



PANDEMIC WARRIOR

SC alumnus Dr. Cleavon Gilman battled for people of color during the pandemic and paid a price.

[Read the full story, Special pullout](#)



Returning Role Models

The Sun featured six student success stories during the pandemic in a popular special section circulated off campus. The section is being reprinted by popular demand.

[Read the full story, Special pullout](#)



CHICANO ARTS LEGEND DESIGNS STAMPS HONORING MIGRANT WORKERS, STORY PAGE 11



AN ACP HALL OF FAME NEWSPAPER

MARCH 24, 2023 / ISSUE 3

A NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD NEWSPAPER

PRESIDENT OF THE ASO ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

BY HAN PSALMA

Associated Student Organization President Leonardo Vanegas has resigned citing stress and a desire to focus on his studies. Vice President Imani Drew assumed the presidency and will complete his term which ends in May.

Vanegas was elected ASO President in May 2022 as the college was in the process of rebuilding follow two years of shutdown and a partial reopening. This fall he and his ASO team had to adjust to the demolition of the Student Center which housed the ASO and campus clubs. It was clubs where Vanegas put much of his time and energy, he said.

“(We) gave clubs an extra \$5,000 per semester,” he said. “So instead of \$20,000 per semester, it (became) \$25,000.”

Vanegas said the project he is most proud of is the fall voter registration and civic engagement project when the ASO registered more than 100 students to vote. He lured prominent elected officials to campus, including Congresswoman Sara Jacobs, Congressman Juan Vargas and California Secretary of State Shirley Webber.

Drew said the resignation shook the ASO.

“When he told me...it was a big shock to me and a big shock to all the executives,” she said.

Vanegas said fatigue and stress led to his decision.

“I really got tired when I got to college,” he said. “I have come to realize that I can no longer continue to properly put students first without putting my studies and mental health first.”

Drew said she would miss working with Vanegas.

“I felt disheartened, very heartbroken because (we) have been doing everything (together),” she said. “Leonardo is the reason I ran for vice president and stayed in the ASO.”

Drew pledged to work hard to keep the ASO meaningful and an asset to the student body.



Photo Courtesy of the Mora family

HAPPY MOMENT — Alexia Mora receives a kiss from her brother following high school graduation.

REMEMBERING ALEXIA MORA

HIGH FLYING CHEERLEADING STAR HAS DIED

Alexia Mora was popular, athletic ‘flyer’ on college cheer squad

BY RAZYLIN M. AVENDANO

Alexia Mora could fly. She did not need wings because she was lifted skyward by her friends and teammates on the cheer squad.

Mora died last month at the age of 21. A former standout Southwestern College cheerleader, she was nearing completion of her Bachelor’s degree in child development at SDSU. She was a Jaguar cheerleader from fall 2018 to spring 2021.

Mora was the squad’s “flyer,” the athletic and courageous member who is tossed in the air for crowd-pleasing acrobatic tricks and stunts. She was previously a four-year member of the cheer squad at Southwest High School and its captain.

Flyer on a competitive cheer squad is possibly the most dangerous position in high school and collegiate athletics. It is the athletic endeavor with the highest rate of injury. Her coach and teammates said Mora was never bothered by that.

“(Our) community lost a fighting spirit,” said Nina Williams, her former coach at SC.

Williams said Mora’s time on the team was marked by her growth from a shy, quiet girl her first year to a confident and driven young woman by the end of her third.

“(Alexia was) very eager (and) willing to do anything you asked,” Williams said. “She was 100 percent on it even when she was fighting so hard inside.”

Williams said Mora’s role as the flyer required great muscle strength, poise and flexibility. To be a flyer, Williams said, Mora

CHEERLEADER • PG 3

MANAGER ADMITS TO ATM THEFT

College administrator, two accomplices, use forklift to steal machine with \$9,600 from student center

BY ALICIA RIVERO

Three Southwestern College employees — including an administrator — confessed to using a forklift to steal a loaded ATM machine from the former Student Center building, then looting it of nearly \$10,000.

Grounds manager Juan Chavez, classified employee Efrain Correa and hourly worker Adbon Hernandez-Jimenez all confessed to stealing the ATM and its contents, then tossing the parts of the broken machine into a dumpster behind the Grounds Department. Campus police said all the money was recovered.

Hernandez-Jimenez was immediately terminated, but Correa remained on the payroll for five months pending his Governing Board-approved resignation on February 28. Chavez, a classified manager and member of the SC administrator’s union, was allowed to retire on Oct. 5, 2022 with full benefits and no sanctions, even though some faculty and classified employees said they told the board and college administration they opposed the plan.

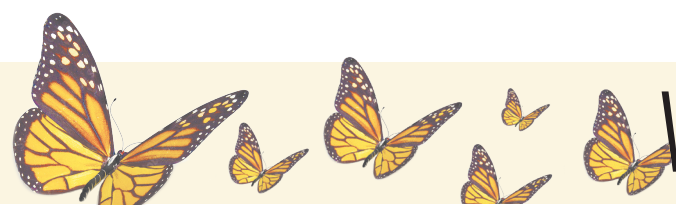
Chavez was initially offered a laudatory governing board proclamation praising his 11-year career at SC, but it was pulled by the governing board, according to College President Dr. Mark Sanchez.



Courtesy Photo

Grounds manager Juan Chavez, classified employee Efrain Correa and hourly worker Adbon Hernandez-Jimenez all confessed to stealing the ATM and its contents, then tossing the parts of the broken machine into a dumpster behind the Grounds Department.

ATM • PG 10



WALK FOR MIGRANTS

Gente Unida activists march along the border to honor the memories of migrants who lost their lives. [Back Page](#)

■ TIJUANA, MEXICO

MEXICAN STUDENTS MAY PAY LOCAL TUITION

Southwestern teams with Baja university to lower barriers

BY CAMILA A. GONZALEZ

On a hill on the southern flank of the Southwestern College campus, students can see well into Mexico. *La linea* is just six miles as the crow flies from the Chula Vista campus and a stone's throw from the Otay Mesa campus.

Yet SC and the Mexican system of higher education can seem as distant as Maine. Despite the fact that Tijuana is home to two universities closer to SC than either SDSU or UCSD, there has been little effort by college leaders in either nation to form meaningful partnerships.

That may be changing. SC is reaching a hand across the border and a major Mexican university system is reaching back.

Dr. Joel Pilco, SC's director of binational and international programs, will never erase the border, but he has removed dozens of other barriers. Mexico's venerable Universidad Autonoma de Baja California has done likewise south of *la frontera*.

SC and UABC have formed a partnership that at first will serve primarily low-income students in Mexico. UABC will help selected students with scholarships for tuition fees and international (F1) student visas. SC will offer the Mexican students California in-state tuition rather than the much higher international student rate.

Pilco and SC President Mark Sanchez said they hope the relationship with UABC will serve as a model for a new approach to borderlands higher education. Sanchez is working with California Assemblymember David Alvarez to pass Assembly Bill 91, the Binational Tuition Exemption Pilot Program for Local Community Colleges. It

UABC • PG 14

BORDERING ON A BREAKTHROUGH —

SC President Dr. Mark Sanchez and SC director Dr. Joel Pilco said they are optimistic their proposal will gain approval in the California legislature.



Photo Courtesy of UABC

BOOK CHECKED OUT IN 1975 FINALLY RETURNED TO LIBRARY

BY CHERI-ANN INOUE

Boyd Applegate checked out "Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare" 47 years ago from the Southwestern College Library and, uh, well, forgot to return it.

It was 1975 when the adventure began. Gerald Ford was president, Elton John was the world's rock star, "Saturday Night Live" debuted and two tech geeks opened Microsoft in their garage. And Applegate became forever linked to the Bard and a science fiction legend.

He said he meant to return the book someday, but "someday" never came. Years rolled by, then decades. Isaac Asimov died in the meantime. (Shakespeare was already dead.)

"The easiest way to solve a problem is to deny it exists."

ISAAC ASIMOV

Fate intervened, or else Applegate passed through a wormhole. Out of nowhere one morning appeared Dr. Mark Sanchez, Southwestern College President and JEDI Warrior (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion), at a breakfast joint called Hob Nob Hill in Banker's Hill. Even though Sanchez is not a banker, Applegate suspected he might be experiencing a rich coincidence.

BOOK • PG 14



PHOTO BY CHERI-ANN INOUE / STAFF

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER — Boyd Applegate returned his library book 47 years late, but college librarians waved the \$4,200 overdue fee.

