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Association

Fall 2017

SJSU ERFA News, Fall 2017

San Jose State University, Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

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Inside . . .

On page 4 you'll find two nostalgic reminiscences of San Francisco: one, by Nils Peterson, about the end of his opera-going; the other, a poem by John Pollock, recalling visits to the City Lights Bookstore .

President's Message

Welcome back to new academic year

**By Ji-Mei Chang
(Special Education)**

On behalf of the SJSU-ERFA Board of Directors, I'd like to welcome you back to the new academic year. It is an honor to serve as President this year and to have the opportunity to work with a Board of such dedicated professionals. As for my background, I am an Emerita Professor of Special Education who did research in two specific areas. First, I worked with elementary and middle-school teachers of students who were not proficient in English and were diagnosed with mild language and learning disabilities. Second, I studied reading abilities and disabilities between two distinctively different writing systems: the Chinese logographic and the English alphabet. I also conducted school-based professional development (PD) projects for teachers in various Chinese-English bilingual/immersion programs in different regions, both in our state and abroad. I am continuing my overseas PD projects into my retirement.

I first got to know ERFA while I was still in the FERP program. I joined an ERFA spring excursion to visit a Rembrandt exhibit at the de Young Museum and attended several Fall Luncheons that featured very informative speakers. Back then, I was unaware of how much work goes into planning and executing such

inspiring events. As a member of the Executive Board last year, I witnessed the rigorous process by which the Program Committee members researched and provided a set of voting options for the Executive Board that applied both to the selection of excursion sites and speakers for the Luncheons. Likewise with our ERFA Faculty Research and Creativity Awards, the selection of each year's awardees is the result of a systematic review process. The two award recipients are invited

to describe their funded projects at the Spring Luncheon. When you are invited to join ERFA and participate in different programs and events, you can be assured that Board members have made their best effort to welcome you and provide engaging activities.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year's events, I encourage you to please save the dates listed on the Newsletter Calendar (page one) and join us for the Fall Luncheon at Michael's at Shoreline, as well as

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Surprise, surprise!

CalPERS pension fund reaches 11.2 %

By David Elliott (CSU-ERFA State Council Delegate-at-Large)

On July 14 this year, we all received some very good news from CalPERS. In this past year, (FY) 2016-17, the interest earned by our Pension Fund reached 11.2 percent. That is a very healthy return on the fund's investments.

In my recent article, "Talking Back to the Mercury News," (in the

Summer Edition of ERFA News,) I argued that the Mercury News' call for steeper, more immediate reductions in the fund's future earnings estimates (called the "discount rate") was irresponsible. The CalPERS Board had already reduced the discount rate from 7.5% to 7.0%, to be phased in over three years. CalPERS finally

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calendar

Friday, October 27, 2017

Fall Luncheon

Speaker, Professor Randall Stross
See enclosed flyer

Friday, December 8, 2017

Holiday Celebration

ML King, Jr. Library
Rooms 225-29

University and Academic Senate News

Old and New Issues

By Peter Buzanski (ERFA Representative to the Academic Senate)

In the previous issue I lamented the Chancellor's proposed policy on Intellectual Property Rights, which decided that one policy for all CSU campuses was preferable to having each campus determine its own. The new policy, written without any faculty input whatever, had been submitted to all campuses, asking for a response within the next sixty days.

Our Senate drafted a courteous but strong protest against the Chancellor's action. It consisted of a resolution, accompanied by a detailed White Paper written largely by Ken Peter, Chair of the Professional Standards Committee. Both documents were sent to all CSU campuses, which provoked a swift reaction from many of them. Nine schools responded in kind, several of whom used the SJSU

documents. CSU-ERFA did likewise. In addition, the CSU Academic Senate (ASCSU), a body which represents all 23 campuses, wrote its own objection to the Long Beach action, again relying to a large extent on the SJSU White Paper. Among its specific objections was that the Chancellor's proposal "was not collegial, that it failed to comport with the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act, that the process failed to establish a reasonable timeline for response, that it is not grounded in the American Association of University Professors' statement on intellectual property, nor is it comparable to the University of

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SJSU ERFA Office

MacQuarrie Hall 438D

email: celia.bakke@sjsu.edu • Telephone: (408) 924-2478

Visit the SJSU ERFA Website at www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty

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President's Message

Welcome back . . .

