



The Joint Educational Project

JEP—Connecting USC & Our Community

L.A. City Council member tells how JEP enhanced her undergraduate experience and influenced her career

By JAN PERRY

Los Angeles Council President Pro Tempore, 9th District

The University of Southern California was my first home away from home when I moved to Los Angeles in the 1970s. I came to Los Angeles eager to expand my world view and to become a skilled professional; the university campus was an exciting place and wholly different from my Midwestern environment. At USC, I was engaged in my field of study—Journalism—and in many extra-curricular activities that made the experience incredibly rewarding and left me with some lasting and fond memories. I found my work with the Joint Educational Project (JEP) to be one of the most meaningful university experiences.



Jan Perry
Los Angeles City Council
President Pro Tempore

Through JEP, I was able to work one-on-one with students at the 32nd Street Elementary School, helping them with homework assignments and reading to some of the younger students. During the time I worked with them, I was able to see them grow as individuals and become more confident as they interacted with me and the other young adults who came to the school through JEP.

Children see the world through an unfiltered lens; they are direct and unedited. It is this candor that can make you smile, think, and maybe even change your opinion about the world around you. They change your life and in return you help to positively shape their lives by simply spend-

ing time with them and listening to them. Strong adult role models are important and having a college student as that model can impact the lives of young people. Who knows, I and every other JEP student before or after me at 32nd Street Elementary could have helped a child realize early on that college was an important part of their future.

JEP also offered me an opportunity to integrate myself into the larger South Los Angeles community. At the time, I was so immersed in the USC student culture that I was missing out on the neighborhood as a whole. JEP was a wonderful way for me to pierce the barrier that existed between the USC student community and the community at large. Through my interactions with these young people, I realized that I was an important part of a greater community that went beyond the walls

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of the university. It helped me understand the University Park area on a much deeper level. In this respect, I felt that I and my JEP counterparts were able to better appreciate the larger South Los Angeles community and broaden our educational experience at USC.

The experiences and people I met through the JEP program helped better prepare me for life after college. It allowed me an opportunity to work with young people, learn about the community in which I lived, and helped nurture and grow my passion for public service.

Today, in my role as Councilwoman for the Ninth Council District in the City of Los Angeles—which includes a large portion of the neighborhoods surrounding USC—I understand that taking time to build relationships with people not only enriches your understanding of communities, it is also essential to building consensus. My participation in JEP was a significant career building block for me. As the next generation joins the Trojan family, I encourage them all to join JEP; it can offer a life changing experience and demonstrates the good will that the students at USC have to share in an incredibly meaningful way.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 8-December 3

JEP Planning with Professors (Spring 2011)

November 30, 6-8pm

Writer in the Community culmination ceremony, SGM 123

January 8, 2011 10:15-11:30a.m

Modern Language Association Annual Conference's session on Service-Learning Pedagogy in the Undergraduate Curriculum, LA Convention Center

February 18

Deadline for Community Service Scholarship applications to be submitted

March 23 5:30-8pm

USC's Community Service Banquet, USC's Town & Gown

April 6-9

The 22nd Annual National Service-Learning Conference / Atlanta, GA www.nslc.org/conference

April 27-29

The 14th Continuums of Service Conference / San Diego, CA www.wacampuscompact.org/cos/2011/cos.shtml

Congratulations President Nikias!

By TAMMARA ANDERSON, JEP's Executive Director

What a privilege! In light of the honor of my being a past recipient of the President's Award for Staff Achievement, I was among 43 staff invited to march in the processional at the inauguration of our 11th president, Max Nikias. As a double alum and long-time employee of USC, it was a personal privilege to participate and represent my staff colleagues.



