

# REMEMBER, HONOR, ACT

Voices Against Injustice Newsletter      March 2022



**“The Trials haunt us as evidence of the victory of prejudice over reason, and the victory of fear over courage. Cultivating the will and the courage to see clearly beyond prejudice safeguards us from “witch hunts” of all kinds. They remind us that the mechanics of hate can take on a life of their own, particularly in communities already grappling with economic, political, and social divisions. Building community across difference and dedicating ourselves to economic, political and social equality engages the lessons of Salem.**

**The Witch Trials, with the vast majority of the accused already in positions of marginalization (in this case women), highlight the importance of protecting and safeguarding those at the edges of our society and our communities.**

**When we stand up with and defend anyone on the margins, as well as those whose voices have been silenced, we honor the history of 1692”**

**Margo Shea, PhD.**



March 31, 2022

Dear friends, family, and members of the Voices Against Injustice community,

Last week, we were thrilled to announce that Jerry Mitchell is the 2022 Recipient of the Salem Award for Human Rights and Social Justice. Mitchell's tenacious pursuit of justice through investigative journalism and reporting demands exactly the kind of courage VAI seeks in granting the award. Board members are reading *The Race Against Time* and planning for an event in November co-hosted with Peabody Essex Museum with both Jerry Mitchell and Reena Evers-Everette in attendance. In this newsletter, we share news of this announcement as well as several features and information about upcoming VAI events.

We also want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Patricia Fae Ho, Doneeca Thurston and Steve Davis who have cycled off of our board since our last publication. Their contributions to VAI have been monumental, and we are indebted to their passion, commitment, leadership and wisdom.

We are also excited to welcome three new Board members: Mathew Chetnick, Dan Marshall, and Jill Willis. Mathew is currently the Director of the First Year Experience at Salem State University and a doctoral student in Higher Education at UMass Boston. Dan has more than 20 years experience in visitor services and museum operations and is currently serving as a historical program interpreter at the Charter Street Cemetery. Jill is studying to get her Masters in History at Salem State University and currently works as a Visitor Engagement Advocate at the Peabody Essex Museum. These three bring their expertise to a very dynamic, dedicated group of volunteer board members, and each of them has already contributed and strengthened our organization.

We invite individuals who are committed to our mission and wish to let us know if you would like to join our Awards, Marketing, Memorial, or Programming Committees. In addition, we invite you to join us in 2022 at our online and in-person events and follow us on social media. Let us know how we can honor the history of the Salem Witch Trials and our previous award winners and what we can bring to the community. We welcome your ideas and input and look forward to meaningful work in 2022. Thank you to all of our tireless Board members and especially to Maile Black and Sara Moore who shared their strengths and amplified others' voices to make this newsletter possible.

In the name of peace, love and justice.

Fara Wolfson, Chair  
email [voices1692@gmail.com](mailto:voices1692@gmail.com)

## HONOR

# Jerry Mitchell Named Recipient of 2022 Salem Award for Human Rights and Social Justice



Investigative reporter and author Jerry Mitchell is the recipient of the 2022 Salem Award for Human Rights and Social Justice. The annual award recognizes and celebrates individuals and organizations confronting fear and social injustice with courage.

“I’m humbled and honored by this award, which encourages people to speak up against injustices even when no one else is speaking up,” he said. “Justice is impossible without truth, and that is why we so desperately need truth.”

As a reporter for the *Clarion-Ledger*, Mitchell spent three decades investigating civil rights cases that had gone cold. In 2019, he founded the Mississippi Center for Investigative Reporting, a nonprofit that exposes injustices, investigates cold cases, gives voice to the voiceless, and raises up the next generation of investigative reporters. MCIR’s stories have already led to two separate Justice Department investigations. Mitchell is the author of *Race Against Time: A Reporter Reopens the Unsolved Murder Cases of the Civil Rights Era*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a MacArthur “genius” and the recipient of more than 30 national awards.