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for our annual Holiday Celebration at the King Library on campus (an event-parking permit will be provided with your registration). Last year, ERFA members remarked to me that they knew more people at the Holiday Celebration than those from their own departments! Of course, we will also schedule another Spring excursion in 2018 and then end the academic year with our Spring Luncheon and Business Meeting at the Villages in May, 2018.

I look forward to serving ERFA members and the Executive Board. I highly recommend your participation at our different functions. I also encourage you to join the Board as SJSU-ERFA builds a network with state and national retirement organizations in higher education.

University and Academic Senate News

Old and New Issues

(Continued from Page 2)
California's policy." The ASCSU statement also raised the question of whether the Chancellor's proposal is lawful, i.e., whether it conforms to the requirements of the Bayh-Dole Act, or whether it's consistent with the Stanford v. Roche decision. We await a response from the Chancellor's Office and a solution to this problem.

Meanwhile, much is new at SJSU. At the May 2017 commencement, not only were nearly 10,000 degrees awarded, but also the very first SJSU doctoral degree: the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. Although we have been awarding the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree jointly with Fresno State for some time, the Ed.D. is a first for the University,

A rather interesting turn of events took place this August when SJSU lifted its four-year ban on alcoholic beverages at home football games. Beer and wine will again be sold in Spartan Stadium (now known as CEFCU Stadium). Fans can obtain wrist bands at ID stations, allowing them to purchase a limit of two drinks per sale, until the end of the third quarter. The ban had been adopted by the CSU in 2006 (though SJSU joined in 2012) in an effort to foster a more family-friendly atmosphere at games. Although many colleges around the nation did likewise, several are now beginning to reverse their policies. The University of Texas and Ohio State have recently lifted their bans and have each taken in just over a million dollars a year in alcohol sales. Stanford and Cal do not yet sell beer or wine during games, but Cal is reportedly considering doing so as a way

to cut its massive budget deficit. However, Cal's new Chancellor, Carol Christ, responded to a question at a recent news conference by saying that she thought selling beer at the games was "stupid."

Important construction projects on campus continue apace. The attempt to make the University Library safer, that is, to prevent further suicides, is now underway and is scheduled to be completed in mid-September, 2017. A second large project, the new Aquatic Center is progressing on schedule. With the exception of Joe West Hall, the remaining brick residential structures were demolished so the new center can be built. In addition, this summer Morris Dailey Auditorium was equipped with a new ceiling, new seats, lighting and carpeting, and Tower Hall is now fully illuminated during the evening hours. Upgrades were also made to the Hammer Theatre. Finally, numerous electric- vehicle charging stations are now operational both in the North (9th Street) garage and the parking lot next to the ATMs.

Earlier this year we reported that the California Legislative Auditor criticized the CSU for wasting large sums of state-appropriated funds. As a consequence, various legislative committees held hearings and issued reports in August 2017, which became headline stories in California newspapers. An editorial in the SF Chronicle singled out President Mary Papazian for having been given over \$100,000 for moving expenses from Connecticut to San Jose. The Chronicle failed to note several factors: the high cost of living and housing in the Bay Area; that paying moving expenses to

attract top-flight administrators is a common practice in academia; and that the CSU Chancellor and trustees strongly believed Papazian was the best candidate to solve the long-standing problems at SJSU.

In her welcoming address to the Campus community at the opening of the Fall semester, President Papazian spoke at length about the recent events in Charlottesville, observing that "human decency is being ripped apart" by the emergence of anti-American armed groups, with the apparent approval of the current occupant in the White House. Her message concluded with an optimistic view of the new academic year, together with a sincere offer to students, staff and faculty who might need counseling and help as a result of current events.

CalPERS Board elections Candidate recommendations, qualifications available

CSU-ERFA representative, Don Keesey, is reminding the membership that the CSU-ERFA Board is recommending Michael Flaherman for Seat A in the upcoming CalPERS Board election. The Board is making no recommendation for Seat B. The Board's reasons and a brief description of the candidates appear in the September issue of The Reporter. In addition, this issue contains articles on health care benefits, social security and the elimination of remedial English and Math in the CSU. The link to The Reporter is <http://csuerfa.org/pdf/Reporter-Sept-2017.pdf>

The CalPERS Candidate Forum is available on www.youtube.com/watch?v=neh4_jNVp2M

Remembrance of Things Past

Sharing memories with our members . . .