USC Colleague Parker Jenkins (TRIO) joins JEP professional staff members and President Max Nikias at the Inauguration luncheon. (Left to right: Tammara Anderson, Emma Rendón, Parker Jenkins, Max Nikias, Alice Villaseñor, Brenda Pesante, Jacqueline Whitley, Jameson Yu, and Tina Koneazny)

Strengthening Democracy Through Service-Learning

Student's dissertation research explores links between service-learning, democracy, and political action

Three years ago, Zabra Ahmed, a graduate student attending the University of California at Irvine, contacted JEP asking if she could study our program for her dissertation, which considers the connection between service-learning and students' democratic citizenship. She spent almost two years meeting with JEP's professional and student staff members, university administrators, and professors. She also conducted several focus groups with undergraduates.

After this extensive and expansive research (service-learning programs at UCLA and Cal St. Long Beach were also examined), Zabra made an insightful presentation of her findings, which are captured in the article below.

I would like to thank Zabra for her rigorous exploration of our program. We appreciate serious research that reinforces our work and offers recommendations that will further the educational benefits of our service.

-Tammara Anderson, Executive Director of JEP

BY ZAHRA AHMED, PH.D

From 2007-2009, I conducted qualitative field research for my dissertation, which investigated the creation and implementation of service-learning programs across three universities: the University of Southern California (USC), California State University at Long Beach (CSULB), and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). My research, entitled "Service-Learning in Policy and Practice: A Study of Service-Learning Across Three Universities," evolved from my continuing interest in community building and the strategies by which individuals, especially youth, can come to see themselves as political actors. With its integration of academic learning, and social action and reflection, service-learning represents the possibility of educating students about social issues while also teaching them to act in service to communities. The Joint Educational Project (JEP) played a key role in this research since it represents one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the country. My methodology incorporated critical textual analysis, ethnographic observation, and over 100 in-depth interviews, all utilized

as a means of creating a comprehensive picture of service-learning policy making and practices in higher education. The study characterized all service-learning staff and key administrators as policy makers, as they each exerted influence over the nature and scope of their programs.



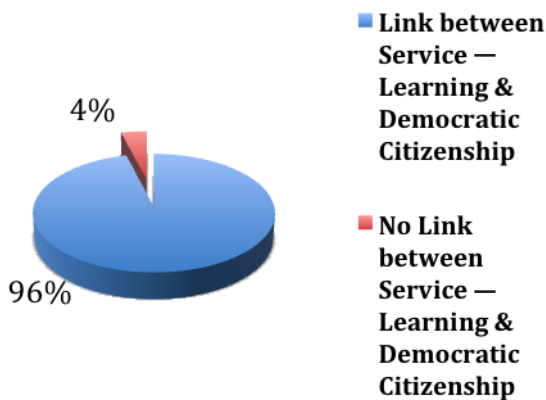
Dr. Zahra Ahmed

While USC, CSULB, and UCLA each had their own institutional missions, visions and agendas, I found strong similarities among the service-learning policy makers, exemplified by their statements that their programs helped students experience and practice democratic citizenship. During my interviews, I asked each policy maker, "How do you view the relationship between service-learning and democratic citizenship?" Their responses indicated that a common goal was to use service-learning to help students see themselves as democratic citizens. For example, one policy maker stated, "I think working within a democracy requires being an active citizen. And that goes beyond just yourself, you know? What a democracy does is take you beyond...the individual experience and [helps you] recognize that while we are in an individualistic society, we also have responsibilities to the larger community. We can't just work for ourselves -- democracy can't happen that way. With service-learning, it helps to break those boundaries down so you see how you belong within that larger community. [Students can have] a very individualistic perspective. What service-learning does is show that, regardless of what career you are in or what class you're taking, that there's a larger impact that you have potential of making. [You can] affect the larger society." Policy makers at all three institutions echoed this view, expressing a belief that engagement in service-learning could help students understand where they fit within our larger democratic community.

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An additional research goal was to determine what democratic messages were transmitted through these programs and the degree to which students received and understood those messages. By speaking with JEP participants, I was able to integrate their voices and experiences into my policy analysis. When asked the question, “Do you think there is a link between service-learning and democratic citizenship?” student responses were surprisingly consistent. The majority of students expressed a belief that their experiences taught them about civic life while also giving them the opportunity to act like good citizens. Figure 2 illustrates the students’ comments regarding a link between service-learning and democratic citizenship. Of those students interviewed, a full 96% expressed a belief that service-learning supported democratic citizenship. The majority of students also stated that their participation in service-learning helped them to act like good citizens. Only 4% of the students stated that they saw no relationship whatsoever between service-learning and democratic citizenship.

