

## President's Corner



**Deborah Seiler**  
President

The Renaissance Society  
of Sacramento

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**Renaissance Website:**  
<https://csus.edu/rensoc>



### Key Dates

April 3

Board of Directors meeting on  
Zoom

April 7

First Friday ASI Food Pantry  
and Pizza

April 10

Voting begins for Board of  
Directors

April 21-22

Give Sac State Day fundraiser

April 30

Multicultural Celebration  
Party at Arden Park

May 5

Voting ends for Board of  
Directors



As proud citizens of this country, we pay our taxes, we serve on juries, we support our schools and universities, we contribute to charities and, perhaps, we work at our polling places or even run for office. One of the most important acts of citizenship is voting.

Our dear Renaissance Society is dependent upon you, our members, for similar acts of "citizenship." This month, we ask you to step up and cast your votes for the committed people who offer their time and talents to support our Society by serving on the Board of Directors. The officers are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Controller. Officers serve one-year terms and may run again.

In addition, the Board consists of six Member-at-Large (MAL) positions which are for two-year terms. Each year, three of the MAL positions are on the ballot, and this year there is a fourth position which will be filled for one year to complete the remainder of a vacancy.

Our By-Laws allow the voting to be conducted by email for members who are on our Constant Contact email list and by paper ballot for those who are not. Our By-Laws also require that one third (about 567) of our members (currently 1,700) must vote in order for the election to be valid. Although we call it an election, candidates do not compete against one another. Members who wish to be considered for a Board position submit their applications to a Nominating Committee who evaluate the written applications and conduct interviews with the candidates.

This year's Nominating Committee has done a superlative job and completed the process in record time. Kudos to Nominating Committee Chair, Susan Brackenhoff and members Barbara Davis-Lyman and Shari Lowen for their dedication and hard work.

Each candidate on the ballot has submitted a statement describing their background and service to Renaissance. Take a moment to read about their fascinating lives and support their endeavors by giving them your vote. Voting takes place from Monday, April 10 to Friday, May 5.

Our current Board has been incredibly productive this past year. We have endowed our first scholarship, created a continuous registration process, begun to collect demographic information, won the ASI Food Pantry's Golden Plate Award, brought back social functions, and maintained highest quality programs through our peer-to-peer learning environment as well as outside speakers.

Because of the Board members' efforts, you have been able to enjoy a wonderful opportunity to learn, connect, and share in the many benefits we offer. Help us continue to sustain our efforts by casting your votes.

Enjoy your Spring!  
Deborah

## Renaissance Society 2023-2025 Board of Directors Nominees

The Renaissance Nominating Committee is pleased to present, in accordance with Renaissance Society bylaws, the following slate of eligible candidates. The RS Board of Directors agreed during their March 6 Board Meeting to once again follow the election guidelines established in Section VI.D of the Renaissance Society's Bylaws:

- 1) This year's election shall be by email for members who are on our Constant Contact email list and by mail-in paper ballot for those who are not.
- 2) Email ballots shall be used to the maximum extent feasible.
- 3) Mail-in paper ballots will be used when otherwise necessary.

Please vote for President, Vice President, Controller, and Secretary. And also vote for 3, two-year term, Members-at-Large and 1, one-year term Member-at-Large to fill a vacancy. Voting begins April 10, 2023, by email or mail-in ballots. Deadline for all votes is May 6, 2023



### **President: Deborah Seiler**

My learning journey began in the Chico Public Library, continued to the University of Vienna, Austria, and then to UC Berkeley. After living in Germany during the Vietnam War era, I returned to California and became Secretary of State

March Fong Eu's Chief of Elections and Political Reform, and provided elections advice and observations in many countries including Azerbaijan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Ireland, Macedonia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Romania. I left to become Chief Consultant to California's Assembly Elections and Reapportionment Committee, then joined an elections printing and voting system company. I wrote and published a monthly newsletter, *The Seiler Report*, and served on the California Fair Political Practices Commission.

In my late career I administered elections for Solano and San Diego counties. I joined the Renaissance Society in 2017, chaired the Communications and Marketing Committee, writing over 100 Weekly Updates and three Annual Reports. As Vice President, and now as President, I sit in on nearly all committee meetings, enjoy our social functions, and promote our philanthropic goals. With my husband, Jim Hodges, we enjoy our two sons, Warren and Taylor, and their significant others, and three grandchildren, and our hound dog, Elvis.