Mitchell received multiple nominations for the award, including one from Reena Evers-Everette, Executive Director of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute, which seeks to fulfill the Evers’ dreams of empowering youth through education. In her letter, she wrote, “Jerry’s work inspired others. To date, there have been 24 convictions in cold cases from the Civil Rights Era. My mother and I believe that this would not have happened without Jerry.”

Wisconsin high school teacher Erik Shager recognized Mitchell as “a true firebrand for justice, whose actions speak louder than his words.” Shager first met Mitchell in 2013 at a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Landmark Institute in Jackson, Mississippi. Shager offered a comprehensive timeline of Mitchell’s career in his nomination and highlighted Mitchell’s courage to speak up for many who have been “silenced in the most horrifying way,” drawing important parallels to the lessons of the Salem Witch Trials.

“It was a unanimous decision by the Board. Jerry Mitchell’s relentless pursuit of justice is extraordinary, and he joins a powerful list of past honorees,” says VAI Chair Fara Wolfson.

Voices Against Injustice, formerly the Salem Award Foundation, has selected award recipients since 1992, the tercentenary of the Salem Witch Trials. While previous award winners Cosecha Massachusetts and City Life/Vida Urbana continue to fight for justice in Massachusetts, others use their voices at the national level.

2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the Salem Award, and Voices Against Injustice will host events throughout the year in a “Remember, Honor, Act” series so that the lessons and legacy of the Salem Witch Trials are not forgotten.

*An awards event hosted by VAI and Peabody Essex Museum will be held later this year.*

## JERRY MITCHELL BIOGRAPHY

The stories of investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell have helped put four Klansmen and a serial killer behind bars. His stories have also helped free two people from death row, exposed injustices and corruption, prompting investigations and reforms as well as the firings of boards and officials. He is a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a longtime member of Investigative Reporters & Editors, and a winner of more than 30 other national awards, including a \$500,000 MacArthur “genius” grant.

His memoir for Simon & Schuster, *Race Against Time*, details how some of the nation’s most notorious murders came to be punished decades later. *The New York Times* made it an Editors’ Pick, and NPR selected it as a Best Book of the Year.

After working for three decades for the statewide *Clarion-Ledger*, Mitchell left in 2019 and founded the Mississippi Center for Investigative Reporting, a nonprofit that exposes injustices, investigates cold cases, gives voice to the voiceless and raises up the next generation of investigative reporters. The stories of MCIR have already led to two separate Justice Department investigations and can be found at [www.MississippiCIR.org](http://www.MississippiCIR.org).

*In addition to his writing, Mitchell is an inspiring speaker. He regularly shares his stories of justice and redemption, speaking at the Kennedy Center, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and colleges and universities across the United States..*

# Where the Past is Present: Recognizing VAI's Former Board Members



## Julie Rose

With a background in finance and project and event management, Julie Rose played an integral role in growing Voices Against Injustice. Having earned degrees at University of Massachusetts Amherst, Babson College, and University of Massachusetts Boston, Julie's professional career has included many private and public sector leadership roles at the MIT Faculty Club, the Boston Harbor Project, and the City of Salem among other places.

For several years, Julie also ran a small catering business in Salem. It was then that Julie was introduced to VAI through former board member Meg Twohey, who recognized and shared Julie's interest in strengthening community connections.

Julie was intrigued by VAI's mission, particularly its connection to Salem's history, and the organization's efforts to educate others so the tragedy of the Salem Witch Trials would never happen again. Julie also appreciated that the Salem Witch Trials Memorial clearly reflected Salem's history and culture, and that the Salem Witch Museum was integral to fundraising for and establishing the Memorial.