That's my last opera hanging on the wall

By Nils Peterson
(English/Humanities)

On Sunday I went to my last performance at the SF Opera. I've had a half season ticket there for more than 35 years and I've had the best cheap seat in the house ever since the restoration of the opera house after the earthquake. It was Carmen, a very different Carmen from the one I first saw, or the one I saw in LA with a somewhat over-aged Placido as the hero. This production had Don Jose and Micaela taking selfies, and simulated oral sex, and a gang rape. Both leads were really fine, though Carmen's voice may have been just a little small, but just right in timbre. She had a slim athlete's body and exuded sexuality. The staging was very physical. Pastias was a Mercedes driven on stage out of which a drunken outdoor picnic evolved. (I think I even smelled exhaust, though I can't believe it was really there. They must have pushed it in some way)

However, I left at the intermission to drive home. I just had sat enough, the drive up, the lunch, the first two acts, and the coming drive home, and my leg was beginning to ache and swell a bit. And as I went over it in my mind, I didn't want to see Micaela come to a ruined, jealous Don Jose, nor did I want to see him kill Carmen in the last act, though I would have liked to have seen the street scenes which I have

sung when my chorale did opera choruses.

I will also say that when I first started going, I would meet Sunday after Sunday at least a half a dozen people I knew, usually more. Now it doesn't happen at all. There was a man who sat a few rows in front of me also on the aisle who brought his son from when the boy was very young. The man would sit on the aisle and the son in the seat beside him straining to see around the person in front. He eventually grew to be taller than his father so then it seemed all right. Later he was replaced by a lovely Asian lady as he went, no doubt somewhere off to school. I was tempted to ask the man what happened to his son. But I'd never spoken to him before. It would have seemed strange. I thought about it while driving up, but he wasn't even there for the first time that I can recall. The production may not have been to his liking, but who knows, certainly not I.

Before I left, I went around to have a last look at familiar faces, the ticket takers who have been at my entrance for years, the man who calls taxis whose hair has gone from sort of a russet to a highlighted gray, but the man who usually keeps the seating in order was not there. I feel strangely related to all these folks. I'll miss them.

The Dragon Underfoot

By John Pollock (English)

"...they didn't even own the basement, which is where the Chinese New Year Parade's endless, red and gold dragon was tucked away the other 364 days of the year. But City Lights became a beacon to the poets, wanderers, and angel-headed hipsters who were making their way to San Francisco. You could browse forever, and nobody would bother you. It was here that Ferlinghetti first met Ginsberg...."

--David Talbot, *Season of the Witch*

And I was there too.

Not when Ferlinghetti met Ginsberg, but from time to time in those days and had no idea, as I browsed among the browsers, that a huge, red and gold dragon, like Beowulf's nemesis, lay curled up just beneath my feet.

Had I known, I'd surely have tried peeking between the cracks in the floorboards just to catch a glimpse.

And now I wonder:

did the sound of our footsteps and muffled voices overhead ever disturb the sleeping beast, or did he slumber peacefully all that time, dreaming of the one day each year he bursts forth into the cool, damp air, to unfurl his gigantic wings, toss his fierce head from side to side, and thrash his spiked tail this way and that, while all about him children shriek as firecrackers explode, drums pound, and cymbals clash to conjure up a new year?

But then, in the *Way of Chuang Tzu* it is written that the wise men of old slept without dreams. Is it possible that sleeping dragons, like those ancient savants,
dream
no dreams
at all?