### **Vice President: Debbie Martinez**

After retiring in 2018 from the California ISO, the Electric Grid Operator, I joined Renaissance Society right away. I was first attracted by the opportunity to mentor students at the Dreamer Resource Center. Once I saw the catalog and the plethora of seminars, I was hooked.

I graduated with a B.A. from Mills College, in Oakland, California. I started my career at Pacific Bell (AT&T) in San Francisco in computer programming when the computer industry was new and just opening to women. Soon, I was tapped by the company to help diversify the organization. This launched my career in human resources. When my husband's career brought us to the Sacramento area, I left Pacific Bell after 17 years. It was 2000, and the electricity industry was going through deregulation, much like telecommunications had experienced. The ISO needed to hire a lot of people – fast. They asked me to help establish their recruiting, hiring and diversity outreach. After retirement, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion are still my passion.

I have been the Membership, Diversity and Community Engagement Committee (MDCE) chair for two years. I have chaired the Orientation and Open House and presented the Renaissance Society Diversity & Inclusion award at the Annual Meeting. I recently worked on both the membership database and events working groups to implement process improvements. I am currently helping to design the 2023 Summer Program. I have really enjoyed meeting so many interesting and intellectually stimulating members. I am looking forward to expanding my service to Renaissance in the role of Vice President.



### **Controller: Norv Wellsfry**

In my professional career, I acquired the financial and managerial skills that are particularly relevant to the Controller position. In addition to teaching Accounting and Computer Information Science, I held a number of administrative positions that utilized my analytical, financial and accounting skills. Most recently as the Vice-President of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, I had primary responsibilities for assessing the financial strength, effectiveness, and integrity of community colleges in the West.

I have been a board member and officer in a number of community and professional organizations at the local, State, and national level and served as President in both State and National organizations. I understand the skills and attitudes needed to make an organization like Renaissance strong and relevant to its members. During my membership in Renaissance, I have made numerous presentations and developed and led Seminars on the Middle East. I am a Member of the Renaissance Board of Directors and am an active member of the Finance and Administrative, Seminar, Resource Development, and Long Range Planning Committees. I also volunteer with several community organizations.



**Secretary: Susan Brackenhoff**

The Renaissance Society secretarial position is vital to our organization. Concise and accurate minutes are essential when reviewing past meeting decisions and recording future plans. The Renaissance Society has

monthly Board meetings with minutes that are available to all members. I have already taken minutes for RS Board meetings on several occasions. I am currently serving as Interim Vice President of Renaissance Society as well as being chair of the Gerontology Committee. This month the RS Nominating Committee, of which I am also chair, submitted a proposed slate of officers after several months of recruiting, informing and interviewing candidates. In January of this year, I was part of the team that organized the RS Open House.

Renaissance Society has a special place in my heart since I joined in 2014. My husband, Ken, and I moved to Sacramento in 2014 when he took a position here and I basically retired at that time. I had been at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois for 26 years. As Regional Director of an off-campus site, there was a myriad of responsibilities such as recruiting and reviewing faculty, managing enrollment staff, bookstore staff, philanthropy efforts, scheduling auditorium events, college counselor, community liaison, and off-campus services.

I was appointed to Economic Development Board for the City of Litchfield and served for 18 years. I served as an officer secretary for the State of Illinois Community College Economic Development Council. I served as officer secretary (as well as other offices) for the St. Francis Hospital Foundation Board. I have three adult children: Melissa in Salt Lake

City, Utah; Megan in Cincinnati, Ohio; Michael in Madison, Wisconsin.



**Two Year Member-at-Large: Carol Barake**

I joined the Renaissance Society shortly after my retirement in 2019 and was immediately impressed with the excellent level of the courses and the instructor's dedication and professionalism. The members are lively and engaging. I knew I had found a great place to combine my love of learning with community involvement.

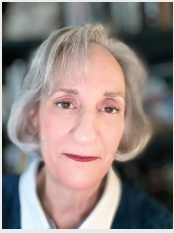
As a member of the Scholarship Committee and a student mentor in the Gerontology Program for the past two years, I learned more about the Renaissance Society and its mission. I am interested in the Member at Large position on the Board to continue working with our organization and to build a strong organization to meet the future needs of our members.

The career experience that I feel is most relevant to this position is my consulting work with public agencies and nonprofits throughout my career in occupational health and safety and risk management. I understand the importance of the Board maintaining a strong connection to the members and ensuring that member needs are addressed by the Board in strategic planning, as well as the day-to-day outreach efforts of a liaison to foster communication. I also have experience working in volunteer organizations where the need for clear direction and communication are important to growing membership and maintaining strong, well-funded programs. My background included developing curriculum and delivering courses to adult learners in areas related to my profession.

