

## President's



## Corner

**Friday, Dec. 2**—First Friday Envelopes, Holiday Party, Engrained Restaurant, 4-6pm

**Monday, Dec. 5**—Board of Directors Meeting, 2pm

**Friday, Dec. 9** —RS Semester Ends

**Monday, Jan. 9**—Spring Catalog Posted

**Friday, Jan. 13**—Orientation & Open House

**Monday, Jan. 16**—Program Enrollment Opens

**Friday, Jan. 20**—Program Leader Workshop, Hybrid

**Monday, Feb. 6**—RS classes Begin

### Renaissance Website:

<https://tinyurl.com/rensociety/>

**Deborah Seiler**  
President

The Renaissance Society  
of Sacramento  
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In many cultures and faiths, the month of December holds special meaning as a time of giving.

As the days grow dark and cold, we bring light into our homes with candles and decorative lights. We may enjoy displays of cheerful lights on city and residential streets. Perhaps we prepare special foods that nourish our bodies and our hearts or listen to music that brings back fond memories.

It is also a time of year when we consider those less fortunate.

Renaissance members are truly fortunate to have many opportunities to share with Sac State students as well as other members in the organization, and most are tax deductible.

Last month, I shared our collective gratitude for all the wonderful benefits of our affiliation with the campus and the Hornet Family. During this season of giving, here are several opportunities to reciprocate by going to the yellow “Donate” button on our website:

- Renaissance Society Scholarship Fund for Sac State students
- ASI Food Pantry
- Renaissance Society Special Programs Fund for joint programs with Sac State

And for those on your personal gift list, here are ways to celebrate and benefit Renaissance:

- Gift of Membership
- Gift in Memory of a loved one
- Gift in Honor of a person you wish to celebrate



A “Give Something Extra” gift benefits the Renaissance Society generally and can be made by sending a check to the office. Membership and other gifts are not tax deductible but are sure to bring comfort and joy to the lucky recipients.

As classes wind down for the semester, take time to learn a new tradition, connect with old friends, and share with Sac State students and those you love and admire.

On behalf of the Renaissance Society, I wish you and yours a holiday season filled with warmth, kindness, and good health.

## DINING TOGETHER

By Cheryl Nelson

The Dining Together group will meet only once this December on Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at 5:30PM at Vinoteca Restaurant, 3535 Fair Oaks Boulevard. (<https://www.vinotecarestaurant.com>)

Individual checks will be provided. Parking is available in the lot near Crepe Danielle's. Enter the building and walk down the hallway to Vinoteca. RSVP to Cheryl Nelson, [lynnsearch@yahoo.com](mailto:lynnsearch@yahoo.com), no later than December 9, 2022: Seating is limited. You will receive a confirmation email if space is available.



## 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:

- ⇒ ⇒ *We Too Sing America*—Deepa Lym, (youth) (The New Press)
- ⇒ ⇒ *A Little Spot of Belonging*—Diane Alber, (children) (Diane Alber Art LLC)
- ⇒ ⇒ *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*—Charles C. Mann (Knopf)
- ⇒ ⇒ *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*—Theodora Kroeber, Karl Kroeber, et al., (Ishi Press)
- ⇒ ⇒ *Scenes from My Life: A Memoir*—Michael K. Williams, (Random House)



## FORUMS

December 2

### State Senator BEN ALLEN

#### What's Happening in California's Environmental Legislation?



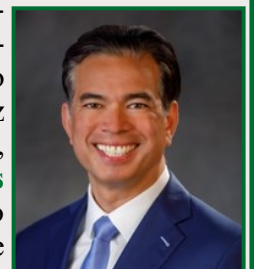
Representing California's 26th State Senate District including the Hollywood, Westside, and coastal South Bay communities of Los Angeles County, **Senator Ben Allen** chairs the Senate Environmental Quality Committee and the Legislature's Environmental Caucus. He received a Bachelor's degree from Harvard, a Master's degree from the University of Cambridge, and a Juris Doctor degree from UC Berkeley. A leader in addressing the impacts of plastics pollution and climate change, he has worked to bolster our state's climate resiliency amidst increasing risks from wildfires, droughts, and sea-level rise. Senator Allen will provide an informative roundup of the most crucial environmental legislation of 2022.