REMEMBERING ROSE SCHINDLER



Photo Courtesy of Sandra Scheller

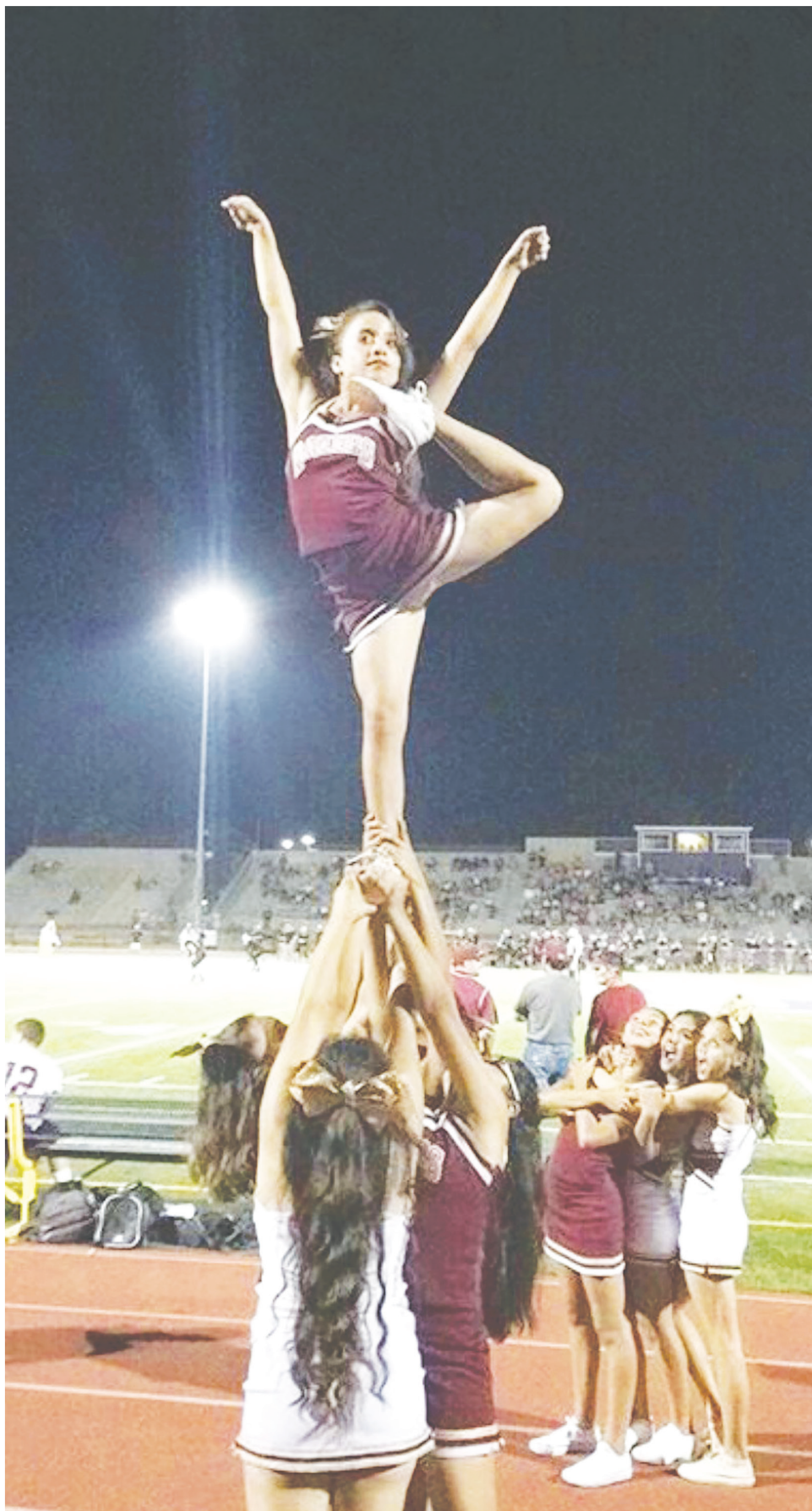


"I promised my father I would tell the world what (the Nazis) did to us. I am keeping my promise. Now I need younger people to keep telling others what happened during the Holocaust."

ROSE SCHINDLER, Holocaust survivor

HOLOCAUST EDUCATOR FULFILLED FATHER'S LAST WISH

Rose Schindler had a constant reminder that life is precious — a concentration camp tattoo on her wrist given to her by the Nazis in Auschwitz. She dedicated her life to educating subsequent generations about the *Shoah* (the Holocaust) and earned the revered Jewish honorific *Moreh* (teacher).



Photos Courtesy of the Mora family

FLIGHTS OF ANGELS SING THEE TO REST — Alexia Mora was well known for her courageous and athletic cheerleading stunts at Southwestern College sports events.

CHEERLEADER

• CONT FROM PG 1

An honor student, Mora was near to SDSU graduation

had to be diligent and courageous. Mora knew cheerleaders are performers and that all eyes were on her when she was thrown in the air for a stunt, Williams said.

Cheer teammate Hannah Nava said Mora was all in.

“If anyone was passionate about cheer, it was (Alexia),” she said.

SC cheerleader Arelis Olivias agreed.

“Alexia was always down for everything,” she said.

Jazmine Banaci said she grew close to Mora when they both cheered for the Southwest High School Raiders when Banaci was a junior and Mora a freshman. After Banaci graduated from high school and enrolled at SC, she became the cheer coach for SHS and worked

with Mora through her high school graduation.

“Alexia was definitely meant to be a cheerleader,” said Banaci. “She had such bright energy and was always willing to help people. Her junior year I made her one of my cheer captains because she was so talented and led by example. She was an excellent student with an exceptional GPA and an amazing all-around athlete.”

After Mora graduated from Southwest High, Banaci asked her to cheer for Southwestern College and be the flyer. Mora accepted and the two cheered together for two years as Jaguars, where their bond continued to grow.

“Alexia always told me how much she admired me, (but) I always admired her and how strong she was,” Banaci said. “I never knew how to manage school and cheer at the same time, but Alexia did, and she was so good at everything she did.”

Mora transferred to SDSU in

2021. She was set to be the first in her family to graduate from a university.

Her cousin Viviana Partida wrote an emotional message for a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for burial expenses.

“She loved to sing and draw, she had big beautiful eyes with a contagious laugh,” Partida wrote. “It’s her smile I can’t get out of my head. She dedicated her life to nothing but good things. (She) never wavered and that’s what hurts us the most. She broke so many generational curses and was the sweetest to every single person in her life.”

Banaci said she is heartbroken by the loss of her close friend.

“I’d give anything to give her one more hug and tell her how much she meant to me and so many others.”

The Mora Family is accepting donations at <https://gofund.me/7f2e6016>.



ALEXIA MORA

■ SAN DIEGO

WILSON STATUE MUST GO SAY RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Protestors say his anti-Latino, anti-LGBTQ stances do not reflect region’s heritage

BY CAMILA A. GONZALEZ

For nearly 30 years Pete Wilson was a popular mayor, U.S. Senator and California Governor. History has not been kind to Wilson.

Today he finds himself in the company of confederate officers, bloody conquistadors and slave owners.

Human rights activists are campaigning to have a downtown statue of Wilson pulled down. San Diego’s demographics have evolved and so has the perception of Wilson and his record of anti-Latino and anti-LGBTQ actions.

Wilson’s enormously controversial support of anti-immigrant Propositions 187 and 227 catered to conservatives but alienated Latinos and progressives. Political scientists point to Wilson’s anti-Latino activities as the main reason California flipped from a red Republican-leaning state to a blue Democratic stronghold in the 21st century.

“Demographics is destiny,” said Herman Baca, chairman of the Committee on Chicano Rights. “It was easy for Wilson to use us as *una piñata* when there weren’t many of us voting.”

Enrique Morones, founder of Gente Unida, said a statue of Wilson in multi-cultural San Diego is like a statue of a slave owner or confederate general in a black community.

“It is really embarrassing that the city of San Diego would have a statue honoring a person that promoted hate, supported Proposition 187 and approved of undocumented children being blocked from going to school or receiving health care,” he said. “This is what Pete Wilson represents to so many of us.”

Proposition 187 was a 1994 ballot initiative to deny immigrants access to health care, public education and social services in California. Proposition 227, an initiative on the 1998 ballot, sought to ban bilingual education in California. Prop. 187 narrowly passed, but was struck down by a federal judge in 1997 who ruled it unconstitutional. Prop. 227 also passed, but was largely ignored by most California school districts which followed federal guidelines instead. The measure was formally repealed by California voters in 2016.

STATUE • PG 14



Photo Courtesy of Enrique Morones

TIME’S UP? — Activists insist Wilson initiated racist policies out of step with diverse San Diego County.

MONUMENTS TO RACISTS REMOVED FROM PUBLIC DISPLAY

BY CAMILA A. GONZALEZ

In 2020 Pete Wilson’s controversial statue disappeared briefly from its pedestal in Horton Plaza before returning weeks later. Other controversial San Diego County monuments banished from public land have not had return engagements. Three contentious monuments removed recently include:

Jefferson Davis plaque, downtown San Diego.

In 1926 the Daughters of the Confederacy convinced the San Diego City Council to install a plaque memorializing Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who led the fight against the Union during the Civil War and attempted to bring down the United States. It remains unknown why the council would honor a man who narrowly missed being tried and hung for treason with the deaths of 618,222 on his hands. In 2017 the memorial was unceremoniously pulled from the wall with a crowbar without opposition.

Christopher Columbus statue, Discovery Park, Chula Vista.

Located less than a mile from Southwestern College, the Columbus statue was erected in 1992 to honor the Italian explorer sailing for Spain who accidentally ran into the New World, but purposefully killed and enslaved its indigenous People. The city council voted 4-1 in June 2020 to remove the statue and rename the park to honor the indigenous Kumeyaay People. Councilman John McCann voted against the statue’s removal. McCann was elected mayor earlier this month.

Stonewall Jackson confederate monument, Hope Cemetery, San Diego.

The southern general was the prominent feature of a memorial honoring the confederacy. San Diego human rights activists called for the removal of the “confederate participation trophy” and it was pulled down in July 2020. Jackson was a slave owner and participant in the hanging of Kansas abolitionist John Brown. He was responsible for the deaths of more than 100,000 soldiers, slaves and civilians.