When Julie first learned about VAI many years before joining the board, the Salem Award held little to no monetary value and was presented in front of a small audience in the Mayor's Office. During her time on the board, Julie's strong administrative and financial skills helped VAI attract a more robust board and increase donations, all of which allowed for the continuation of a significant monetary award that was started under Meg Twohey's leadership. She had a broader network than many of the board members at the time and was able to attract both new audiences and new donors, which allowed for the award celebration VAI holds today. Julie recruited board members with strong administrative, financial, and community engagement skills, all of which were critical for VAI to meet its mission. During her time as President, Julie also facilitated a retreat that helped the organization reaffirm its values and more clearly define its processes. During her tenure on the board, VAI also increased outreach and facilitated several education activities like symposia at Salem State University and local tent talks.

Julie was raised by a single mother, who was a teacher and principal, and was always trying to help those who had less. She credits her mother for instilling in her the values of equality and justice. Julie is particularly interested in social justice issues like women's rights and equal access to education. With former VAI Co-Chair, Patricia Fae Ho, Julie served on the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women and worked on issues around women's access to education, including addressing barriers like transportation and childcare. Julie has also served as a volunteer for Historic Salem, Hamilton Hall, the North Shore YMCA, and Samaritans Charitable of Salem, where she currently serves as President.

Of her time on the VAI board, Julie says, "It was wonderful to see the organization continue to grow and make an impact. [I appreciated] the strong teamwork we created, the new friendships I made and continue to foster, and all that I learned from each board member."

Thank you, Julie, for the integral role you played in growing Voices Against Injustice!

# Where the Past is Present: Recognizing VAI's Former Board Members



## Doneeca Thurston

Doneeca Thurston was born to a family of longtime Lynn residents but she now calls Salem home. Her interest in racial equity, affordable housing, and language access propels her own activist and advocacy work. Her career in the arts has brought great energy and opportunity to Voices Against Injustice.

Although Doneeca has spent much of her life living in Lynn and visiting her father's family in the Bahamas, her profession brought her to Salem six years ago and facilitated her introduction to VAI. Doneeca currently serves as the Director of the Lynn Museum/LynnArts but from 2014-2019 she served as a Creative Engagement Producer at the Peabody Essex Museum.

In 2018, Voices Against Injustice reached out to the education team at Peabody Essex Museum to collaborate on a one-word memoir project. After sitting in on a couple of meetings, former VAI board member Betsy Lahikainen asked if she might be interested in learning more about the organization and perhaps serving on the board. Doneeca joined VAI not long after that.

Doneeca is inspired by the activist community, both locally and beyond. She says, "There are many different ways to advocate for social justice and it's encouraging to see how folks engage in activism, whether it's a sit-in, community conversation, rally, or simply wearing a t-shirt highlighting what matters to you. Using our collective voice to advocate for those who feel they have not been seen or heard is absolutely beautiful."

Doneeca is also a firm believer in the power of community and community engagement. She brought that passion and energy to VAI and has helped VAI more deeply connect with the wider Salem community over the last several years. Whether it's been co-organizing a kick-off event, moderating a panel, or assisting with the annual awards celebration, Doneeca has enjoyed her time as a board member and helped shape the organization as it forges a new path and shared identity.

Although Doneeca's tenure has ended, she says of her time on the board, "My favorite thing about serving as a VAI board member has been getting to know the other members of the board and the wider organization. The work VAI does, and has been doing, is so important and timely. To know that the organization has been able to sustain itself for over 25 years with a volunteer board is remarkable. It also speaks to the passion, commitment, and dedication of board members and committee members, past and present." Doneeca is leaving the VAI board this month, and while she has embraced and enjoyed her time with VAI, she is also looking forward to spending more time with her partner and the mixed breed senior pup, Nelly, they rescued earlier this year.

Thank you, Doneeca, for sharing your energy, passion, and vision with Voices Against Injustice!