Figure 2. Link Between Service-Learning & Democratic Citizenship



By way of illustration, during an interview, one student said, *“It’s [service-learning] taught me to listen, and I think that’s an important thing for citizens to do. We have to listen to one another in order to figure out how we can work together, right? It all just helped me feel more like a real citizen because I’m involved but I’m also stepping back and looking at the whole situation rather than just seeing it from my own eyes.”*

When explaining how his service-learning experience helped him become a more informed citizen, another student stated, *“I feel like I’ve gotten a new perspective on those that are very different from me from everything from socioeconomic background, to the opportunities they’ve received in life, to what they’ll encounter later in life. And all that stuff goes into what kind of citizen you are, what kind of person you are in the larger society. And being involved, it’s really changed my perspective on how other people live day to day. I think that helps me be a better citizen.”*

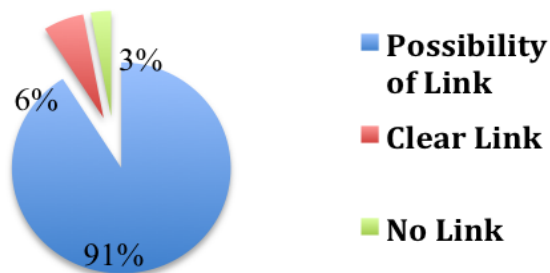
Thinking back to those university policy makers who expressed a belief that their programs supported democratic citizenship among participants, the student comments show that they are receiving the message and they too see the connection. Students tended to believe that service-learning was an important means for engaging with communities and connecting their individual lives with the larger society. One limitation of this study is students, who generally self-select into these programs, may have had prior inclinations toward a view that service is an important aspect of citizenship. Since there was no control group for my study, I cannot state that participation in service-learning caused these students to express such a belief. However, the findings do indicate the transmission of the value for democratic citizenship which is held by policy makers and seems to be successfully communicated to student participants.

By conducting this research, I found that service-learning is built around strongly democratic values which have largely been upheld by contemporary policy makers. However, one troubling finding leads me to believe that there is still work to be done in order for service-learning and other engaged learning activities to live up to their full potential. As Figure 3 shows, when asked whether they saw a link between political issues and their service activities, only 6% of students stated that they saw a clear connection. At the same time, only 3% said they saw no link between the two. The overwhelming majority, 91% of the students interviewed, expressed views that, while many had never considered the relationship between politics and their service before, they could imagine that a linkage was possible.

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Figure 3. Service / Politics Split




Several scholars have written about the importance of helping students understand the political implications of their service, but it is a difficult task (See Herzberg 1994; Westheimer 1998; Walker 2000). Most of the students in my study realized that their service could be linked with social and political issues, but they did not feel that their service-learning experience made the connections explicit.

For example, when one student was asked if she saw a link between her service and politics, she replied, *“I don’t think so. I don’t know if it applies in this situation. I guess you could say looking at the families that are there [at a homeless shelter] and how much help they need, that could be something I would get from my experience. Obviously I don’t feel like the system is doing enough for these people. That would be one thing. There was this journal question about TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and it was asking how does that apply to the families we work with, and we wrote about how a lot of them are poor and that’s something they need. We also wrote about dependency on TANF, so that fits some with political action. But you don’t really think about politics and stuff when you’re there, so I think if it was more directly related and the politics part of service was clear, that would help.”*

When analyzing my findings regarding student perceptions of service and politics, they point to both necessity and possibility. On one hand, they show that students would benefit from more assistance with contextualizing their service-learning activities and developing an understanding of the social, political and economic structures that create a need for their service in the first place.

The above-mentioned student was clearly asked to consider her service in a larger policy context, but she and others still had trouble identifying and articulating the relationship between service and politics.