MARCH

• CONT FROM PG 16

Human rights activists honor lost migrants

2.3 million people and San Diego County's 3.3 million souls.

"Beautiful, *verdad?*" offered Enrique Morones, the Gente Unida founder who organized Walk for Migrants. "We are so blessed to be able to enjoy a morning like this when so many other people can't."

Morones picked a perfect December morning in Border Field State Park – warm in the sun, cool in the shade, capped by an azure dome spotted by an occasional tumbling cloud. He and his fellow walkers were there to remember the suffering and tragedy of migrants around the world, including near the U.S.-Mexico border.

Padre Dermot Rodgers, in his traditional brown Franciscan friar's robe and sandals, reminded the line of the reason for the season. It was two weeks before Christmas on *el Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe*, but Father Rodgers stopped and gathered the pack every few minutes like an Easter Station of the Cross procession.

Instead of the suffering of Christ, Father Rodgers shared stories of suffering by immigrants from Haiti, Syria, Somalia, Ukraine, Venezuela, China and other corners of the world beset by poverty and violence.

"We ask for basic and simple justice," he said in his light Irish brogue, a vestige of his native Belfast, Northern Ireland. Rosary beads dangling from his weathered fingers and a serious countenance crossed his otherwise welcoming face.

Justice, however, is rarely basic or simple, he said. Inequity, war and corruption have pushed tens of millions out of their native countries and on to the migrant trail, an invisible highway of desperation crisscrossing the planet. Like the earnest walkers in the bottom left corner of America, as many as 1.3 million migrants are on the move this very day, said Rodgers.

Many of them never reach their destination, he said, struck down by heat, cold, robbers, rapists, accidents and hunger. More than 1,000 migrants died along the southern border in 2022 alone, according to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Rodgers gathered marchers to pray a portion of the rosary for Joselyn Quinteras of El Salvador, a migrant who died of dehydration and heat exhaustion in the desiccated southern Arizona desert near Tumacacari.

"She was abandoned in the wilderness by the *coyotes* she had paid to guide her across the border," he said. "They found her body three weeks later."

Quinteras, like the other migrants remembered along the way, was honored with a tangerine butterfly released into the cyan sky.

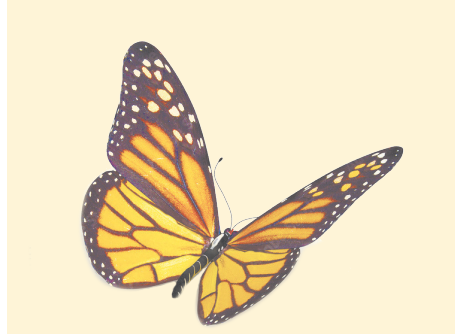
"Butterflies are symbols of hope in many cultures," said Rodgers. "They are revered in Latino cultures as messengers to heaven. Butterflies remind us that we are never alone and always connected to the spiritual world."

Transfronterizo human rights activist Hugo Castro is a man known for his remarkable courage while helping Central American migrants traverse the perilous journey through Mexico where they are preyed upon by cartels and petty criminals alike. Castro was severely beaten and left for dead in a rural roadside ditch a few years ago while accompanying migrants. Morones said it is a miracle he survived.

Castro is a diminutive and soft spoken man, which betrays his reputation as a fierce defender of the weak and vulnerable. He said it was fitting that a Franciscan monk



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA / STAFF



MONARCH MESSENGERS

Franciscan Padre Dermot Rogers said butterflies are a symbol of hope in many cultures and have a special place in the hearts of Latinos. "They are revered in Latino cultures as messengers to heaven," he said. "Butterflies remind us that we are never alone and always connected to the spiritual world." Monarch butterflies, which undertake long migrations between California and Mexico, are symbols of immigrants and DREAMERS. Gente Unida activist Frank Modic, a hospice chaplain, raises butterflies to be released at ceremonies and funerals. The sleeping butterfly awakens and becomes active in the warm sunlit hands of participants. After a few moments, they test their wings and take flight.

and a team of activists clutching rosaries gathered on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe to fight for the rights of migrants.

"It helps us to recognize the necessity of fighting for human rights, which is really a spiritual quest," he said. "Some of us do it for spiritual reasons to light a flame of hope and love."

Marching along the border to honor migrants "*es muy importante*," Castro said, but the event is even more important for the activists walking together in the comforting sun. Caring for others



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA / STAFF



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA / STAFF

MARIPOSAS AND MEMORIALS — Gente Unida activists walked along the U.S.-Mexican border in memory of migrants from around the world who died while trying to reach for a better life. (from top) Frank Modic hands a slumbering butterfly to Cecelia di Mino. Padre Dermot Rodgers helps a young Monarch walk to a native plant. A marcher reads a passage from Catholic scripture.

requires people of good will to also care for themselves, he said, and to be periodically recharged with inspiration.

"*Hay un gran crisis humanitaria en todo el mundo*," he said. "We need to remember that God is on their side and our side. Walking today with *el padre y los mariposas* helps me to remember that and gives me encouragement to do more work."

Cecelia di Mino was a teenager adrift when she landed at Southwestern College and found herself, she said. Today she is a Harvard graduate who remembers

her humble South County roots. She traveled from Las Vegas to participate in the walk, which she felt called to.

"I was blessed with opportunity so many other people do not have," she said. "Sometimes as people find success and run toward their goals they forget their past, they forget about those they left behind. Migrants are so often the people left behind. They are criminalized and victimized."

Looking down the path, Di Mino said she saw reasons for optimism. "The people (here) have great

intention and energy," she said. "Releasing the butterflies...was really beautiful. There is a lot of love. (We need) people to pay attention (to migrants) and treat them with dignity and respect."

Retiree Dr. Christauria Welland is far from retired. The former educator now helps run the Oaxaca Education Fund that provides schooling and food to indigenous people in Mexico's southern states. One part of her organization's mission is to help people thrive

MARCH • CONT NEXT PG



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA / STAFF



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“I was blessed with opportunity so many other people do not have. Sometimes as people find success and run toward their goals they forget their past, they forget about those they left behind. Migrants are so often the people left behind. They are criminalized and victimized.”

CECELIA DI MINO
SC alumnae, Harvard graduate



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA / STAFF

MEMORIAL MARCH — Gente Unida volunteers annual Walk for Migrants serves as a memorial for deceased migrants as well as a day of reflection about their activism and their lives. Padre Dermot Rogers stops to share a story of a migrant from the Middle East. Walkers prayed for peace in the world and more humane treatment of refugees.



“A little support can go a long way, but the need is great. Mexico is a wonderful but complicated society. Doing humanitarian work there can be difficult because there are so many barriers and challenges.”

DR. CHRISTAURIA WELLAND
Director of the Oaxaca Education Fund

where they are so they do not become displaced refugees.

“A little support can go a long way,” she said, “but the need is great. Mexico is a wonderful but complicated society. Doing humanitarian work there can be difficult because there are so many barriers and challenges.”

Hope gives her the power to push on, she said.

“Education is a force multiplier,” she said. “One transformed person can transform others. That is how it has always been since the beginning of time.”

Morones and company had planned to march all the way to the beach at the international border, but recent downpours had flooded the path. Padre Rodgers said the God-sent rain was a blessing for the plants and animals of the park, including the squadron of butterflies launched by the marchers that morning.

“The butterflies were born in the desert southwest of Southern California and will later migrate to the Columbia River Gorge around Portland, Oregon,” he said. “Our butterflies represent our migrants who are also undertaking a great trek. May God protect them as they make their journeys.”

VIEWPOINTS

Editorials • Opinions • Letters to the Editor



The mission of the Southwestern College Sun is to serve its campuses and their communities by providing information, insights and stimulating discussions of news, activities and topics relevant to our readers. The staff strives to produce a newspaper that is timely, accurate, fair, interesting, visual and accessible to readers. Though The Sun is a student publication, staff members ascribe to the ethical and moral guidelines of professional journalists.

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Student Press Law Center National College Press Freedom Award 2011, 2018	Student Newspaper General Excellence 2002-23
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Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Awards 2003-06, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012-2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022	San Diego Press Club Excellence in Journalism 1999-2022 Directors Award for Defense of Free Speech 2012
General Excellence 2001-23 Best of Show 2001-23	Journalism Association of Community Colleges Pacesetter Award 2001-18, 2022-23 Newspaper General Excellence 2000-2023
Columbia University Scholastic Press Association Gold Medal for Journalism Excellence 2001-23	American Scholastic Press Association Community College Newspaper of the Year
College Media Association National College Newspaper of the Year 2020, 22	
California College Media Association Outstanding College/University Newspaper	



MOREH ROSE SCHINDLER BENT DARKNESS TO LIGHT

From the last time she saw her father at Auschwitz until the day she died, Rose Schindler's mission in life was to tell the world what happened during the Holocaust. Her father's last words to the 14-year-old dwelled within her until she died this month at 93.

"Whatever you do, stay alive so that you can tell the world what they are doing to us."

Mrs. Schindler fulfilled her mission and became one of America's greatest Holocaust educators and one of our nation's greatest citizens. The last 45 years of her life were dedicated to keeping the sacred promise she made to her father. There are no exact figures to tabulate how many people she reached, but it would be safe to say it was in the hundreds of thousands. She became one of our nation's leading *Moreh*, the Hebrew word for teacher. In Judaism they is no more honored title.