# The Power of Language

## VAI Recognizes International Transgender Day of Visibility

 The graphic is a representation of the transgender flag, which consists of five horizontal stripes of equal width. The colors from top to bottom are light blue, white, light pink, white, and light blue. The white stripes are twice as wide as each of the other three colors. The flag is centered within a white rectangular box.	<p>March 31st marks International Transgender Day of Visibility, a time to remember, honor, and act on behalf of our transgender community. Given the ban on transgender athletes in states like Utah, lawmakers nationwide removing books about the transgender community from public school libraries, and policies in states like Texas denying families the right to keep their transgender children safe, the issue of visibility is more important than ever. VAI stands in solidarity with our transgender and gender diverse community and remains committed to pursuing meaningful social justice for all those who experience ignorance, discrimination, and hatred.</p>
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To that end, VAI hosted a panel discussion late last year, “Humanizing Language: Identity, Allyship, and Why Words Matter.” During this event, panelists spoke about a range of marginalized identities, including immigrants, disabled people, and transgender and gender diverse people. They encouraged attendees to consider how the words we use in every conversation shape how we think about the world around us, allow us to recognize the humanity in one another, and change the conversation around important social and political issues.

One aspect of language that is particularly salient among the transgender and gender diverse community has to do with personal pronouns. Personal pronouns like she/her, he/him, and they/their are the pronouns a person uses in place of their formal name. Pronouns are important because they reflect our identity in deep and meaningful ways, and we use them to articulate who we are. Using the wrong pronoun for someone is just as offensive as calling them by the wrong name. Misgendering happens when someone refers to a person using a pronoun or name that does not correctly reflect their gender. In effect, misgendering erases a person’s identity, and can lead to embarrassment, anxiety, and social isolation for the person who is misgendered.

What can you do to create spaces that are inclusive for transgender and gender diverse people? You can share your own pronouns when you introduce yourself, in your email signature, on your web meeting screens, on social media, and elsewhere. You can ask people to share their pronouns if they feel comfortable doing so. You can also rethink how you address groups of people. Choose gender-neutral words like, “folks,” “friends,” “colleagues,” and even “y’all” to address collectivities, and use they/them/their pronouns whenever possible.

Physical violence is not the only type of violence the transgender and gender diverse community faces. Consistent misgendering can be alienating, which is why we must all pay closer attention to the words we use to describe and address one another.

# UPCOMING EVENT

## ART & ACTIVISM   Wednesday April 6, 6pm - 7pm (virtual)

The arts can be a form of self-expression as well as a means to bring people together to reflect on their collective identities, experiences, hopes, and struggles. Through this kind of collaboration, artists help to build and strengthen communities while amplifying the voices of those with whom they work.

This panel invites two artists, **Silvia López Chavez** and **Michael Aghahowa**, to discuss how their work intersects with activism and community engagement. The conversation will be led by Voices Against Injustice Board members, Doneeca Thurston (Executive Director at Lynn Museum/LynnArts) and Siddhartha V. Shah (Director of Education and Civic Engagement, and Curator of South Asian Art at Peabody Essex Museum). This event is co-hosted by Salem State University First Year Experience as part of Advocacy Month at Salem State University.



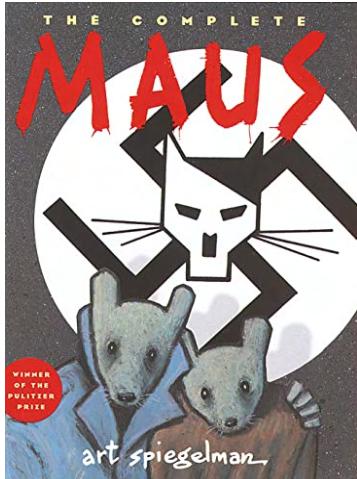
**Silvia López Chavez** is a Dominican-American painter and designer who works at the intersection of art, design, and community. From murals to product design and brand collaborations, López Chavez' technical expertise transcends traditional categories. Integral to López Chavez' practice is providing opportunities for the next generation of female artists to express their visual voice. As her career continues to expand internationally, she remains true to her vision: to make art with others and create beauty that also tells a truth. She is a proud alumna of Altos de Chavon School of Art & Design in the Dominican Republic and Massachusetts College of Art & Design.