In Memoriam

• **Embert Hendrickson** (History, '97) passed away on May 24, 2017, at the age of 88. Embert was born in Minneapolis, MN, and attended St. Cloud State Univ., where he graduated with a BS degree in History and Social Science. He continued his work at the Univ. of North Dakota, earning his MA in History and finishing with a PhD at the Univ. of Minnesota. Prior to coming to SJSU, Embert taught high school history and served in the US Army Counterintelligence Corps during the Korean War, where he developed a life-long passion for understanding the challenges countries face as they transition from foreign occupation toward independence with self-sustaining political, social, and economic systems. He began teaching history at SJSU in 1961—primarily courses in Modern Latin America and Recent US history. Embert especially enjoyed teaching US history geared for foreign students at SJSU, from 1969 to 1990, while serving as the Department's graduate student advisor from 1974 to 1991. When History enrollments dropped precipitously in the mid-1980s, he taught Public Speaking courses in the General Education program. His research and publications centered on the development of newly independent countries bordering the Caribbean, and on the efficacy of diplomacy in dealing with crises in that region. In 1968, he received a Fulbright Grant to serve as a lecturer at the University of Guyana. After retiring in 1997, he moved to Granite Bay, CA, where he maintained his interest in global politics and, of course, Spartan basketball and football. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Linda (a SJSU alumna), his son, Noel (a SJSU alumnus who

followed in his father's footsteps and is now an Associate Professor at James Madison University in Virginia), a granddaughter, and a new grandson due in October.

• **Robert Sasseen**, passed away on June 14, 2017, in Salem, OR, at age 85. "Bob" Sasseen left SJSU in 1981 to become President of the Univ. of Dallas, a Roman Catholic university in Irving, Texas. Born and raised in Brooklyn (he always retained a bit of the accent), Bob attended Notre Dame Univ., earning his BA in Political Science, before moving on to the Univ. of Chicago for his MA and PhD. He taught briefly at Marquette Univ. and the Univ. of Santa Clara, before coming to SJSU. He taught Political Science courses before becoming a full time administrator in the late 60s and 70s. During the campus turbulence of that period, he developed a reputation as a hard task master among some faculty members. Perhaps his Roman Catholic training, his expertise in logical exegesis and love of vigorous debate made him appear uncompromising. In any case, the Univ. of Dallas must have seemed a better fit when he applied and was chosen for its presidency. He was successful there in presiding over significant growth. He secured a permanent home for the Rome Program in Italy, facilitated the building of a large Science Center, and carried out a \$15 million dollar campaign for campus improvements. His scholarly writings reflected an interest in applying Catholic doctrine to the problems of human nature and the larger body politic. Upon retiring in 1995, he returned to teaching for several years, then traveled throughout the western states with a travel trailer. He was an avid birder and a former Eagle Scout who loved nature. He is

survived by his sister, five children and seven grandchildren.

• **Mary McCreath** (Associate Member) passed away quickly on June 22, 2017, only days after her 95th birthday. Born in Salmon, Idaho, she lost her father when she was little more than a toddler and her mother brought her and her two brothers to Sunnyvale, CA, where she began teaching school. Mary attended San Jose State where she met her husband to be, Harrison (Benny) McCreath, when they were in a theater production together. They married a few years later, when Benny returned home wounded from WW II, in 1944. He would teach at SJSU for 36 years, retiring as Chair of the Humanities Dep't.

Raised by a teacher and married to one, Mary's interest in education came naturally. While raising her three children, she became a member of the PTA, then its president, then a member and president of the SJ Unified School District Board of Education. She continued chairing county school board committees and running local election campaigns. In the 1980s she became a lobbyist in Sacramento for San Jose Unified, "learning how the sausage was made," her daughter Leslie said, and fueling her lifelong interest in politics and government.

Mary was multitalented: an avid gardener, potter, seamstress, baker and, with Benny, a devotee of interior decoration, which was clearly manifested in their home furnishings. She remained socially connected all her life: helping found the Valley Puppeteers, whose performances raised money for educational scholarships; enrolling in community book clubs, exercise classes, and SJSU-ERFA; and

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CalPERS fund assets sufficient, but outside observers worry

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made this decision because the fund's assets had dropped to the disquieting level of 65% of what it would need to cover all of its potential liabilities. But this was not enough for the Merc; it wanted more precipitous reductions. Our newspaper, and other powerful interests, seemed to ignore the fact that prior to the Great Recession the assets of the fund were sufficient to meet over 100% of its potential pension liabilities. Also lost in most of these discussions was the recognition that no pension fund will ever be required to meet all of its ultimate liabilities at any single point in time.