Moreh Schindler required superhuman stamina and enormous inner strength to travel the land and share her family's horrific experiences of fear, suffering and death at the hands of one of history's most barbarous regimes. Her parents and most of her immediate family were among the 6 million Jews exterminated by German Nazis during World War II. Her family members were killed in the notorious Auschwitz gas chamber. A tattoo etched on her forearm by the Nazis was a daily reminder.

Miraculously teenage Rose and her sister survived, once by sneaking out of the line of teens and children heading for the same gas chambers her parents perished in. She later dodged death by lying about her age and going to a labor camp with able bodied adults. Her courage, cunning and desire to live propelled her through unspeakable depravation and epic cruelty.

Then, on one surprising morning, the Germans fled and she realized she could keep her promise to her father. She met fellow Holocaust survivor Max Schindler in England, immigrated to San Diego County and raised a family.

In her late 40s she launched into her life's third act. She was a charismatic presence, a gifted storyteller and a brilliant witness to history. When the world's collective memory of the Holocaust began to fade, she was the right woman at the right moment. Her message to "pick up the torch and carry it forward" resonated with youth. She visited hundreds of schools, sat for countless interviews and wrote a book, "Two Who Survived: Keeping Hope Alive While Surviving the Holocaust."

Among the campuses she visited recently was Bonita Vista High School, our neighbor across the street. Moreh Schindler was compelled to go to BVH in late April of 2022 following darkly ugly acts of anti-Semitic vandalism there and at BV Middle School.

It was a seminal event for the high school. Her electrifying presentation transformed the BVH student body. When she began to speak it was if the whole world froze to listen. Students were shocked, outraged and pained to hear what the Schindler girls were put through. She spoke of her happy childhood that turned horrific after her entire family was arrested and sent to Auschwitz where she was tortured and enslaved. Tears flowed when she told the teenagers in the high school gym that she and her sister were the only two of the nine members of her family to survive the concentration camp. They were also teens.

Somehow the terrible things Moreh Schindler faced could not ruin her radiant spirit. She was a Holocaust survivor who inexplicably remained update and optimistic. She was one of the liveliest and most loving people anyone could hope to meet.

Faith made her that way, she said. It was her faith in young people that fueled her optimism and her mission.

Rose Schindler was a warrior for peace right to the end. She spoke to enthralled audiences just a fortnight before she died.

Now the torch has passed to us. We honor her and other great Holocaust *Moreh* like Ben Midler, Gerhard Maschkowski and the late SC honorary degree recipient Ruth Goldschmiedova Sax by continuing their work to reject evil and promote peace. It is now our turn to say "never again" and keep alive the spirits of Holocaust victims and survivors.

History has a disconcerting habit of repeating itself, but people of good will and intention can prevent humanity from replicating its darkest mistakes. In the spirit of Rose Schindler, we accept the challenge.

Moreh Schindler required superhuman stamina and enormous inner strength to travel the land and share her family's horrific experiences of fear, suffering and death at the hands of one of history's most barbarous regimes.

Her parents and most of her immediate family were among the 6 million Jews exterminated by German Nazis during World War II.



ILLUSTRATION BY EDMUNDO GODINEZ / STAFF

Her family members were killed in the notorious Auschwitz gas chamber.

A tattoo etched on her forearm by the Nazis was a daily reminder.

Rose Schindler was a warrior for peace right to the end. She spoke to enthralled audiences just a fortnight before she died.



ILLUSTRATION BY ABRAHAM GODINEZ / STAFF

FOOD ALLERGIES ARE DEADLY MISTAKES WAITING TO HAPPEN

BY HAN PSALMA

A Perspective

Southwestern College does so many things right that support inclusion, enrollment and meaningful learning. Props to our faculty and deans for supporting students. Thank you to our campus police for working to keep us safe. Mil gracias counselors, financial aid and all the special departments that help students stay on course.

SC has a big hole in its game, however, when it comes to nutrition. Our campus food choices are unhealthy, insensitive to allergies, exclusive of religious and cultural considerations, and much too expensive.

It is mystifying that a college that has invested more than half a billion dollars in its facilities, more than \$100 million a year to keep the campus operating and untold amounts of blood, sweat and tears teaching students places so little priority on the food that fuels its people.

It is akin to pouring Pepsi into a Maserati.

Other colleges and universities have healthy food options. We should, too. Students need lean protein, fruits, vegetables, unprocessed bread and healthful beverages. They provide short-term and long-term energy as well as building blocks of lasting health.

Sadly, most of our “food” offerings at our college cafes are indistinguishable from an am/pm store at a gas station. Rows of chips, pastries, sugary trail mix and candy are a depressing statement about what some college leaders think we are worth. Sugar, fat, soda, energy drinks and other slow motion poisons make students lethargic, overweight, unhealthy and unable to think well.

ALLERGIES CAN KILL

About 32 million people in the U.S. have food allergies, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Most common are milk, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, shellfish and wheat.

Kaitlyn Blagrove, a freshman psychology major, avoids campus cafeterias after a serious food allergy accident.

“I accidentally consumed dairy due to bad labeling which resulted in me throwing up,” she.

Blagrove was fortunate to be able to identify the food that was incorrectly labeled, but other students are often not so lucky. America loses college students every year due to fatal campus food encounters.

“Teenagers and young adults appear to be at higher risk for fatal allergic reactions,”

according to a national study Prevalence of Food Allergy in College and University Students.

Students and faculty members reported close calls with nut

allergies, including a hair raising incident at a commencement ceremony catered by the cafeteria. A severe nut allergy can kill someone in minutes unless they have an epinephrine pen.

Not every SC student and employee can afford epinephrine. In 2020 two doses cost \$670.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL FOODS

Jewish and Muslim students are also generally excluded from the lunch table at SC. A vast majority of food offerings are not kosher and do not meet the requirements of most Muslim students. San Diego County is sprinkled with Jewish, Hindu and Muslim delis and eateries that have a rich variety of offerings, so there seems to be no reason SC cannot provide at least a few.

Chula Vista is disproportionately Jewish and has a proud history of altruistic Jewish citizens who helped to build and advance our region. Recently Muslim students from Africa and the Middle East have found a home at SC, but not a good place to eat on campus.

VEGETARIANS LEFT BEHIND

Religious and secular vegetarians deserve a better effort from our college. Many vegans and vegetarians are on medically-informed diets for heart conditions, high blood pressure, migraines and gastro-intestinal problems. The old “You’re in Wyoming, eat beef!” mentality does not cut it in metropolitan San Diego County.

Arturo Andres Salas Garcia, a criminal justice major who transferred in 2021, used to depend on campus food.

“There isn’t really a wide variety,” he said. “They should include some new offerings.”

HIGH COST OF HEALTHY CHOICES

Too often, food is the last thing students can afford. After paying for educational costs, rent, gas and transportation, there may be little or nothing left for food.

SC deserves a lot of credit for its work on student hunger. When it learned just before the pandemic that nearly 40 percent of students suffer serious food insecurity, SC opened the Jaguar Kitchen food pantry.

There has been no progress, though, on the very real problem of expensive food in the cafeterias. The State of California and SC do so much to subsidize the costs of higher education, but nothing meaningful related to food. Johnny can’t learn if Johnny is hungry. Neither can Maria, Mustafa, Sally and Kylian.

Improving the quality of food and lowering its cost is not a moon shot or as difficult as curing cancer, but requires vision and will by our leaders. It is doable if it is a priority.

We are what we eat. Garbage in, garbage out. Let’s start fueling our students with the food that will fuel success.



PHOTO BY KAI GRAY / STAFF

DRAG QUEEN HOLDS COURT — Drag artists hosted by the ASO read books and told stories during a recent visit to Southwestern College. The college joined the City of Chula Vista in hosting events in support of drag artists and the LGBTQ community.

DRAG ARTISTS, ALLYS PUSH BACK AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

BY HAN PSALMA

A Perspective

Chula Vista voters once again showed a hate-based city council candidate the door.

Here’s hoping anti-LGBTQ scourge Marco Contreras remains on the ash heap of history.

Contreras and his ilk have raised their ugly heads to castigate members of the LGBTQ community and drag artists time and again, only to be swatted aside by the Chula Vista community. A self-proclaimed minister, Contreras has engaged in unchristian behavior since he first opened his mouth to insert both of his feet. He is just the latest homophobic bully hiding under the guise of clergy who has tried and utterly failed to stigmatize the South County LGBTQ community and drag performers.

Let’s hope he’s the last.

Contreras took to Instagram to slander Mmm Cakes, a small business on Third Avenue, for hosting drag queen Mariam T at Disney Villain Trivia Night.

“Exposing children to drag queen entertainment is child abuse,” he belched forth.

The “child abuse” canard hit deep with members of the LGBTQ+ community, historically struggling with hypersexualization, and historically NOT child abusers. Nearly 98 percent of child abusers are straight men and women. Ironically, a disproportionate number are clergy.

Drag is a centuries-old art form from England meant for expression of self and to celebrate diversity. Drag artists are among the world’s most talented and popular performers, including prime time American TV.

In recent years family events featuring drag performers have become a popular way to teach children the beauty of diversity and acceptance. Contreras clearly did not learn these lessons as a child. Sadly, he mistakenly believes the rest of us are as small minded and hateful as he is.

“As an entrepreneur and businessman, Marco knows the value of community support for business to thrive,” crowed his campaign website.

Nevertheless, he blacklisted and bullied a small business in Chula Vista that values community. Mmm Cakes owner Jose Vargas called out the hypocrisy.