The future of the Renaissance is based on our great instructors and developing new instructors to meet the needs of our members in the future. I feel that I can offer insights into this process based on my experience developing in-house training programs as well as open enrollment courses for UCD Extension programs in occupational and environmental health.

Finally, I am a graduate of California State University, Northridge (MS Occupational and Environmental Health Science) as well as my two daughters who both earned their degrees in the CSU system. It is a great joy to be back on campus learning and contributing to the success of our generation, as well as extending a hand to the students today.

(more candidates on the next page)



**Two Year Member-at-Large: Janet Heath**

I have been a Renaissance Society (RS) member since 2015 attending many classes and forums, supporting courses and forums as a Zoom technical host, and working on the semi-annual Renaissance Society survey. I like to travel and have planned three overseas trips in 2023.

My professional work included five years at Gavilan Community College (GCC), eight years at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) and retiring from UC Davis (UCD) after 18 years. One of my projects at the UNC-CH Injury Prevention Research Center was a collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control on the first national teleconference for state and local health departments on injury prevention and control.

In 1998 I was hired by the UCD where I managed projects in three different departments over 18 years. At the Medical Training Center (MTC) I was responsible for creating curricula for health care and legal professionals on the medical examination emphasizing the forensic procedures for collecting and handling of evidence for sexual assault, domestic violence, and child and elder abuse victims.

I switched to the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) where I supervised registered nurses, social workers and support staff on a Medi-Cal funded, long-term care coordination program for frail, low income older adults wishing to remain in their homes.

Rounding out my career, I managed the Office of Continuing Medical Education putting together conferences, one-hour Grand Rounds and online courses for medical professionals. I have served on many community task forces and planning committees advocating for older adults and persons with disabilities and their access to appropriate healthcare.

I look forward to my ongoing participation in Renaissance Society and working with its board and staff.



**Two Year Member-at-Large: Frank Martinez**

I joined Renaissance in 2020 so I could take Ken Cross's class and find my post-retirement mission in life. I had already been a garage band musician, a graduate of San Diego State, an Air Force Pilot, a Silicon Valley project manager, the Supplier Diversity Director at PG&E, the Supplier Diversity Manager

at SMUD, a husband for 33 years and a parent for 30 years. But as I learned about the distinguished history of every Renaissance member I met, I was attracted by the opportunity to learn from them and share with them. Applying to be on the Renaissance board seemed the next appropriate step.

My passions still include music, flying and supporting Diversity and Inclusion. Along the way I also got an MBA, but I am most interested in promoting community outreach and inclusion to help Renaissance grow. I also want to help Renaissance run more efficiently and effectively for all those it serves. As a board member at large, I will support the Board president as directed and will support committee chairs who may wish assistance. It is a privilege to serve Renaissance and its members.



**One Year Member-at-Large: Dale Good**

I have had a varied career, serving in the Navy as both enlisted and officer with tours to countries on both coasts of Africa and throughout the Caribbean. After graduate school, I managed complex programs and policy priorities with multiple stakeholders. I served as an executive for the Minnesota Supreme Court, and the state Public Safety Agency, including roles as Chief Information Officer, Executive Director, and Research Director; and I served as an adjunct instructor in the State University system, teaching constitutional law courses part time, evenings, while employed full time with the Court. More recently, I served as an executive for the California Judicial Council, Administrative Office of the Courts.

After retirement I provided consulting services to Santa Clara County's Public Safety and Justice Systems Program. I advanced complex policy and funding priorities with the Justices, Appellate Court Judges, trial court Chief Judges, and Court Executives, as well as with the State Legislature and key members of the Governor's Cabinet, as well as with local agency leaders in law enforcement, prosecution, public defense, probation and corrections. I also advanced these priorities with the CEOs of the largest corporations serving the state to gain their support. I served on an advisory board for the Federal District Court and presented at national court conferences, regional bar association, prosecutor, and probation conferences, and presented at an Executive Sessions on Sentencing and Corrections at Stanford Law School.

I consider myself a life-long learner and I am very impressed with the quality of the Renaissance Society Program and am honored to offer my service.



## FORUMS

### **April 7— Andrew Waterhouse: Wine Quality and Climate Change**

Andrew L Waterhouse

Andrew Waterhouse earned a BS in Chemistry from the University of Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from UC Berkeley.