December 9

### Attorney General ROB BONTA

#### California's Chief Law Officer Addresses Our Most Significant Legal Challenges

Growing up as the son of activists during the civil rights movement, and with parents who worked alongside Cesar Chavez for the United Farm Workers, **Attorney General Rob Bonta's** fight for justice is hardwired into his DNA. In 2012 he was the first Filipino American to win election to the California Legislature and in April 2021 he became California's first Attorney General of Filipino descent. Since then, he has worked tirelessly as the "Attorney for the people of California". Rob has passed many major reforms that reversed long-standing injustices, and he will provide us with an update on the most important legal issues and challenges that face our grand state of California. This presentation will be dedicated to his father, Warren Bonta, a long-time Renaissance Society member, who passed away unexpectedly earlier this year.



## RENAISSANCE EXPERIENCES DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS AT SAC STATE

By Debbie Martinez

The Serna Center, in collaboration with the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Sac State commemorated Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) on November 2, 2022. This holiday, celebrated in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries, honors loved ones who have passed away. Over two days, mourning is exchanged for celebration, and families create ofrendas (offerings) in the form of “*altares*” (altars) decorated with flowers, photos, and the favorite foods of those honored.

Renaissance members were invited to attend, and I stopped by along with President, Deborah Seiler to see what the students had created.

Student groups created altars to honor role models and loved ones that were important to them. These altars are not for worshipping; rather, they’re meant to welcome spirits back to the realm of the living. As such, they’re loaded with offerings—water to quench thirst after the long journey, food, family photos, and a candle for each of the loved ones represented. Marigolds are the traditional flowers used to decorate the altars because the scattered marigold petals guide wandering souls back to their place of rest.



Jessica Gutierrez of the Serna Center and Kim Gomez of the Dreamer Center

Colorful altars with photos, stories and memorabilia were displayed on tables lining the Foothill Suite at University Union. The themes included sports, music, civil rights, migrants who have perished during their journey, and LGBTQ. A partic-

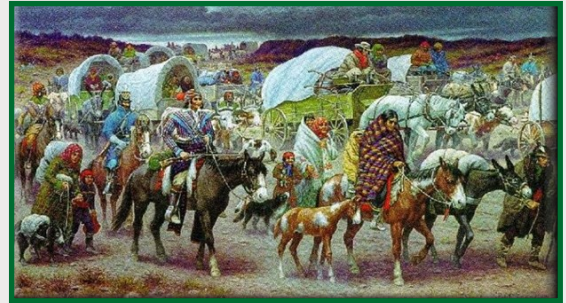
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## ETHNIC REFLECTIONS Reflections of Ethnic America

By Darryl Omar Freeman

Native Americans demand a “seat” at the table.

### Cherokee Nation “trail of tears” removal to Oklahoma



There are those who accuse teachers of Critical Race Theory of being a contributor to the divisiveness among residents of our society. As a professional educator in the Ethnic Studies discipline, I contend that studying and teaching of how folks of difference races or ethnicities navigate life in this diverse American society will lead to a better understanding of each other, which in turn leads to a more harmonious society. Point in case in this article is the identification on how a past governmental action has the potential of a significant influence in contemporary times.

In 1835 U.S. officials traveled to the Cherokee Nation’s capital in Georgia with the blessing of much of the general colonial population to sign a treaty forcibly removing thousands of Native Americans from their ancestral lands in the southern United States and resettled them all in what at the time was the territory of Oklahoma. The trauma of that action which caused the death of thousands of Native Americans of five different “civilized” tribes, impacts the attitude of many Native Americans today in terms of participation in our democratic process.