“It’s not a good look to attack a citizen while you claim to be trying to help citizens,” he said.

Contreras swung open the Gates of Hell and set free his chorus of internet trolls and rightwing loonies. Mmm Cakes received non-stop harassment from Contreras minions who called its operators pedophiles and groomers.

“It was actually very disturbing,” Vargas said. “(Contreras and his supporters) are calling us pedophiles and yet they are hypersexualizing everything.”

Contreras is not the first hate monger to target drag performers in Chula Vista. In 2019 a handful of anti-LGBTQ protesters led by another self-appointed “minister” threatened to picket the Drag Queen Story Hour at the tiny Otay Ranch Branch Library. Former Mayor Mary Casillas-Salas counterpunched. She moved the event to the main Chula Vista Library downtown, gave it heavy marketing and personally led a counter protest that dwarfed the hate group, sending the rednecks home red faced.

California Assembly member Steve Padilla was one of the

LGBTQ • PG 12

THINKING OUT LOUD

COMPILED BY EMMA MALY

How have the three years of COVID isolation affected your college experience?



MARLENE FIGUEROA
(Liberal Arts)

“When I was in online classes my development and grades went down. The hardest part was that I did not have any social contact, so that kind of messed up my mental health. Now I feel much better.”



GERARDO SIEGEL
(Biology)

“I stopped attending college a year before COVID, so when I finally came back this semester it remains the same for me.”



KARLEY GALLEGOS
(Psychology)

“This is my first year at Southwestern (and) we are getting back to normal pretty fast. I feel like fall semester we still had COVID problems.”



MOISES MARTINEZ
(Business Management)

“It feels weird to be back in class, but also good. (We) can interact in person and talk with the professor. It is way better to learn in person than online.”

OVERWORK DRIVES MANY YOUNG PEOPLE TO EARLY GRAVE

BY LILIANA ANGUIANO

A Perspective

I don't want to work. I don't want to work hard. I would like to live the life of Paris Hilton's dog, Tinkerbell. Sadly that is an impossible fantasy. That said, American work culture is to blame for not encouraging sensible people to want to work.

American work culture is not working. Laboring in a 9-to-5 office job can be the equivalent to playing Jedi mind tricks on oneself to walk across a board of nails without feeling pain.

American workaholic culture dictates that we rise and grind, pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, girl boss and hustle until we drop. Then, in the far-off distant future, we may have 2.5 kids, a dog and a picket fence, thus fulfilling our American dream to live happily ever after.

As long as we are not dead.

Benefits of hard work have declined in recent years. Housing prices are at an all-time high. Americans are experiencing burnout by the millions. The wage gap between the poor and rich is higher than that of the French Revolution. With no guillotines in sight, the future seems bleak.

Americans are beginning to realize this. So are other workaholic cultures.

Americans are quiet quitting. Chinese are tang ping (lying flat). Japanese leaders passed laws to address karoshi (death from overwork).

Most of us must work. We work to eat, for shelter and to play. Work is a necessary nuisance.

Across the world, though, other cultures focus on creating work environments we can love rather than merely survive.

In Europe "Right to Disconnect" laws prevent management from contacting employers after work hours, an effort to encourage work-life balance. France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Ireland and Portugal have all passed versions of "Right to Disconnect."

This may sound like a far-off dream to Americans used to answering late-night emails, but just across the border in the far-off land of Canada, the concept is spreading.

Last June Canadian province of Ontario passed its own "Right to Disconnect" legislation, but not without pushback. Opponents claim "Disconnect" laws tear down the workforce and lessen productivity.

America's Quiet Quitting Movement reflects workers' desires for boundaries. Quiet quitting means not putting in more hours than employers pay for. If employers want employees to work more, they should pay them more.

Unfortunately, the gap between minimum wage and living wage is increasing. In San Diego County the minimum wage is \$15 an hour but the living wage is \$22.74.

Our capitalist class does not get it.

Kevin O'Leary, the Shark Tank investor, symbolizes the problem.

"People who shut down their laptop at 5 p.m. (who) want balance in life and want to go to (their child's) soccer game, they don't work for me," he said.

O'Leary embodies toxic American work culture. Overwork, burn out and stress have become the standard. Our health suffers. University College of London researchers concluded in a study published in the European Heart Journal that those who worked

NARCISSISTICS CAN STEAL AWAY HOPE

BY ALICIA RIVERO

Julie L. Hall's comprehensive study of Narcissistic Abuse explores an array of characteristics of the destructive malady.

"These characteristics," she said "are often combined with intermittent repentance, promises of change or rewards to keep the target 'in the game' and holding out hope for change."

Change, she said, almost never happens.

Characteristics of narcissistic abuse include:

- **Boundary violation** (physical, sexual, mental or emotional)
- **Refusal to take responsibility or acknowledge error**
- **Pitting people against each other** (divide and conquer)
- **Emotional blackmail** (punishment, silent treatment, anger, aggression or threats)
- **Exploitation** (using people to serve their own interests)
- **Projection of abusive behavior and selfishness onto others**
- **Fishing** (throwing out 'hooks' or 'bait' to reel victims back under control)
- **Gas lighting** (making someone think they are crazy)
- **Ghosting**
- **Idealization** (representing somethings as perfect or much better than it is)
- **Inconsistencies** (actions not matching words)
- **Judging**
- **Love bombing** (intense displays of affection to manipulate)
- **Lying** (including lies of omission)
- **Slander**
- **Toddler tantrums** (shouting, screaming, storming off)
- **Inability to share attention**
- **Verbal abuse**
- **Withholding** (money, communication, affection)
- **Violence** (including subtle forms easy to deny)
- **Isolation** (restricting contact with family and friends)
- **Removal of free will**
- **Instilled powerlessness** (undermining confidence)
- **Terror** (threats, verbal, physical and sexual violence)



"Narcissism has the dubious distinction of more often being treated for its traumatic impact on others than for the condition itself. Narcissism is a sickness for which everyone but the patient is treated."

JULIE L. HALL

Author, "The Narcissist in Your Life: Recognizing the Patterns and Learning to Break Free"

People in relationships with the self-absorbed often suffer terrible abuse and have a very difficult time escaping their clutches

BY ALICIA RIVERO

A Perspective

Narcissists have been around for a long time.

In ancient Greek mythology Narcissus was a beautiful man so enamored of his appearance he fell in love with a reflection of himself in a pool of water and spent the rest of his life admiring it.

Narcissus would have lots of company today. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) affects at least 6.2 percent of the U.S. population, but the number is almost certainly higher. Narcissists, it seems, rarely seek help because they have convinced themselves they are wonderful.

Unfortunately, it is the people around them who suffer. Narcissistic Abuse is a recognized mental disorder but it is the people in relationships with narcissists who often take an emotional beating.

Julie L. Hall is the author of "The Narcissist in Your Life: Recognizing the Patterns and Learning to Break Free." She said narcissism is underreported and damaging to a huge swath of Americans related to a narcissist or in a

VICTIMS OF NARCISSIST BEHAVIOR

Narcissistic abuse can be emotional, psychological, physical, mental, spiritual, sexual or financial. Parents, partners, coworkers and friends who exhibit narcissistic traits can all inflict this type of abuse. Narcissistic abuse is usually progressive and hidden from the outside world, making it very difficult for victims to spot, according to Southwestern College Professor of Psychology Dr. Thomas Murray.

"Narcissists can be very charming," he said. "They can be very funny, smart, charismatic, fun to be around and engaging. That's what gets you hooked, that's what gets you into the relationship. But over time their true colors come out."

WEAPONIZING HOPE

Murray said the most common reason victims stay in bad relationships is the hope they can change the perpetrator.

"The hope is what keeps you locked in," he said. "It is the hope that they're going to change and it keeps you involved."

Murray said victims commonly think if they appease a narcissist and make them happy, the bad traits will subside and the attractive ones will resurface.

The ugly truth, he said, is that narcissists are unwilling to change. Narcissists lack self-awareness and avoid introspection. They are unable to acknowledge that they need to change because they think they are fine (and probably wonderful).

Damage done by narcissists can be intense. Victims may suffer complex post-traumatic stress disorder that can require years to recover from.

It takes time to recognize and accept the warning signs, Murray said, and it takes time to break free from the highs and lows victims unconsciously learn to crave.

"If it was just easy, then people would do it," he said. "It's not that easy."

relationship with one.

"Narcissism has the dubious distinction of more often being treated for its traumatic impact on others than for the condition itself," she said. "Narcissism is a sickness for which everyone but the patient is treated."

Like many psychological maladies, NPD is not what it appears on the surface. Rather than the self-assured and confident people they project, narcissists are suppressing feelings of shame and guilt. Narcissism is a deep psychological coping mechanism which makes narcissists unable to feel empathy for others.

Emotionally stuck at a young child's developmental level, narcissists are unable to develop a stable sense of self-definition and self-worth. To overcompensate for their deep-rooted sense of inadequacy, narcissists mask themselves behind a pretentious persona. They manipulate people to serve their need for validation. As long as their mental defense and their destructive behaviors help the narcissist stay away from connecting to genuine feelings of shame, guilt and pain, it does not matter how exploitative or abusive they are to others.

Narcissists often target people who give them admiration, affection and status. Victims are usually empathetic, kind and vulnerable, making them easier targets for a narcissist to manipulate and control, according to Hall. Over time victims may lose trust in themselves and their judgment.