**Michael Aghahowa** is an American artist and professor based in Lynn, Massachusetts. He is a dynamic creator, most known for his illustrative paintings, murals and community engagement. His work mixes elements of realism with collage, spray paint, and sculptural materials such as cardboard and glass. Through diverse media, Aghahowa often critiques the structural systems in place by using references to art history and HipHop. Aghahowa is currently an MFA candidate at Massachusetts College of Art and Design studying painting and 2D media.

**Learn more about both artists by visiting their websites, and join the conversation April 6.**  
A link to all upcoming events will be shared on Facebook. Email [voices1692@gmail.com](mailto:voices1692@gmail.com) with questions.

# UPCOMING EVENT: WE READ BANNED BOOKS

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 7pm - 8:30pm (virtual)



**Maus: A Survivor's Tale** - a graphic novel acclaimed as “the most affecting and successful narrative ever done about the Holocaust” (*Wall Street Journal*); one of *Variety*’s “Banned and Challenged Books Everyone Should Read”

In a recent tweet, Author Art Spiegelman reissued a statement he made for Banned Books Week a few years ago: “Keep your nose in a book — and keep other people’s noses out of which books you choose to stick your nose into.”

Voices Against Injustice will be hosting a series of discussions about banned books over the course of the year, exploring the issues and complexity surrounding pushes to ban individual books and/or books with common themes. Each discussion will include special guests to provide context and share different perspectives. The May 6 event will be co-hosted with Salem State University Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Which titles on banned book lists have impacted you? What does it mean when MAUS is banned or teachers are told they must teach opposing views of the Holocaust? What does it mean when a book about the March on Washington raises concern because it might cause emotional trauma, or a book about Ruby Bridges is banned because it "is not sufficiently redemptive of the white people who targeted her"? What does it mean when *And Tango Makes Three*, a picture book about a pair of male penguins nesting together, raises concerns?

According to Pulitzer Prize winning author Viet Than Nguyen, “Books are inseparable from ideas, and this is really what is at stake: the struggle over what a child, a reader and a society are allowed to think, to know and to question.” What is your reaction to this most recent wave of banned books? Which titles on banned book lists have had a profound impact on you? Which banned books are you reading again, or for the first time, in 2022? Which are you teaching?

We want to hear what you think.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/voices-against-injustice-we-read-banned-books-maus-registration-311181892417>

A link to all upcoming events will be shared on Facebook. Email [voices1692@gmail.com](mailto:voices1692@gmail.com) with questions.

## Opening Doors: Jelivet Perez



Jelivet Perez, Coordinator of Civic Engagement and Public Programs at the Peabody Essex Museum, has only been in the building since 2019, but her understanding of that position and its potential is, like the mission of the museum itself, deep and broad. It's a testament to her intelligence, justice-oriented approach, and positive energy that in her short tenure, she has already added enormous value.

Born in Puerto Rico, Jelivet moved to New York City as a toddler and became an artist, then switched to social work. The combination of experiences shows up in a career that allows her to merge her passion for the creative arts with a strong interest in community engagement, a career centered on promoting access for all to the arts and arts education.

Jelivet remembers the first time she came to the Salem museum, the day before her job interview. From her first stroll through the galleries, one photograph stands out in her mind, one taken in Puerto Rico. "It was a photograph of a soldier's boot prints in the sand. It was speaking to the United States invasion of Puerto Rico, specifically the Island of Vieques, and the colonization that took place." The personal connection brought the artwork to life for her. She sees this moment as a turning point that speaks definitively to the power of connection. This experience led directly to one of her most important goals: to create and foster such connections between the museum and all the people of Salem, especially its Latinx community.