I conceded in my article that the move to reduce the rate had probably come too late, but I supported the Board's decision to limit the decrease to 7.0%, implemented in three phases. I strongly believe that reducing the discount rate in a precipitous manner would inflict immediate and substantial pain on all tax-supported state agencies (including the CSU). When expected earnings drop, the affected state agencies are required to make up the difference by paying a larger portion of their pensions. What worries me is that asking these agencies and the taxpayers that support them, to pay more will provide strong ammunition to those who are eager to replace our defined benefit plans with defined contribution arrangements (e.g., 401(k)s), where most of the long-term investment risk falls on individual employees. If the reductions are phased in gradually, however, the effects are less calamitous in the short run and, over time, the discount rate can be returned to a more favorable level, if, and as,

economic conditions improve.

The July "surprise" tempts one to conclude that economic conditions are improving and a lower discount rate is no longer necessary. This past strong year raised CalPERS' average earnings for the past five years to 8.8%, and its funding level increased by three percentage points to 68%. But it is too early to conclude that economic conditions have improved enough to return the discount rate to the previous level. One year's experience is hardly sufficient to generalize about future years. Also, with the fund remaining at only 68% funded, it is still vulnerable to downturns in the markets.

One final note: according to the Wall Street Journal, large retirement funds for public employees earned median returns of 12.4% in FY 2016-17, meaning that CalPERS, with its 11.2%, underperformed the others. Some say this signifies

poor management, but others say this sort of discrepancy was to be expected. With assets totaling 323 Billion, CalPERS is the largest retirement system in the country, and because its assets are so broadly diversified, it's difficult for it to compete with smaller systems that are not as diverse. This past year's earnings provide a case in point. Although the Public Equity Sector in the CalPERS Fund generated 19.7%, the Real Estate holdings came in much lower at 7.2%, and other sectors were even lower than this.

I am encouraged, however, that the average earnings for all the large funds reached unusually high levels last year, which is a promising indicator. Minimally, it seems fair to conclude that the CalPERS Board was wise to approach reducing the discount rate in a tentative way. And I still believe it was irresponsible for our local newspaper to urge precipitous decreases at this time.

In Memoriam

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regularly dining with extended family and longtime friends. She impressed everyone with her gentle humor, curiosity, sophistication and personal integrity. She leaves behind three children, three grandchildren and a large coterie of friends who will never forget her.

• **Irma Eichhorn** (History, '93) passed away at Good Samaritan hospital in San Jose on August 25, 2017, at age 90. Irma was born in Montrose, CO, the daughter of Rev. Jacob and Elizabeth (Strauch) Eichhorn. She was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the Univ. of Michigan, BA (1948), MA (1949) and a Fulbright scholar at the Univ. of Vienna, Austria (1952). She taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in

European History, but her interest in critical writing and research made her graduate seminars an excellent springboard for students going on to the PhD level. She was a perfectionist, demanding, but always encouraging to students willing to work hard. Her preparation for every class set the tone of seriousness that inspired them to do their best. She also taught in the Humanities Honors Program, taking a typical leadership role in designing curriculum and working closely with her team of lecturers. She is survived by two brothers: Dr. Jacob Eichhorn of Midland, MI, and Dr. Erwin Eichhorn of Charmicael, CA, and their children and grandchildren—Irma's nieces and nephews.

Chat Room . . .

Special news from and about our members.
Edited by Gene Bernardini

This edition contains news about travels and activities taken from the membership renewal forms. Members are invited to send additional news about themselves to Gene Bernardini at geebernard@comcast.net or by snail mail at 775 Seawood Way, San Jose, CA 95120

• **Ann Fountain** (Foreign Languages, '12) has been very busy since retiring three years ago. In 2016 she served as national president of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese and spoke at an international conference on Cuban Patriot Jose Marti'. She has published chapters in three different books on the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson's ideas on Marti'. Her book, *Jose Marti', the United States and Race* (Univ. of Florida Press) was published in paperback this past May and she has a forthcoming article in the journal *Hispania* on Chicano Studies. In addition, her interest in teaching through the use of film led her to help a colleague complete a mini-documentary recently on the Cuban author, Nancy Alonso.