In 1991, he joined the Department of Viticulture and Enology at UC Davis, researching wine oxidation as well as various aspects of wine chemistry, with an emphasis on phenolic compounds. His graduate students and post-docs are wine-makers, researchers and faculty across California and around the globe. Climate is a key factor in grape characteristics and wine quality. Dr. Waterhouse will discuss how changing climate may affect famous wine growing areas and what mitigation strategies are possible to address the resultant impact on grape growing and wine production. 109



### **April 14—Shirley Weber, California Secretary of State: Reparations**

Dr. Shirley Weber, California's first African American Secretary of State, will speak about her efforts to create the first statewide reparations task force (CA-AB3121), a two-year effort to study the consequences of slavery and systemic racism against African Americans in California and develop reparations proposals for descendants of slaves. Dr. Weber will be accompanied by her Chief of Archives, Tamarra Martin, and Deputy Secretary of State for Voter Education and Outreach, Jannell Jackson. Together they will be able to field questions about reparations, history, and elections. 86



### **April 21--Fernando Ponce: Protect Yourself from Fraud**

Fernando Ponce

Fernando Ponce is an Outreach Specialist for the California Department of Financial Protection & Innovation (DFPI). His areas of responsibility span northern California, the central coast, and the bay area, providing informational presentations in English and Spanish to students, senior citizen populations, veteran groups, new Americans and the military community. He will educate us on the current and emerging scams involving various financial services, including cyber-crime, bank fraud, online scams and phishing attacks. 74



### **April 28—Gunner Johnson and Christian Branscombe: The Healing Journey of Restorative Justice**

Gunner Johnson

Christian Branscombe

Gunner Johnson spent two decades struggling with PTSD and a spinal injury after being shot multiple times in 1994. Gunner will share the restorative justice journey meeting his perpetrator Christian Branscombe to relive and heal their trauma twenty-three years after the shooting. Gunner and Christian have become close friends. They have created a parole board program that accompanies the offender and survivors of violent crimes to transform a deeply re-injuring event (the parole board hearing) into something that has potential to mend deep wounds. Gunner and Christian will discuss ongoing prison reform advances and helping formerly incarcerated prisoners reenter Sac State University through Project Rebound. 105 ❖



## MEMBER PROFILE

# Jack Jennings Found His Calling in Book Publishing

By Judy A. Lewis

Jack Jennings' career path has taken him down many roads. He has published or produced leading engineering texts, best-selling computer books, science and social science college textbooks, a PBS Television Series, NY Times best sellers, New Age Inspirational books, marijuana grow books, cookbooks and more.



He was born in Brooklyn, New York, and remembers traveling as an only child with his parents to California. It was shortly after World War II and there was a long waiting list of buyers hoping to purchase a new automobile, so the family made the journey in a new Jeep. His father was novelist who served in the Navy, and his mother taught history in Washington during the war.

Eventually he found himself at the University of Oregon, where he reports his primary focus was on football and girls. During his senior year, Jack wondered "What subject do I have enough credits in order to graduate?" The answer: Political Science.

Jack became the cooking steward in his frat house and the forest service, and relishes cooking to this day. Following his graduation, Jack served in the Marine Corps, including 14 months in Okinawa.

After holding three corporate sales jobs in 20 months with Union Oil, Reynold Metals and Koret of California, Jack reached the conclusion that there was no future for him in those industries. He reports "finding my calling as a book rep with McGraw-Hill publishing company." After a few years in the field, he became the editor for Electrical Engineering hand computer programs and then editor in chief for those titles.

He was then hired by Harper and Row in New York which brought him back to California and a change of focus to working with instructors from community colleges. He started Canfield Press where they served students who were less prepared, and published best

sellers in Biology, Economics and Psychology. This led to Harper sending him to the Harvard Advanced Management program.

Next he reports "beginning my real adventure as an entrepreneur." Jack started a publishing company, which in spite of a NY Times best seller, was caught in the Carter administration economy, "which killed us." With a friend, he began a consulting business, just as desktop publishing was taking off. "I never thought of retiring, because I loved what I did."

Jack's partner of 12 years, Barbara Davis-Lyman, introduced him to the Renaissance Society and they joined in 2016. Although he had never taught a class, he provided two seminars revolving around the first 100 days of the Trump administration and the second 100 days.

Jack's other contributions include serving as an MLB and then Comptroller where he initiated the finance committee and current budgeting and financial controls. After leaving this he began the popular Tuesday Speakers Series which presents Zoom speakers on a wide variety of topics every semester.

Jack's last real job before retiring and moving to Sacramento was with the leading marijuana publisher and marijuana icon Ed Rosenthal which introduced him to a new culture and industry. On April 25, Jack will present a seminar showing how the industry has evolved from being barely legal in California to being accepted in 19-20 states today, as part of the Tuesday Speakers. It will include an update on the medical benefits from guest speakers.



