduate student **Sophie Biehle** will be helping **Professor Kathy Kasic** with a film about climate change research in Greenland.

- **Lecturer Stu VanAirsdale** received the 2021 Educator of the Year Award (University Division) from the California Journalism & Media Affiliates for his work as the faculty adviser of *The State Hornet*. The CJMA comprises journalism educators and news professionals from the California College Media Association and the California News Publishers Association, with support from the California Press Foundation.

Scholarship set in honor of Kincaid Goldberg

Professor Emerita **Marlene von Friedrichs-Fitzwater** has established a scholarship for Public Relations students in honor of **Nancy Kincaid Goldberg**, a longtime lecturer in the department. Nancy received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Sac State.

Donations can be made in Nancy's honor to the Nancy Kincaid Goldberg Memorial Communication Studies Endowed Scholarship. Checks should be made payable to The University Foundation at Sacramento State, with "Nan-



David Goldberg, Nancy Kincaid Goldberg's husband, with Dr. Marlene von Friedrichs-Fitzwater, Department Chair Mark Ludwig, Nancy's daughter Allison Kincaid-Nervino, and Tess Marie Dyer, director of development.

cy Kincaid Goldberg Scholarship" in the memo, and mailed to The University

Foundation, 6000 J St., Sacramento, CA 95819-6030.

France trip is back on

Seven undergraduate and three graduate students will travel to

France with **Dr. Jacqueline Irwin** on May 30-June 7, where they will study Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism at the La Muse Artists and Writers Retreat in Labastide-Esparbairenque, France. The undergrads are **Kaitlyn Hay, Anissa Espinoza, Brittna Melvin, Hannah Guzman, Maddie Kizirian, Madeleine McDaid, and Melissa Vios**. The grad students are **Mariam Abbas, Monét Bradford, and Alaric Adams**. The COVID-19 pandemic had put the program on hiatus the past two summers.



Koester named interim chancellor

Dr. Jolene Koester, a former professor and department chair in Communication Studies, has been named interim chancellor for the California State University system.

"The CSU and its 23 campuses make a significant impact on California and the nation, and I am deeply humbled by the opportunity to serve as their interim chancellor,"

Koester said in a press release. "The commitment of our world-class faculty, staff, administrators, executives, and trustees deeply align with my values to provide life-changing educational opportunities for our students."

Koester also served as Sac State provost before being named president of Cal State Northridge. She retired in 2011.

She replaces Joseph Castro, who resigned as chancellor after *USA Today* reported about a sexual harassment case involving another administrator while Castro was president at Fresno State.



Koester