By rising to the occasion and continuing to deepen students’ exposure to the political aspects of service, JEP and other service-learning programs have the potential to increase the capacities of students and communities. In addition to supplementing students’ general academic learning, these programs can help students become better informed and more competent citizens by highlighting the complex relationship between individual service and community-level social issues. They also have the opportunity to help solidify student learning by strengthening the relationship between what students do through service-learning and the issues they see and hear about in society. My research shows that students undoubtedly want to make a difference by serving their communities. Now, the challenge is to provide them with the tools they need to access the political arena and bring about the changes they want to see. 

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Assessing Service-Learning's Effects on Students' Exposure to Diversity

Research shows that service-learning brings real-life relevance to the classroom

For the last three semesters, JEP has worked with Darnell Cole (Rossier School of Education) to assess the learning outcomes of students enrolled in JEP through courses that meet the diversity requirement at USC. This Teagle Foundation-funded study uses the Collegiate Learning Assessment to measure students' higher order thinking skills (e.g., analytic reasoning, problem-solving) before and after their eight-week assignments. We are grateful to Wendy Stewart for her contributions to this project through her dissertation research which helps us better understand the impact of service-learning and JEP.

-Susan Harris, Associate Director of JEP

BY WENDY STEWART, ED.D

As population demographics continue to diversify in the United States (U.S. Interim Projections, 2004), and U.S. industries expand their markets and workforces to include communities abroad, employers increasingly seek staff who can work effectively in a diverse environment and with diverse peers (Bikson & Law, 1994). Institutions of higher education are often positioned in the press and with professional associations as potential mediators of these trends. In 2002, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) recommended that colleges find ways to enhance students' ability to communicate with and understand people from diverse groups and re-engage disconnected youth.

The research literature suggests that colleges are already employing some strategies that show positive results. Service-learning experiences embedded in coursework can help students become more connected to community needs (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kaye, 2004; Sedlak, Doheny, Panthofer, & Anaya, 2003). There is ample literature that cites inherent benefits of service-learning for student populations including critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, civic responsibility, and communication skills (Barber, 1992; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002; Sedlak et al., 2003). Service-learning experiences have also been found to challenge student assumptions about others from different

backgrounds and provide environments where students confront preconceived values, beliefs, and attitudes (Leonard, 2004; Martin & Wheeler, 2000). However, there has been limited assessment regarding the role that service-learning plays in reinforcing student cross-racial interactions in a college context.



Dr. Wendy Stewart

This study was conducted for the purposes of doctoral research for the USC Rossier School of Education to explore how service-learning contributes to student experience of cross-racial interactions and exposure to diversity. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 15 first and


second year students currently enrolled in the JEP program at USC and taking both non-diversity and diversity courses. The study posed the following questions: (1) In what ways do diversity courses impact conditions for cross-racial interactions in the classroom? Are there differences when compared to courses that do not meet the diversity requirement? (2) How does service-learning enhance students' experiences in diversity courses? and (3) In what way does service-learning, when coupled with a diversity course, impact cross-racial interactions? There were several crucial findings in regards to student experience in JEP service-learning environments.

A significant finding emerged from this research that participants related the material that they learned in class as having more relevance when they were able to observe the topics and subjects in a "real world" environment outside of the class-

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room, such as their JEP site. Additionally, participants reported increased diverse interactions with their fellow students and individuals at their JEP site more so than in their classroom setting. This finding illuminates the positive linkages between academic courses and service-learning experiences. Previous studies have shown that such linkages both reinforce curricular objectives as well as connect curriculum to community issues (Kaye, 2004; Sedlak, Doheny, Panthofer, & Anaya, 2003). Research has demonstrated that utilizing a variety of methods to teach students how to communicate in a diverse world is a key to student success post-graduation (Association of American College and Universities, 2002). Service-learning opportunities can be utilized to educate students in a way that furthers student comprehension and understanding of academic content and materials.