One of the provisions of the treaty approved by President Andrew Jackson guaranteed Native Americans representation in the United States Congress. That provision was never instituted. In contemporary times Native Americans by virtue of Casino and natural resource revenue have a more prominent role in the democratic process in this country. The 574 federally

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## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

By Deborah Seiler

The unique character of Renaissance is that it is a volunteer organization. With minimal paid staff, we function almost entirely by virtue of the tremendous dedication, talent, and hard work of our members. This month, I would like to acknowledge and thank two of the many volunteers who have made major contributions to our organization:

**Debbie Martinez:** Debbie has been a Renaissance member since 2018 and has served on one of our most important committees, the Membership, Diversity, and Community Engagement Committee (MDCE). She served as co-chair from August 1, 2021, until July 1, 2022 and then took over as chair. In this capacity, she has played a major role in our August and January Orientation sessions, helped produce our Membership Directories, promoted membership growth, and explored ways to expand the diversity of our membership. In addition, she makes presentations to community groups to inform them about the many advantages of Renaissance and urges them to participate. She actively participates in various working groups, including the Events and Database working groups. Debbie formalized the Renaissance Society Diversity & Inclusion Award which is presented at the Annual meeting. She also revitalized our partnership with Sac State's U-Mentor program which aims to promote student success. She is currently mentoring 2 students and loves working with them. She always offers cogent advice and great suggestions.

**Allan Keown:** Allan has been a member since 2010. At Marilyn MacBride's urging, he helped to establish the MDCE Committee in 2015, worked with Maryellen Burns and the other MDCE members to launch the ASI food pantry program in 2017, and over several years helped to write an initial draft of the history of RS initial years, 1986 to 1996. He nurtured the "gift of membership program" over two years into its inception in 2018. His seminar leadership since 2012 has included contemporary documentaries, TED talks, Blue Zones, and Slavery as well as a long-term service on the Program Committee and Board. Along with ten others, he recently helped to organize a new SIG for this Spring entitled "Interrupting Racism and Promoting Social Justice Through Conversation, Friendship, and Activities." Believing strongly in the importance of social activities, as a mem-

ber of the social committee he has organized countless social functions—most recently the Cinco de Mayo celebration last May and the Back to School BBQ in September. Allan has a great heart, generous nature, and a lifelong dedication to justice.

### *Pg 3 Ethnic Reflections Cont'd—*

recognized tribes not only vote in significant numbers but also contribute financially to the campaigns of many of the candidates running for elective offices.

With this newfound social political status, the Cherokee Nation as well as other Native Nations are lobbying Congress to meet the obligations of the 1835 treaty and designate a non-voting seat in the Congress of the United States. They point out that the 430 thousand Cherokee citizens represent more than the combined population of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, all of which have their own delegates in Congress.

Information shared in educational venues allow U.S. residents a better understanding of the motivation and rationale for social political actions by groups of ethnic Americans to gain more influence in a society that has had a significant impact on how they navigate life in this evolving United States Society.

### *Pg 3 Dia de Los Muertos Cont'd —*

ularly moving altar, honored beloved professors and namesakes of the Serna Center, former Mayor Joe Serna and his wife, Dr. Isabel Serna.

Kimberly Gomez, Coordinator of the Dreamer Resource Center and Jessica Gutierrez of the Serna Center were pleased to see and meet the Renaissance members who attended. They invited us to participate next year by having our own guided tour of the "*altares*" and possibly Renaissance would create and display an altar too. Deborah and I let her know we would welcome the opportunity!

## Member Profile

### Jerry Lagomarsino Has Lived a Life of Giving

*By Judy A. Lewis*



Spanish, French and Italian—Jerry Lagomarsino can converse in all these languages. A native of Sacramento, he believes he is related to numerous Lagomarsinos in the area. His grandfather, an immigrant from Italy in 1875, developed a ranch of fruit trees behind what is now Corti Brothers. And his grandmother, also from Italy, arrived from her native city of Lagomarsino.