There is one bottom-line question that drives all of Jelivet's work: "How do we create a sense of belonging?" And not just on the surface. She and Siddhartha Shah, the Director of Education and Civic Engagement and a member of the VAI Board, want to make *real* progress, "not just solve part of the problem." To this end, they work hard to develop community partnerships. Doing so requires a high level of sensitivity around programming and a keen understanding of pacing. "We have to think about how content is offered," she says. "I'd rather move slowly and intentionally and not make any lasting mistakes." This thoughtfulness toward who is included and how they are represented applies to exhibits, programs, collections, resources, and collaborations .

With a focus on accessibility and fostering dialogue and trust, the Civic Engagement and Community Education program continues to expand. One successful program began in 2021 when The House of the Seven Gables was unable to host classes due to COVID restrictions. PEM offered a solution because the museum had the space and could host weekly ESL and citizenship classes. On those evenings, the museum is, in a way, transformed. Jelivet "saw people come in who look like me," and she had an idea. Jelivet started Spanish-language after-hours gallery tours, opening up this world of art and artifacts to 75 adult learners. "It is just so rewarding," Jelivet says. At one point, she overheard one person say, "I didn't know this was a place for me." Another asked, "I didn't even know this was here. Can I bring my family?" Jelivet was delighted to inform them that PEM is free to all Salem residents.

It will come as no surprise that Jelivet insists on giving most of the credit to her mentor, Siddhartha Shah, "a true visionary." Together, they focus on some Big Questions: What does it really mean to be "inclusive"? Who are we to talk about these issues? What is our role in creating (or working towards) a solution? What is the museum's capacity for this work? Given her generosity of spirit and clarity of vision, Jelivet's impact on PEM should be broad and far reaching. As she and her team continue to ask the tough questions and work on responding from a historic perspective with sensitivity and joy, PEM and the ever-expanding community it serves are in the best of hands.

## RECENT EVENT

### Salem Film Fest 2022: “With This Breath I Fly”



Salem Film Fest 2022 has done it again. Every year, the festival's many and varied documentary films offer urgent and compelling stories from all over the world. This year, VAI was honored to be one of the sponsors of “With This Breath I Fly” (Directors: Clementine Malpas, Sam French, Producers: Sam French, Leslie Knott). The film is a decade-long account of two Afghan women imprisoned on charges of “moral crimes” by an Afghan justice system supported by billions of dollars of aid money from the European Union.

The film is fascinating not just for the intimate look at Afghan culture and the exposure of the European Union's complicity in silencing these cases, but also in the way the documentarians grapple with the extent to which they can/should, intercede. Because the film is specifically about the courage to speak out — by both women, their lawyers, and the filmmakers themselves — it was the perfect choice for this year's VAI sponsorship.

*Salem Human Rights Coalition and The Satanic Temple Salem also sponsored the film.*

After the screening, the film's director, Sam French, accepted the Salem Film Fest's “Special Jury Award” and fielded a number of questions from the audience. He encouraged people to visit the film's website, [thisbreath.org](http://thisbreath.org) to learn more about women in Afghanistan. Of particular interest are [Women for Afghan Women](http://WomenforAfghanWomen.org), currently the largest women's organization in the country

Films available for live streaming through April 3. More information at <https://www.salemfilmfest.com/>

*While not affiliated with the film, the [Afghan Women's Fund](http://AfghanWomen'sFund.org) has been on our minds. We encourage you to learn more about and support the organization. Director Fahima Gaheez was the recipient of the 2005 Salem Award for Human Rights and Social Justice. For the past 20 years, Afghan Women's Fund has been “dedicated to rebuilding Afghanistan with a focus on empowering women and girls through education, access to healthcare, and vocational opportunities”. Their work continues.*

## Are you a Poet 4 Justice?

Celebrate National Poetry Month by sending Voices Against Injustice a postcard with a poem about justice. Send your own poem or a poem about justice written by another poet. (*Please identify the poet*) This initiative is modeled after World Peace Poetry Postcard Month. The deadline to be included in an interactive online exhibit is Saturday, April 30.