Another significant finding is that students recognized diversity courses, social issues courses, courses relevant to the city, and courses about different cultures as the optimal course couplings to JEP. Participants discussed how these types of courses were ideal matches because of their ability to assist students in adjusting to JEP environments and to promote increased understanding of diverse peers and peer interactions that often took place at JEP sites. This finding is supported by the literature which identifies programs that connect academic courses and service-learning as having several benefits for students including emphasizing current and new course objectives, renewing community connections and connecting curricula to community issues (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kaye, 2004; Sedlak, Doheny, Panthofer, & Anaya, 2003). Given the diverse location of USC, JEP served as a way to connect students to the larger community and increase awareness of societal issues beyond the walls of the academy.

Given the repercussions of a student's ability to learn effective intercultural communication, both inside and outside the walls of the academy, the findings of this study succeeded in underscoring the relevance of service-learning in addressing the issue. There are also several implications for how such information can be utilized by the university, students, and institutional agents to benefit both students and the community. 

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Two Former JEP Volunteers Come Full Circle

JEP alumni share the story of their passion for education and serving the community around USC

By **MEG PALISOC**, *Co-Founder of the Synergy Charter Schools*

Fourteen years after participating in JEP, two University of Southern California alumni, my husband Randy and I, are transforming USC's South Los Angeles neighborhood by building upon our service-learning experiences. We both participated in USC's JEP as undergraduate students from 1992 to 1996. I served as a Teacher's Assistant to a kindergarten class at Weemes Elementary School as part of my Developmental Psychology class. As part of my U.S. History class, I joined a team of students who taught social justice lessons once a week to a class of 7th grade students at Foshay Learning Center. Randy was also part of a JEP team that taught weekly gender-related lessons to 4th grade students at Weemes Elementary School.



Randy and Meg Palisoc


While we enjoyed our experiences with JEP, we did not anticipate working with JEP fourteen years later. In 1996, Randy graduated with a business degree in marketing and entrepreneurship and I graduated with a psychology degree. While Randy went to work in the business field, I went on to obtain my Master's degree in College Student Personnel Services at the USC Rossier School of Education. From 1998 to 2001, I worked in the student affairs division for the USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

I loved working with college students, but I noticed that there were not a lot of minority students in the engineering profession. I also noticed that the quality of the K-12 education that students received prior to entering USC differed dramatically depending on which communities students came from. At the same time that I was working with college students, Randy quit his business job and found his calling teaching elementary school students near USC. Four years later, I realized that I could not

help remediate 13 years of poor education at the college level, so I decided to also become an elementary school teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District to help provide students with a solid foundation at an early age.

In 2002, Randy and I decided to open a charter public school near USC because of the flexibility that charter school teachers have to innovate in their classrooms in order to improve students' academic achievement. After two years of planning, we opened our first school, Synergy Charter Academy, in August 2004. Within one year, Synergy Charter Academy became the highest-performing school in its neighborhood and for the past six years, the school has been the highest-performing fully-implemented K-5 school in the entire South Los Angeles area. In a short amount of time, we have proven that the achievement gap between low income communities and more advantaged communities can be eliminated. Synergy catapulted its students' academic achievement from among the bottom 10% of all students statewide to among the top 10% of all students statewide. Based on these unprecedented results, Synergy Charter Academy recently became the first elementary school in the history of South Los Angeles to be named a National Blue Ribbon School. This is the highest honor awarded to a public school in our nation.

In 2008, we opened a middle school, Synergy Kinetic Academy, with an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), and in 2011, we plan to open a STEM-focused high school, Synergy Quantum Academy. All of our schools are intentionally located within 5 to 10 minutes from USC because we targeted one of the lowest-performing communities in Los Angeles and wanted to help empower the community near our alma mater. Starting this school year, we are excited to be "coming full circle" by becoming a USC JEP partner school.

According to Randy, "JEP has a special place in our hearts and we are happy to be part of shaping a young Trojan's future. Who knows what this may lead to? It would be great to know that fourteen years from now, a Trojan will be inspired to solve world hunger or provide clean water to a village in a third world country because they volunteered at one of our schools!" 