## *In Memoriam*

Robert J. Ocnosak who joined Renaissance in 2000 passed away on February 1, 2023. Bob and his wife Ann Carroll joined at the urging of Bob Heilman, co-founder of the Society, and he was a faithful member and contributor for many years. The Sac State campus was very familiar and loved by him as he had been a staff member and retiree after serving thirty years there.

## LITERARY READINGS ON DIVERSITY

By Robert Benedetti and Roberta Gleeson

*In our on-going commitment to President Nelsen's campus-wide plan to end discrimination and prejudice, we present our latest:*

**“Calling for a Blanket Dance”** - Oscar Hokeah, (Native American/Mexican). Amazon: “A moving and deeply engaging debut novel about a young Native American man finding strength in his familial identity, from a stellar new voice in fiction.”

**“Our Missing Hearts”** - Celeste Ng, (Chinese). Named a Best Book of 2022 by People, TIME Magazine, The Washington Post, USA Today, NPR, Los Angeles Times, and Oprah Daily, etc.

**“Probably Ruby”** - Lisa Bird-Wilson, (Native American). Washington Post: “In a time when truth is coveted, ‘Probably Ruby’ is a refreshing reminder of the realities of forced Indigenous adoption and family separation. Bird-Wilson’s writing is at times poetic and ever compelling. We are fortunate to have her and Ruby among us.”

**“Celebrating Chinese New Year”** - Eugenia Chu, (kids). “‘Celebrating Chinese New Year’ is packed with fascinating facts, games and crafts, and a yummy dumpling recipe to celebrate Chinese New Year. Eugenia combines her gift of storytelling with fun and easy to-dos to make for a perfectly festive Chinese New Year. This book will be an instant favorite for families around the world!” — Michele Wong McSween, author and creator of Gordon & Li.



### DINING TOGETHER

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at

**Zinfandel Grille, 2384 Fair Oaks Blvd.  
at 5:30 PM on April 12.**  
([www.zinfandelgrille.com](http://www.zinfandelgrille.com)).

Please **RSVP** to Cheryl Nelson:  
[slynnsearch@yahoo.com](mailto:slynnsearch@yahoo.com), or,  
(916) 421-0407  
no later than April 7.

Separate checks will be provided. Parking is available.

Diners will be required to conform to County COVID health requirements.



## It's Party Time Again...and We're Celebrating Our Diversity

Yes, our social leader, Allan Keown, and our MDCE Committee Chair Debbie Martinez have yet another wonderful party idea to celebrate both the end of the semester and our collective diversity and heritage.

This semester's theme is: **“Our Multicultural World”** and we are inviting you to bring a dish that celebrates a tradition either in your own family or a culture you particularly enjoy. Be prepared to tell the group why you chose this dish and what its meaning is to you. There are electrical outlets for crock pots and other warmers for hot dishes. We'll take lots of pictures for our June Recorder and the Annual Report and generally have a terrific time.

**When:** Sunday, April 30, noon to 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** Arden Park, 1000 La Sierra Drive.

**Food/Desserts:** We will provide a special main dish in honor of Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month and yummy desserts.

**Bring:** Your family's favorite appetizer/salad/main dish to share and describe.

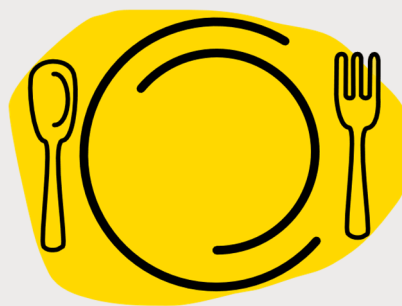
**Drinks:** We will provide water and ice but bring your own preferred beverage — **NO GLASS!**

**Dress:** Casual.

**Lawn Chairs:** Bring one if you don't like hard chairs or benches.

**Music:** TBD (we have some ideas but would love yours, too)

These parties need folks to help set up and clean up. Please consider contacting Allan to sign up or ask questions. Contact him at 916-501-8833. Many hands make light work! See you there!



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It's April and that means it's **Give Sac State Day!** This is your chance to contribute to Renaissance scholarship and special projects funds during Sac State's 36-hour online fundraising blitz on April 21-22.

The university gives special recognition to our donations during this annual event and last year they matched our donations by over \$600 due to the level of our giving. Help Renaissance achieve our goal of supporting seven \$3,000 scholarships to needy students!