**Send your postcard to Voices Against Injustice PO Box 8484 Salem, MA 01971.**

**Share on social media #RememberHonorAct and #Voices1692**

## REFLECTIONS

### Which Teacher Has Had a Lasting Impact on Your Life?

The world of education is complicated. Questions abound around equity, safety, student investment, teacher attrition, and other profound and important issues. But through it all, teachers continue to impact students' lives. In the Fall Newsletter, we asked: When you think of your experiences in school, who are the teachers who left an impression? Whose wisdom or kindness or love or spirit made a mark? We offer, in this issue, some responses from current and past Board members

## CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

### **Maile Black**

Sandy Ellis taught me the most profound lessons of my life. Through constant example, Sandy showed us all what it meant to be genuinely kind, to act from a place of authentic compassion. She took us to orphanages and garbage dumps in Tijuana, farms in Calexico, hospitals in downtown Santa Barbara. Because I witnessed and experienced Sandy Ellis, I know that it's possible to love our neighbors, all of them, and to reach out with joy to help.

### **Ana Brea**

One of the teachers who made an impact on me was my high school geometry teacher. Mathematics had never been my preferred subject, and the year I took his class it was. What he taught me and that I try to emulate in my own teaching practice is that a great teacher not only encourages you to love learning the subject, but they also make you feel capable of doing hard things.

### **Steve Carey**

I took my first course in Philosophy from Victor Menza during my sophomore year in college. This course taught me to think for myself and dare to inquire into fundamental questions about the meaning of life and my part in that. I learned that taking the time to contemplate a good, juicy question is often more fruitful than grasping for answers. For perhaps the first time in my life, I rejoiced and swam in the uncertainty and pointlessness of life, free to create something fresh and new that was not transactional or a means to an end.

### **Mathew Chetnik**

Mrs. Huzarewicz (8<sup>th</sup> grade English) pulled me aside to say "Even though your writing constantly breaks the rules, putting prepositions at the start/end of sentences, you have a unique style that makes an impact. Don't worry about the rules." She taught me the importance of sometimes following your heart instead of the rule when it was the right thing to do.

### **Dan Lipcan**

Sue Buck was my art professor and advisor in college. She taught me to see: how to look carefully and notice beauty. She helped those of us in her studio art classes to think critically, and to give each other constructive feedback—and to deliver our thoughts with care and sensitivity.

### **Sara Moore**

Tom Patterson introduced me to the field of sociology. His undergraduate sociology classes are the foundation upon which I built my career, studying how social systems and structures shape people's lives and how we can change those systems and structures to create a more equitable world.

### **Jill Willis**

I honor Taya Matthews, my high school health teacher, who also served as my independent study teacher when I was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. Taya Matthews visited me at home to help with my school work through the majority of my senior year when I could not attend school in person. Her attentiveness and understanding brought ease to a very overwhelming time in my life and her care for me as a student when I really needed it will never be forgotten. I am forever grateful for her willingness to help me finish out my high school experience in the most positive way possible.

### **Fara Wolfson**

There are so many who impacted me and inspired me to teach. Today I am thinking of my 6th grade teacher Ms. Carpenter and her rotating selection of museum-quality chalk drawings. Decades ago, I realized her impact when I stood at the border of Israel and Lebanon looking down the Mediterranean coast. The world seemed very complex, and at the same time I knew exactly where I was. This is one of the many gifts of a good teacher: to simultaneously ground us and inspire us to take flight.