JEP's Volunteer Opportunities Serve More Than Just Students

Retiree Returns to JEP to run the staff/faculty volunteer program, Literacy Project.

By **GWENDOLYN RANDOLPH**, *Literacy Project Coordinator*

Retirement is viewed as an exciting time for some, for it can be an opportunity for leisure and travel. In other instances it can be viewed as a major and difficult life transition. This major life change may leave a void or perhaps a need for a new career. For retirees who have planned well, and who are seeking new opportunities, careers and/or fulfillment, volunteering may be an excellent choice.

After retiring two years ago, I began to reflect on all of the loving teachers and community volunteers who enabled me to become a success in the field of education. I also thought about all of the young lives I touched as an educator, my passion for teaching, and the love I have for children. I realized that now that I was retired, I had a wonderful opportunity to give back to the very community where I was taught and eventually began teaching. I knew as a volunteer I could impact children in the community in a positive way while gaining individual health and social benefits. Prior to retirement I was an Outreach Consultant, which in essence is a teacher who takes on the role of social worker at a school. My job was to work with at-risk students. It was my responsibility to secure resources and services that would help these students become successful in school. I worked at Weemes Elementary School, one of USC's original Family of Five Schools, and developed a relationship with JEP during that time. Services that JEP provided were tutors, mentors, and classroom mini-courses. JEP also provided a coordinator at the school site who helped me to collaborate and implement an award-winning program that was recognized as a model for like programs. The impact that JEP had on the students, staff and volunteers was evident in less absenteeism, less




Gwendolyn Randolph

discipline problems, increased academic achievement, and increased likelihood that students will see a college education is an attainable goal. The volunteers benefitted by learning more about themselves and the world in which they live.

Once I began volunteering as a retiree, I realized what a meaningful and symbiotic relationship could exist between many retired citizens and the communities in which they serve. I realized that service to others is an excellent choice for it aids in boosting my confidence by giving me a greater purpose and a connection to others. Re-connecting with JEP and becoming the volunteer Literacy Project Coordinator has given me the opportunity to give back to the USC community and help children learn, progress, and one day have the opportunity of a college education. I am proud to be changing lives by connecting with one student at a time!

The USC Literacy Project is operated by JEP's USC ReadersPlus program. This project focuses on literacy development placing faculty, staff, alumni, graduate student, and retired volunteers at USC neighborhood schools to develop a meaningful relationship with struggling readers. We are always looking for new volunteers to add to our cadre, so please consider taking an hour out of one day each week to work with a developing young reader. As a volunteer you will receive training in the area of literacy content and learn strategies to meet the individual needs and interests of your student in an effective and efficient way. This special attention given to a child fosters a love of reading and brings forth substantial literacy growth.

In recognizing the busy schedules of full time employees, students, retirees and alumni, the Literacy Project asks for only a one or two hour a week commitment. I hope you will consider volunteering. 

If interested in volunteering, please contact:
 Gwendolyn Randolph, Literacy Project Coordinator
 at 310-215-0848, e-mail rancgwen@yahoo.com
 or www.college.usc.edu/literacy-project

JEP Students Contribute to SurveyLA

The students' work will inform and add to the survey work being done by the City

BY SUSAN HARRIS, PH.D

Students enrolled in Prof. Julie Cohen's History 240 course (History of California) have the option of enrolling in a special JEP project this semester: SurveyLA.

In July 2010, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning launched a comprehensive survey of historic resources in the city. Funded in part by the J. Paul Getty Trust, this attempt to identify buildings, bridges, murals and other artifacts of Los Angeles history represents a unique effort among American cities. Given the expanse of Los Angeles, the Department of City Planning's Office of Historic Resources (OHR), which oversees the project, is enlisting the support of citizens in this massive effort to identify and document material examples of the city's rich history.