"Your fundamental human rights have been violated," she said. "Your dignity, integrity and basic freedoms have been crossed and curtailed in countless ways. This is why you feel beaten down, trapped, confused, angry, and sick in your soul and possibly your body. And making matters far worse is the fact that the person who violated your humanity is someone close to you — someone you have cared for and you thought cared for you."

Mental health professionals have not caught up with diagnostics, said Hall.

"Many therapists do not understand or recognize NPD or the trauma that results from being around it," she said.

Hall said a clean break with zero contact is best. If that is not possible, Murray recommends a strategy he calls "diversification of hope."

"Instead of hoping you will change this narcissist, which is not going to happen, you diversify," he said. "Maybe you go 50/50 or 80/20 and you start spending your hope on what makes you happy. Take some of that hope that you're going to change them into hope that you can be the person you want to be."

Murray said intelligent, kind people can get stuck in the toxic relationships wrought by narcissists, but powered by hope and courage, they can break free.

Narcissus the Greek hunter never could change and modern narcissists do not change either.

But there is hope.

Victims can change and can eventually leave the abusive narcissist staring alone into the pool of water.

CAMPUS

Campus News • Student News • Profiles

LATINO VIBE FADES

Administrative churn has obliterated institutional memory and has left no one to advocate for the Latino architecture and culture of Southwestern College. A great whitewash continues unchecked.

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Frederick Buechner never took classes at Southwestern College, but he has stared right into our soul. “You have to suffer in order to be beautiful,” he wrote.

Our once-beautiful campus looks like a war zone, especially in the center which is ... gulp, gone. The college is now a 156-acre donut—tasty on the perimeter, empty in the middle.

College leaders are justifiably boastful about what is coming. Taxpayers in the district have been very generous with SC and have invested in the future of the community by passing three bonds in two decades. Between the college and the Sweetwater high school district, local voters have taxed themselves almost \$2 billion.

Proposition Z alone will fund a modernized student center, bookstore, SWC Cares Hub, culinary arts, learning communities, veteran’s center and personal wellness. Thank you voters.

Now to the suffering.

This generation of students is paying the price for attending a college in transition. We attend classes in the middle of a major construction zone. Sure there is the dirt, dust, mud, noise, ugly fencing, rude construction workers, competition with heavy equipment and almost-daily alterations to the pathways around campus. That is to be expected.

What was unexpected is the disregard for our Latino culture and history of Southwestern College. Our DNA is being rewritten before our eyes. Construction is whitewashing our Latino/Mesoamerican architecture and our SoCal vibe.

This was entirely avoidable, but inevitable due to the dizzying revolving door of college leaders we have suffered the past 25 years. Through no fault of their own there is no institutional memory in our senior college administration. None know our history and culture. Even our “homeboy” president is a La Jolla



Our Mayan architecture is dismantled piece by piece, new building by new building. Ego trumped our culture. Proud architects who wanted to “make their mark” selfishly whipped up their own little monuments rather than working cooperatively to maintain a cohesive theme that represents our unique borderlands community.



PHOTO BY THE SUN STAFF

OUR 156-ACRE DONUT — Construction has left students feeling unmoored and the Latino community mourning the loss of SC’s once-admired Mesoamerican architecture. New buildings are generic and untethered to any theme.

SOME IMPROVEMENTS THERE ARE STILL TIME TO IMPLEMENT

All is not lost and the college community can still save three important elements of SC heritage.

- Greatly expand our once-beautiful botanical garden. It should be the other center of campus, connected to the grassy middle by a pedestrian foot bridge.
- Replant the campus with local vegetation instead of generic stock from the hardware store. Provide sanctuary for endangered plant species.
- Embrace the wildlife that lives on the perimeter of campus and keep open corridors so nocturnal animals can enter the campus center and botanical garden.

CAMPUS • PG 15

Otay Valley Regional Park is one of the few remaining natural open spaces in southern San Diego County. Since 1990, more than 5,000 acres have been acquired for open space and public access.



Photo Courtesy of San Diego Parks and Recreation

A GOOD IDEA GONE BAD — Otay Valley Regional Park was born as a visionary collaboration of Chula Vista, San Diego and the County of San Diego. After a great opening and early life, the park has been neglected. Trash is everywhere, pollution threatens wildlife and unsavory characters make women and children feel unsafe.

OTAY RIVER VALLEY

THREE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES DO NOTHING TO MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE A NATURAL TREASURE

BY HAN PSALMA

Otay Valley Regional Park is a good idea. It is an increasingly precious sliver of nature wending its way between San Diego County’s two most populated cities. It has a river, ponds teeming with life, beautiful vegetation and some wonderful wildlife.

It is also in need of attention.

Otay Valley Park is full of trash, fouled water and petty vandalism. It is crying out for help.

Humans have traversed the banks of the Otay River for more than 10,000 years. La Jolla and Kumeyaay People traveled along the river to the mountains and

ocean following the seasons. In the 1770s Junipero Serra and Spanish conquistadors used the valley for their first camp in Alta California. Spanish ranchos occupied the area in the 1800s prior to California statehood in 1850.

American towns and settlements were scrubbed from the face of the Earth in 1916 when the original Otay Dam gave way following torrential rain, killing hundreds. A new dam was built and the riverbed was mined for gravel from 1920-1990.

A park sprang to life in 1990 as an agreement between San Diego



Photo Courtesy of San Diego Parks and Recreation

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER — Bicyclists generally have a smooth path through the park, but hikers encounter trash and polluted runoff which spoil a potentially beautiful community resource.

PARK • PG 10

CHOP SHOP — Juan Chavez and two accomplices brought the stolen ATM machine to the rear of the campus Grounds Department and used heavy equipment to break it open. Campus police later found parts of the machine in a nearby dumpster.

ADMINISTRATOR CONFESSES TO THEFT OF ATM



“I know a lot of people who, when that happened, a lot of faculty and staff too who want to say ‘you’re guilty.’ The investigation concluded. Did it (the theft) happen? Yes.”

DR. MARK SANCHEZ
SC President



“What we want to make sure is that we hold people accountable. And when I say ‘people accountable,’ I mean all people. If you commit a crime we’ll process the crime accordingly and we will submit it to the District Attorney just like anyone else.”

MARCO BARENO
SC Police Chief

ATM • CONT FROM PG 1 *College president denies that Chavez received special treatment, said he was entitled to retirement*

THE ATM THEFT

SC Campus Police records indicate the incident was reported on September 26. Chavez later admitted that he and his partners drove a forklift into the former Student Center and pried loose an ATM for FAFSA recipients that was bolted to the floor. Chavez, Correa and Hernandez-Jimenez then took the ATM to the Grounds Department in the south area of campus where they used a jackhammer heavy college equipment to break it open. College officials said about \$9,600 was removed from the ATM, which belonged to a local bank.

Buildings 66A and 67A — the former Cafeteria/Student Union and the Student Center — were scheduled to begin demolition preparation in late last September. Director of Facilities Aurora Ayala directed her staff in a September 22 email to remove and relocate items remaining in the buildings before demolition fencing was installed. Once the area was fenced, she said, access to the buildings would be restricted.

The privately-owned ATM machine was scheduled to be relocated October 4 or October 5. Chavez was included in the message.

Four days later, on September 26, the ATM theft was reported.

The episode launched two immediate actions, according to SC Public Information Officer Lillian Leopold.

“One was a criminal investigation done by the college police and one was our administrative process that was conducted by HR,” she said. “College police collected the evidence and presented all the information to the (San Diego County) District Attorney’s office and then our HR department.” Leopold said Chavez and Correa

were immediately placed on paid administrative leave during the investigation, as required by their union contracts.

OTHER UNEXPLAINED ACTIVITIES

Pallets with surplus phones, desktop computers and laptops were also found in the area behind the Grounds Department, though they are usually stored inside the college warehouse prior to a public auction. It is unclear how they got there. Campus Police Chief Marco Barena said he did not know why the pallets were in the Grounds area, but said they were not considered stolen because they were not damaged and had not left the campus.

Sanchez agreed.

“Correct. Technically,” he said. “They were moved, yeah. Should they have been moved? No. There was no work order to move the pallets. But there’s a lot of construction happening, so what they did was to blend it in with the construction work.”

Sanchez refuted statements by some college employees that there was broader theft.

“We have recordings of everything and we didn’t see anything that was removed or taken off campus,” he said. “As a matter of fact, we check inventory. I don’t have evidence (of widespread theft) because that would be criminal proceedings. Big time.”

LINGERING ON THE PAYROLL

Hernandez-Jimenez, a non-union hourly employee, was immediately fired. As an hourly, he was not considered a full college employee and his employment was at the discretion of his supervisor. Correa was a full-time employee

and member of the CSEA classified employees union. Under the CSEA contract, unit members under investigation have due process rights. They cannot be fired without a hearing, though they may be placed on paid leave.

College officials said the CSEA contract allows employees under investigation or on leave to resign or retire at any time during the process.

Item 15.19 on the Feb. 13 Governing Board agenda said the college would accept Correa’s resignation on Feb. 28. Five months after the ATM theft his name was still listed in the college faculty and staff directory as an active employee. Correa confirmed that he was on paid leave through Feb. 28 while he was under investigation.

Chavez, an 11-year employee and a classified manager, chose to retire, according to Sanchez. At the Oct. 10 meeting of the governing board he was to be presented a retirement resolution that did not mention any criminal activity, sanctions or termination. Agenda Item 18.20 said that Chavez’s last day of employment was Oct. 5, five days before the meeting took place and about two weeks after the theft of the ATM.