He describes his academic journey this way: “I attended Christian Brothers High School which was located at 21st and Broadway then later moved in my junior year to a new location on MLK Blvd. I graduated in 1958. My college/seminary years were spent on a hill in Los Gatos, CA. This included two years of being a novice in ‘basic training,’ an almost a monastic routine. There was plenty of silence, prayer, physical labor, picking grapes and K.P. This consisted of taking vows as a Jesuit (2 years of classical studies) including a lot of Latin and Greek, plus the equivalent of the first two years of required courses in any college (e.g. English, history, basic psych, math, and general science at Sacred Heart Novitiate). We were isolated on a hill and not on a college campus. These years were credited through Santa Clara University.”

Jerry came down from the hill to teach Spanish and English at St. Ignatius High School in San Francisco from 1965 to 1968.

He goes on to report “I was then situated on another hill in Spokane WA, Mount St. Michael’s, for three years for Philosophical studies done at the Seminary and credited through Gonzaga University. Simultaneously I was on campus classes with regular folks not just other seminarians to get my degree in English Lit. plus a minor in Spanish. (1962-1965). In 1968, he left the Society of Jesus during his first year of theological studies and was not ordained as a

priest. He had been studying at Alma College associated with Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

After leaving the Jesuits, Jerry taught in the Sacramento City School district, as well as Folsom-Cordova district. He met his wife, Mary Caye, while working and studying in Guanajuato, Mexico. Mary Caye was teaching literacy and English to Mexican campesinos who came to the U.S. to work in the fields. In their encounter there they developed a love of Mexico and her people. This carried over into Jerry’s teaching years (1969 to 2002) at Cordova High School where he taught Spanish and was advisor to the Latino and M.E.C.H.A. clubs. The couple continues to support a scholarship program in Guanajuato, Mexico for young Mexican campesinos to this day, which helps the students to complete their schooling. The program has endured for 50 years.

Jerry is retired from Folsom-Cordova USD and Mary Caye from San Juan USD. They have been involved at their church, Our Lady of the Assumption, Carmichael, in the adult education program and in the St. Vincent de Paul Society which runs a food closet as well as assisting those in need with rent and utility bills.

So why has Jerry been facilitating a French seminar for Renaissance Society? He says he has always been attracted to romance languages. His wife, Mary Caye, has participated in an off-campus Spanish group. The couple enjoy a daily walk in Ancil Hoffman Park. After visiting a Santa Cruz retreat site, Villa Marie Del Mar, located on a bluff overlooking the beach, they eventually purchased a condo in the area with two other couples.

Prior to the COVID shutdown, Jerry found the Cracker Barrel especially stimulating.





## It's Time to think about New Year's Resolutions for 2023!

*By Martha Larkey*

Make #1.... **Update or Develop your Will or Estate Plan.** We are planners. We plan births and baptisms, weddings and honeymoons, our schedules and work projects, vacations, and retirement. BUT planning for after we are gone is difficult for most people.



It is estimated that anywhere between 50-60% of Americans don't even have a Will, much less an Estate Plan\*. Many factors influence whether an individual has a plan, with age being a major factor. According to Gallup:

- ◆ 14% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29
- ◆ 35% of Americans between the ages of 30 and 49
- ◆ 56% of Americans between the ages of 50 and 64
- ◆ 68% of Americans 65 and older

So, it would appear that members of Renaissance Society, based on age alone, have a much higher possibility of being prepared. BUT what about the younger ages that reflect on our children and our grandchildren ... are they covered? A good guideline .... if you own a house, a car, or a bank account and especially if you have minor children (i.e., who gets custody) you should have a plan.

We have all heard the horror stories about people who die without having a plan...it can be a mess. Planning for a less enjoyable time isn't fun, it's an uncomfortable topic and no one is trying to convince you otherwise. But a few hours of your time and effort today will save your family from a lot of heartache in the future. **WILL YOU LEAVE A LEGACY OR A MESS?**

\*Estate Planning is a broad category that includes wills, powers of attorney, living trusts, financial powers of attorney, end-of-life directives, including the POLST form.