## **PAST BOARD MEMBERS**

### **Ana Nuncio**

With much gratitude, I remember the musical inspiration provided by Mrs. Courtney, my 5th grade teacher at James Russell Lowell Elementary School in Chicago. In the fall of 1963, my family had arrived in the U.S. from Mexico, but we were not newly arrived. My sisters and I had previously started school in the US, and we knew some English. Our classroom had a piano, and Mrs. Courtney was a passionate educator who always set aside time to enhance her teaching with music. She taught her students songs from another era, mainly old songs from the American popular tradition. One song I especially remember was "Love's Old Sweet Song". In retrospect, I realize that Mrs. Courtney shielded us from the fitful, racially charged world we had just re-entered in the U.S. In her classroom, a welcoming culture prevailed through music, and it made learning easier for all students. Mrs. Courtney captivated me with her optimism and her belief in "love's old sweet song".

### **Betsy Lahikainen**

I honor Mr Perlinger (French) and Mr Stracoula (Algebra) because each in their own way took away the burden of learning by making it interesting.

### **Julie Whitlow**

I honor Patricia Blanchard, high school English teacher, who instilled in me that language has the power to transcend dogma and spark ideas. She told me I could write and probably influenced my career path.

### **Doneeca Thurston**

Dr. Leslie Patrick, better known as LP, really helped set me on my path to my current career. The way she approached teaching history opened my eyes to a world of possibilities, and until taking her classes, I had an unrealized love for the subject. Her wealth of knowledge, lived experience, and no-nonsense attitude made an impression on a lot of students, myself included. Being one of very few professors of color on campus, LP became a mentor to me and I will always treasure our many conversations on the back stoop of the Carnegie Building during her smoke breaks in between classes (although hopefully she's quit smoking by now).

### **Kathy Lique**

Arthur Bellinzoni was a professor who taught "Quest for the Historical Jesus" my freshman year. I learned many things and he helped me to consider leaving the Catholic Church. He has been on the Board of *People for the American Way* since it began in 1980. Their statement of purpose was: "Our highest purpose is to nurture a national climate that encourages and enhances the human spirit rather than one which divides people into hostile camps."

### **Monica Leisey**

I am honoring Dr. Mary Katherine O'Connor, a professor of social work who demonstrated the importance of creativity and curiosity in thinking and scholarship. She taught me that there is always more than one right answer. Just because my answer is different from others does not mean it has less merit. This lesson continues to be important as I engage with college students and work to build inclusive classroom learning communities. I am also honoring Dr. F. Ellen Netting, professor of social work whose scholarship and grace showed me that honesty doesn't have to hurt people's feelings. Working with Dr. Netting taught me that not only does nice matter, but building trusting relationships with colleagues provides more opportunities to be 'real' with them when there are difficult things to discuss. When I am in a challenging conversation with a colleague, I am always thankful for having spent the time building the professional relationship, as demonstrated by Dr. Netting, so that the disagreement is about the issue and not the people involved.

### **Patricia Fae Ho**

To The Immigrant Learning Center, The House of the Seven Gables, Wellspring House and other organizations—THANK YOU for providing a lifeline of access and opportunity to individuals settling into a new country. And for sharing with pride the stories of your students! Here is a salute to all ESL teachers who have broadened opportunities and changed the lives of countless students who are learning English to navigate through their new communities. While teaching ESL in England. I realized how dedicated teachers could make a vital, positive impact upon the confidence, skill sets and cultural understandings of newcomers. I have witnessed many instances of selfless commitment and empathetic, respectful interactions which have facilitated success. Within any class, there can be a wide range of age, countries of origin, level of education and job skills, employment and income status, and access to the Internet. Yet this diversity enriches the teaching/learning experience through understanding of new perspectives and cultural values.

## **Thank you**

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events and having the opportunity to collaborate in 2022 and beyond. Follow us on social media. Share ideas and join our committee work or help with a specific grant or project. Lend your expertise to our marketing and development team. Expand our knowledge of the Salem Witch Trials, descendants, or the organization's history by reaching out to one of our board members. Represent your organization at our quarterly regional meetings. Together let us remember, honor and act and work toward creating a more just and equitable world.