• **Sigurd Meldal** (Computer Engineering, '15) was reappointed for the 2017-18 year to the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET (the national accreditation organization) for whom he will oversee evaluation teams. This past April he provided expert testimony to the International Trade Commission investigating mobile devices (including smartphones and smartwatches) involving Apple, AT&T and Immersion. Meanwhile, he hopes to "complete the remodel of my house in the Sierras this summer to enjoy the tranquility of a rustic life."

• **Lucy McProud** (Nutrition Food Science & Packaging, '17) has retired from being Dep't Chair after serving for 32 years. She'll continue to teach field experience and internship courses while

FERPing.

• **Ruth Yaffe** (Chemistry, '90) took her eighth trip to Alaska this summer on a cruise with her daughter Lauren. (On her first trip in 1964, she drove 12,000 miles with two children, ages 8 and 10.) She has concluded that global warming is indeed real: a flight in a small float plane over the retreating glaciers makes it all too clear. The two flew to Taku Glacier Lodge for a salmon feast, then from Skagway they took the historic Yukon and Whitehorse Railroad train to the Yukon Territory. On the sail back, they visited the magnificent Butchart Gardens on Vancouver Island.

• **Michael Sproule** (Communication Studies, '01) is still working on long-term projects. He writes: "I hope I'm not the only one who still uses the King Library micro cards for 19th century books. They're often easier than online! Onward!"

• **Kim Uhlik** (Recreation & Leisure Studies, '11) had his large scale oil painting, "Mugged at the Feet of Liberty," accepted into the prestigious Artists Council Exhibition at the Palm Springs Museum this Fall. His photo show, "Opposites Attract," with his partner, Johanna, was exhibited this August and November in Hudson, Ohio.

• **Gail Evans** (Kinesiology, '13) was appointed to the Santa Cruz Parks & Recreation Commission this past January, and to the Coastal Watershed Council. She says she is enjoying both and learning a great deal. "One of my primary projects is to support the City's efforts to revitalize the San Lorenzo River, which runs through the City's center and is just a half

block from my home."

• **J. Benton White** (Religious Studies, '92) continues to travel a bit with his wife, Mary Lou. They are thankful for their good health, but mourn the loss of so many good friends. They enjoy their children, grandchildren, and the ERFA events that bring them into contact with colleagues and friends.

• **W. Warren Kallenbach** (Education, '95) and his wife, Patricia, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary this April, and their 90th and 91st birthdays this year with their three daughters and their families in attendance. Warren still walks and runs a mile every morning in the Park, "unless it's freezing," he says. He also adds, "You might call it jogging, but at 91, I call it running."

• **Jane Day** (Mathematics, '05) attended a new exhibit, "The Arsenal of Democracy," at the WW II Museum in New Orleans this summer. Last year, she and her spouse, Walter, took a tour organized by the Museum: "The Rise and Fall of Hitler's Germany," which began in Berlin and ended in Warsaw. "A somber subject," she says, "but it's a history we must never forget." The Museum, inspired by historian Stephen Ambrose, opened in its new location ten years ago and is a popular draw for visitors to the city.



Newsletter of the Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0210

Return Service Requested

Farewell . . . and Welcome!

By Nancie Fimbel (Past President, SJSU ERFA)

In early July, President Papazian celebrated the careers of about a dozen faculty retirees at a reception in her home. In front of their spouses and deans, she thanked them for their service to SJSU. Provost Andy Feinstein added his praise and presented to each retiree a glass apple mounted on a base with the SJSU logo. Each dean detailed the faculty member's career accomplishments—and it was immediately evident that this was an extraordinary group! Each of them was encouraged

to tell a story or make a comment about the University.

After this heart-warming farewell, we welcomed the new retirees to “the other side” of retirement by inviting them to join SJSU-ERFA. Wayne Savage, Membership Chair, explained the activities and benefits of our association and distributed membership applications to all.

Our thanks to President Papazian and Provost Feinstein from ERFA! We are thrilled that faculty who have devoted their careers to SJSU are being recognized with so much appreciation.



Lucy McProud, retiring professor, Nutrition, Food Science & Packaging