In Item 25.6 Chavez was praised in a glowing proclamation announcing his retirement.

“BE IT PROCLAIMED, that Juan Chavez is deserving of recognition for their dedicated years and services, and deserved the commendation of the Governing Board, administrators, faculty, staff and students of the Southwestern Community College District.”

The proclamation was pulled from the agenda at the request of Trustee Don Dumas.

FUTURE PROSECUTION POSSIBLE

SC did not punish Chavez, but his case was turned over to the Chula Vista Police Department and the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, according to Barena. Chavez, Correa and Hernandez-Jimenez could be charged with felony Grand Theft, a crime punishable by up to three years in state prison with fines. California Penal Code statute of limitations for prosecution of Grand Theft is four years.

Barena said the case was complicated and required investigation. SCPD has no detective, so the case was turned over to Chula Vista Police. Barena said he and his officers were constrained by state law and college personnel policies, but that further action could be taken against Chavez, Correa and Hernandez-Jimenez by the CVPD or the District Attorney.

“What we want to make sure is that we hold people accountable,” he said. “And when I say ‘people accountable,’ I mean all people. It doesn’t matter whether you’re an employee or whether you’re a student or whether you’re a police officer. If you commit a crime we’ll process the crime accordingly and we will submit it to the District Attorney just like anyone else.”

Representatives of the CVPD and district attorney said they could not share details on the case because it is an active investigation.

POLICIES ALLOW QUICK RETIREMENTS

Sanchez refuted complaints by some employees that Chavez received special treatment. He said the district acted properly and because Chavez had not

been convicted of a crime, he was granted retirement without sanctions.

“He was allowed to retire,” Sanchez said. “That’s public record. That part of it is, in this country you are what, until proven guilty? What are you? You are innocent, right? So by contract, before he went through review he said ‘I’m just going to retire.’ So at the time that he was allowed to retire, he wasn’t charged of anything. It was under investigation.”

Sanchez said the Southwestern College portion of the investigation has since concluded.

“There is always the potential that someone can come back and sue,” he said.

Sanchez said he and the governing board made decisions based on foundational American law.

“I know a lot of people who, when that happened, a lot of faculty and staff too who want to say ‘you’re guilty,’” he said. “In this country you’re not guilty until there’s a review and an investigation and a conclusion that someone did it. But people want to condemn you right away. The investigation concluded. Did it (the theft) happen? Yes. But while that investigation was happening Juan said ‘I’m not going to let this go on. I’m going to retire right now.’ It was a good move on his part.”

Barena said the situation needs time to play out with the CVPD and District Attorney. He said the SCPD did all that it could do under the circumstances.

“If we ask for (campus police) to be trusted as an institution... we need to act accordingly,” he said. “There is not going to be any difference in treatment whenever a crime has occurred.”

PARK

• CONT FROM PG 9

*Pollution and trash
despoil a beautiful
riparian valley*

County, Chula Vista and the city of San Diego to restore natural habitats and give the community the opportunity to appreciate nature.

Otay Park is potentially lovely, but isn’t. Neglect, trash, pollution and some shady people have taken

their toll.

Upon entering the park through a residential area on Beyer Boulevard in western Otay Mesa, the first sight is the popular Greg Cox Bike Ramp Park. Children and teens whooped in delight as they launched their bikes skyward from ramps and dirt mounds. A wooden bowl for more expert riders and skateboarders allows users to test their talent and courage.

The hike gets off to a promising start. After a relaxing series of bridges straddling creeks offer great views of cactuses and statuesque palmera, hikers

encounter a quandary. Crossing the third wooden bridge there is a fork in the path and no clear way forward. There are no trail markers or signs.

An underpass of the roaring Interstate 805 is the first clear checkpoint. It was an area that could unnerve a young woman because it is very secluded. Hiking in pairs or small groups is advised. While it felt incredible to see huge palm trees the size of the columns of the bridge, it was also a bit creepy, even in broad daylight. The sight of cast aside women’s shoes did not help.

A mound of trash wrapped

around the bridge like malevolent Christmas presents under a grey concrete tree. Bags of recycling, Amazon boxes, refrigerator filters, mattresses, cans and bottles despoiled nature and clogged the riparian pathway. Trash persisted, nature resisted. A battle ensued.

People need to rescue the rare plants and animals in the Otay Valley Park before it becomes the northern twin of the filthy Tijuana River Valley. Otay Valley feels abandoned.

Potential abounds. Glimpses of beautiful wildlife leave hope. Trees and plants seem stressed but ready to rebound.

Otay Valley Regional Park needs an army of high school and college volunteers with rakes, gloves and Glad bags to pack out the trash of the piggish people who disrespect nature. A more permanent solution beckons. Chula Vista, San Diego and San Diego County officials seem to be passing the buck and pointing fingers. We need the three jurisdictions to start working together to save the park.

Otay Valley Regional Park remains a good idea, even a great idea. All great ideas need effort and commitment to reach their potential. Otay Valley needs us to rescue it.

ARTS

“No one has ever designed stamps that honor the migrant laborer. I had to do it because no one else will.”

— SALVADOR BARAJAS, Artist

SEEKING CONGRESSIONAL STAMP OF APPROVAL

BY JUAN HERRERA

Salvador Barajas is an artistic legend who made his name by thinking big — really big — including several towering murals in Chicano Park.

Now the 79-year-old master of murals is thinking small.

Really small.

Postage stamp small.

Barajas has designed a set of U.S. postal stamps that celebrate migrant laborers. “*Los Indispensables*” was inspired by the indispensable contributions of unsung workers to American society. He said he is thinking smaller so others will think bigger.

“These stamps are meaningful,” he said. “People who work at Walmart or Burger King, places like that, someone has to, but it should not be forever. Perhaps to earn money to buy a car or a computer, yes, but one’s aspirations should be bigger and grander than Burger King.”

Barajas has portrayed honorable migrant laborers including a field worker, a nanny, an agricultural worker, a construction worker, a hotel domestic and a busboy.

“I worked as a dishwasher and a busboy before I entered the Air Force,” he said. “I told myself being a busboy was not going to get me anywhere.”

Getting his stamps on the envelopes of America will take an act of Congress in the most literal way.

“I would like to present a sample of *Los Indispensables* to Juan Vargas, our Congressional representative for the South Bay,” he said. “I am hopeful he can help get the prototypes to the right people at the U.S. Postal Service.”

Barajas is stuck on the idea of publishing *Los Indispensables* as a set of Forever Stamps

POSTAGE DUE —

Salvador Barajas drew on his wife’s experience as a nanny and his own teenage jobs as a field laborer and busboy to develop six designs for U.S. postage stamps that honor the work of migrant labor.

PHOTO BY JUAN HERRERA / STAFF

STAMP • PG 12

FROM ART TO STAMP

The U.S. Postal Service created the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee in 1957 to assist the Postmaster General. Committee members use their knowledge and expertise to consider and then recommend subjects to the PMG for final approval.

The U.S. Postal Service welcomes suggestions for stamp subjects that celebrate the American experience. Any proposal that meets the established criteria will be considered. To submit an idea, there are four steps:

- Carefully consider your stamp subject.
- Submit a proposal in writing by U.S. mail. Has to be by mail.
- Include historical information, facts, and dates about the subject in the proposal.
- Mail your suggestion. One topic per letter.
- Here’s the address:
Stamp Development
Attn: Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee
475 L’Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC 20260-3501

Source: USPS



ACTS OF CONGRESS

Salvador Barajas needs a little help, he said, from Congressman Juan Vargas. Barajas is hopeful that with Vargas’ help the prototypes can get to the right people in the U.S. Postal Service.



PHOTO BY ALICIA RIVERO / STAFF

BOLD AND BRASSY — Southwestern's Big Band and Improvisation Ensemble demonstrated dexterous musicianship and creativity to delight a large crowd at the PAC.

JAZZ PLAYERS SHOW CHOPS IN NOTEWORTHY PERFORMANCE

■ **REVIEW**
BY ALICIA RIVERO

Sometimes powerful. Sometimes nostalgic. Sometimes frenetic. The Southwestern College Big Band and Jazz Improvisation Ensemble proved they could swing.

Their most recent gig, “Jazz Sessions,” was a rich mix of jazz, bossa nova and rock that cut right to the chase. In fact, the SC Big Band opened up the evening without a formal introduction as Tim Nunnink multitasked as conductor and baritone saxophone player.

It was a harbinger of what was to come. Don Menza’s driving “Groovin’ Hard” burst forth on the power of trumpets and trombones like an army of archangels announcing their arrival.

Energetic “Vehicle” by The Ides of March was the highlight of the night. Almost 54 years after its original release, “Vehicle” is still a race car lapping less inspired competitors.

A gentle side showed itself. Lovely vocal

performances by Rachel Sacks and Tungching Yim were the human element among the powerhouse instruments. Sacks wrapped her arms around the Gershwin classic “Embraceable You” and Luiz Bonfá’s bossa nova gem “Gentle Rain.”

Yim switched on her charisma, launching into “Fly Me to the Moon,” a crowd-pleaser at the packed PAC.

Gloria Parks, the only flute player of the ensemble, did not have the loudest instrument but she pushed through and soared like an inspired songbird during her solos. “Autumn Leaves,” “Song for My Father” and “Cantaloupe Island” were high points for the SC Improvisation Ensemble.