HIST 240 students are working in teams to explore neighborhood blocks within the West Adams district, located just north and west of the UPC campus. While the City already designated parts of West Adams as Historic Preservation Overlay Zones,

much of the area has never been surveyed. The students' work involves identifying and describing potential historic resources, thereby helping to narrow the scope for official surveyors who began their assessment of West Adams this fall. In addition, data collected by the students through field work and archival research will contribute to the City's innovative Zoning Information and Map Access System (ZIMAS). This database, which is freely available online (zimas.lacity.org), provides planning, zoning and jurisdictional information, assessor data and other information about properties all over the city.

According to Janet Hansen, Deputy Manager of the Office of Historic Resources, the JEP students are among the first college students to be directly involved with SurveyLA. "They are contributing a lot to the project," noted Hansen, who said the OHR may replicate the USC-JEP project at other universities. "I am passing on the students' research to the surveyors and they have been finding this most helpful. It has turned out to be a great project." Not only does the City benefit, but students do as well: "A lot of young people don't think about where they live, so being involved in a project like this gives them a sense of belonging, of community, and an understanding of the character of the neighborhood where they are living. And even if they don't stay in L.A., they will take that understanding away with them. So when they go home, they will look at where they live in a different way," notes Hansen.

Professor Julie Cohen agrees: "JEP [has] put together a wonderful project that I hope will be replicated for California history and other relevant courses in the future. In addition to their contributions to the L.A. city database, students gain the opportunity to actually see the history they read about in my class. It has helped them make important connections to class themes—from the post-war suburban ideal and "urban renewal" programs, to the politics of race, ethnicity, migration, and urban space. Getting students to explore their neighborhood with an eye to its political and social

DO YOU KNOW ANY STUDENTS WHO DESERVE TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE?

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THE GRACE FORD SALVATORI COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

This \$2,500 scholarship is given to up to six sophomores or juniors with majors in the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. It is based upon community service, academic performance, need, and civic leadership.

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Two \$750 scholarships are given to workstudy students who have performed outstanding community service.

For more information please go to: <http://sait.usc.edu/volunteer/scholarships-and-awards.aspx>

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history—to ask key questions about how and why certain sites and spaces look as they do—is invaluable. Ideally, a project like this deepens students' relationships to their surroundings, and shapes their interactions with any place they might live, long after the semester ends.”

As for the HIST 240 students, perhaps Christina Suriadjaja, a Freshman majoring in Business Administration, puts it best when she says: “[The SurveyLA project] complements my class so well [and] aside from being academically insightful, what I like about this project most is that it allows flexibility and creativity in choosing my historical sites and analyzing the site based on my own perceptions and value I put forth, backed up by virtual or contextualized sources. It [has] totally changed my perception about historical landmarks and . . . inspired me to look more into values and significance of history to our current society.”

For more information about SurveyLA, please visit the website for the Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources: Surveyla.org

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JEP Remembers Varnette Honeywood

BY TAMMARA ANDERSON, *Executive Director of JEP*

This past September, JEP lost a member of its family: Varnette Honeywood. Varnette bravely battled cancer for the last two years. She was a well-known artist and illustrator, praised for her use of bright colors, distinctive patterns and textures. She is the creator of the artwork that graced the highly popular “Cosby Show” in the 1980s.

Long before she caught the eye of Bill Cosby, Varnette belonged to us. In the mid-’70s, she joined JEP’s professional staff as Art Director. She was responsible for illustrating all JEP materials. It was not unusual to see her famous “JEP IS HERE” posters in the hallways of each of our partnering schools.

Her drawings and paintings are simply beautiful and draw the viewer in, as they always tell a story. This is one of the many facets of Varnette that made her so popular with the children she taught in our neighborhood schools.

Maria Calderon, former executive assistant to JEP’s founder, Barbara Gardner, summed up the feelings of the staff when she lamented, “Varnette had a beautiful sweet smile, was kind-hearted, and had a soft-spoken, calm way that I will always remember.”

Varnette touched so many with her glorious art. Her JEP family will forever be grateful that she shared her time, talent, and friendship with us. Thank you, Varnette.



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