## ASSOCIATED STUDENTS INC. (ASI) FOOD PANTRY SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

As Renaissance members we are all aware of the Associated Students ASI Food Pantry's ongoing need of monetary donations. Since the beginning of this semester, students have been lining up outside each day waiting to pack a bag. As the number of Sac State students utilizing the Pantry rises, the organization is seeking more volunteers. The pantry serves 500 students a week on average, a significant increase from last year.



While the Pantry program has a small staff, it depends on volunteer support to succeed. They need people for keeping the store stocked, but they also really need drivers for picking up and delivering food.



**Click here to Volunteer:**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e49afa62ea6f58-volunteer3>

In addition to nonperishable food, the Food Pantry is requesting donations of high in-demand items such as canned chicken, tuna and beans. They are especially looking for in-person toiletry donations.

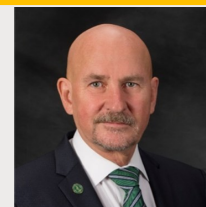
**Click here for monetary donations:**

<https://swarmfunding.csus.edu/project/33266>

## President Robert S. Nelsen Announces his July 2023 Retirement

*"It's been a great ride."*

*By Deborah Seiler*



A great ride indeed.

When President Robert S. Nelsen and his wife Jody announced their retirement from Sacramento State University on November 2, Renaissance members were deeply saddened. Not since former President Donald R. Gerth and his wife Beverly helped launch the Renaissance Society has a Sac State president been so supportive and welcoming to our organization.

Longtime member Allan Keown recalls that not long after President Nelsen first arrived in Sacramento the Executive Committee met with him to introduce themselves and the organization as well as deliver the Annual Report showing the total number of volunteer hours Renaissance members had contributed to Sac State. They underscored Renaissance members' gratitude for being on campus and their intent to be good, respectful guests. President Nelsen responded immediately, saying *"You are not guests. You are members of our Hornet Family."*

During his storied tenure at Sac State, President Nelsen has consistently made us feel part of the Hornet Family. When I shared his retirement announcement, I asked members to consider ways we might honor him. So far, one suggestion is a luncheon in his honor. Another is a bench dedicated to him. These are both promising ideas and I continue to welcome your additional thoughts.

I am pleased to announce the Board of Director's approval on Monday, November 7 of my motion to name our first-ever endowed scholarship "The Robert S. and Jody Nelsen Scholarship" in honor of their extraordinary commitment to the university and its students.

In his remarks, the ever-humble president commented: *"When I came here, I said that this was such a great University, even I couldn't screw it up. You proved me right. We didn't screw it up. We got stronger and better. We have the Tschannen Science Complex, we are going to have a new engineering building, the Student Union has an additional 77,000 square feet. The WELL has been expanded, especially for mental health. And we can't forget the arts. The Art Sculpture Lab is just about to begin to be built."*

*"When we came, we set goals. Those goals have been reached. We said that we would double the number of scholarships, and we have doubled the number of scholarships for our students. We raised \$239 million. \$239 million because of you. Because of our donors. Many of those donors are our faculty and our staff. Because of Sacramento."*

Mrs. Jody Nelsen who is constantly at his side and ever supportive of his mission commented: *"I know retirement is really difficult for Robert, but I am looking forward to our next chapter. We've always been of service in every community we've lived in and I want that to continue, but perhaps at a slower pace. Exactly what form that will take, I don't know, but I know it's what we should do, and I look forward to doing it together. We love Sac State and Sacramento. Everyone was so welcoming, and then so supportive through thick and thin. I can't begin to express my gratitude enough."*

Our endowed scholarship ensures that at least one of the seven three-thousand-dollar student scholarships we award each year to deserving Sac State students will continue in perpetuity. It is accomplished by our Controller, Norv Wellsfry's action to transfer funds from our General Fund reserve sufficient to ensure an annual withdrawal of \$3,000. We can think of no more meaningful way to honor such a great president and his wife.

*"It's been a great ride because of you. But now, really July 1st, it's time to 'hang 'em up.' It's time to move on."*

Thank you, President and Mrs. Nelsen. You may move on, but you will not be forgotten.

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*Bringing tidings of comfort and joy!*



*Happy Holidays*

*and*



*Happy New Year!*