While the diverse selection of songs for the whole show’s program was delightful, the presentation order was a bit jarring. More thought needs to be given to lineup to fully capture the music’s ability to transform and transcend.

“Jazz Sessions” was an excellent production and a great introduction to jazz for students who may be newcomers to America’s greatest contribution to our planet’s music.

they drop. In high school students are pressured to reach highly competitive universities. High schoolers may take six AP classes, piano lessons, basketball practice and volunteer at a shelter on the weekend — all to bolster that resume for university applications.

Once they get through a university, they may get stuck with tens of thousands of dollars of debt (or more). Once they get on the career hamster wheel, they feel the pressure to work until they drop. The American prophecy is fulfilled.

America’s burnout epidemic should not come as a surprise since U.S. workers get half the paid leave of European workers.

The European Union requires at least 20 days of paid leave a year, the U.K. 28. The U.S. has no standards for paid leave. On average an American worker gets about 10 days of paid leave for public holidays.

Perhaps it is not that I don’t want

to work. Maybe it’s that I don’t want to work in the U.S.A. The old American dream has been stomped on by donkeys and elephants.

Karl Marx’s words simmer in the background.

“Capital cares nothing for the length of life of labor power,” he wrote. “All that concerns it is simply and solely the maximum of labor power that can be rendered fluent in a working day. It attains this end by shortening the extent of the laborer’s life, as a greedy farmer snatches increased produce from the soil by robbing it of its fertility.”

America is trailing most of the civilized world on work-life balance. Countries like Belgium, Germany and Norway are showing the way.

Maybe I am not destined to live as Tinkerbell, the pampered purse dog, but I am determined not to be a casualty of overwork.

LGBTQ
• CONT FROM PG 7

Chula Vista Council, Southwestern host pro-LGBTQ events

counterprotesters. He was a Chula Vista councilmember at the time, the first openly gay person elected to the council.

“It was a perfect example of people taking an issue or a program and twisting it to advance their own ideas,” he said. “All they

succeeded in doing was increasing the attendance. (The library) had to arrange for more shows.”

Padilla attended Disney Villain Trivia Night.

“It was a very family-oriented event,” he said. “It was families with kids in costumes. It was completely appropriate, it was delightful and it was packed!”

Vargas said he was unbowed and that Mmm Cakes San Diego will host another event with drag performers.

“We will 100 percent do it,” he said. “We are a diverse community. We are accepting of everyone. That is what makes us beautiful.”

STAMP

• CONT FROM PG 11

Legendary muralist hopes little stamps go a very long way

which typically depict images of the American flag, national parks, celebrities or iconic animals.

“No one has ever designed stamps that honor the migrant laborer,” Barajas said. “I figured I could do it. I had to do it because no one else will. These are our friends and our family. They are forgotten members of our society.”

Barajas is no stranger to hard work. He has labored in fruit orchards and vegetable fields. His wife was once a nanny. Gardeners and hotel maids are essential to our society and economy, he said.

“I really appreciate what migrant workers have done for decades,” he said. “They are the backbone of our economy.”

For five decades Barajas has been a leading voice of Chicano artists and Chicano issues, which he never saw coming as a kid.

Originally from Nio, Sinaloa, Barajas grew up in Tijuana in the venerable barrio of La Colonia Libertad. For many migrants Colonia Libertad is often the last stop before attempting to cross the border into United States.

At 17 Barajas and his family moved to San Diego where he attended night classes to learn English. Motivated by his pursuit of an education and the promise of the G.I. Bill, he joined the Air Force in 1964. He rose quickly through the ranks and held a secret security clearance as a technical illustrator, becoming a U.S. citizen along the way. He was also a talented boxer.

After completing his military service, Barajas entered Los Angeles Trade Technical College, whereupon he started his career as a commercial illustrator for an advertising agency.

Barajas was an early contributor to the world famous mural collection of Chicano Park. In fact, he collaborated on the first one, known today as the Founders Mural. He has now painted more of the murals in Chicano Park’s iconic collection than any other artist. Legendary faces of heroes like Cesar Chavez, Frida Kahlo, Dolores Huerta, Herman Baca, Benito Juarez and Ramon “Chunky” Sanchez stare down from the park’s “Historical Mural” like Aztlan’s Mt. Rushmore.

“In 1973 we just got whatever paint we could get our hands on and started painting what is now called the Historical Mural,” he said. “We invited artists who were university professors from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fresno and all over the (state) to come and paint the pillars. We prepared the pillars for them, spending money out of our own pockets. Our scaffolding was primitive...but we found a way.”

Many Chicano leaders insist the vastly talented but famously humble arts legend should himself be a face on the park’s preeminent gateway mural.

“He is our Diego Rivera,” said

Gente Unida founder Enrique Morones. “Salvador Barajas is one of the greatest San Diegans, Chicano or otherwise.”

Baca, the chairman of the Committee on Chicano Rights, agreed.

“Sal deserves to be up here (on the Founders Mural),” Baca said. “He is a great artist and an important figure in Chicano history. The Historical Mural is the most important mural in the park because it is like a giant textbook. It is a portal into the history and heritage of our people.”

In 2021 Barajas joined UFW legend Dolores Huerta, Morones and Baca as recipients of a Southwestern College honorary degree, the institution’s highest honor.

“(Barajas) has made a profound and permanent impact on our community, is an inspiration to members of our college community and is a hero to countless Chicanos/Latinos as well as people who value multiculturalism in our region,” read his nomination. “He is also a kind, generous and decent man who is a role model and inspirational figure.”

Morones said Barajas played a critical role in saving the entire collection in the 2000s when Caltrans planned to destroy the murals for a seismic retrofit of the pillars supporting the Coronado Bridge. The City of San Diego was also drawing up plans to pave over Chicano Park to create off-site parking for the Petco Park downtown baseball stadium.

Barajas and members of the Chicano Park Steering Committee fought ferociously for three years against the Caltrans plan, arguing that the bridge could be reinforced for safety without harming the murals. Eventually a team of seismologists from UCSD hired by Caltrans reported that the pillars needed strengthening at ground level and at the very top, but that the faces of the pillars did not need new concrete.

Chicano Park’s murals dodged destruction, but still faced damage by the dirty retrofit work. Caltrans hired Barajas to create a manual to guide the retrofit and a subsequent restoration of the 1970s-era murals. His “Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual,” a detailed study of each mural and a precise plan to restore it, was the first of its kind ever developed in the United States.

Several local schools host murals by Barajas, including an ambitious two-part tour de force at King-Chavez Elementary, which he admitted is his favorite. His motivational posters with a rich Chicano aesthetic resonate from walls of classrooms and offices across the Southwest.

“Education is the great equalizer,” he said. “For Latino kids, and all kids of color, a good education is essential.”

Barajas is optimistic that his stamp designs will get the Congressional stamp of approval, but he will keep busy in the meantime.

There is more art to be done.

Julia Woock contributed to this story.

HARD WORK

• CONT FROM PG 8

Young Americans dropping dead from overwork, stress

more are at greater risk for heart attacks.

Overworking is also deleterious to mental health. Japan has enacted laws aimed to stem death from overwork prompted by the suicide of a 24-year-old manager forced to work 190 hours of overtime a month. Japan’s traditionally Type-A government awarded the man’s family 51.7 million yen.

U.S. work culture expects overwork, burnout and exhaustion. Americans even boast about it.

Millennials and Generation Z have been raised to hustle until

SPORTS

Campus Sports • Features • Alerts

Jessica Robinson Photo Courtesy of Cuyamaca College
 Jennifer Harper Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Harper
 Josh Godfrey Photo Courtesy of Big West Conference



Image Courtesy of Tonie Campbell

BACK ON (A) TRACK — Campbell leaves the Southwestern College track and field program much better than he found it, but never received the support he was promised — including a new track.

“Somewhere on my body I’ll still have on Jaguar colors.”

TONIE CAMPBELL

DEAN OF ATHLETICS, Kinesiology, and Health Sciences at Cuyamaca College

KEEPING TRACK OF WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

Tonie Campbell made three Olympic teams, then spent decades helping other athletes reach their goals. He took special pleasure coaching Paralympians and disabled athletes.

BY EMILY INGCO

September 26, 1988
 XXIV Olympiad. Seoul, South Korea.
 Heart pounding, Anthony “Tonie” Campbell wiggled his feet tightly into the blocks for the 110-meter hurdle race in front of 70,000 cheering people.

“On your Mark!”

Campbell tensed and stretched in his red, white and blue tights.

“Set!”

Dropping his head low, Campbell raised his hips and stared ahead.

Inhale. Exhale.

BANG!

Smoke drifted from the starter’s pistol and Campbell was already meters down the vermilion polyurethane. Just 13.38 seconds later, Campbell blazed across the finish line, bullets of sweat streaking across his taunt face.

13.38. Bronze. Made the podium!

Three-time Olympian Campbell, the kid from Banning High School in Wilmington, California, had a medal. His life would never be the same.

Track was not even teenage Tonie’s favorite sport.

“I was always a baseball and football player growing up,” he said. “When I got to high school I wanted to take one year off from baseball and football.”

Campbell’s father said okay as long as he played another sport to stay active during the spring.

“My friends were all going out for track and field,” he said. “I didn’t even know what that was.”

He was drawn to the hurdling group, specifically the low hurdles. Banning’s hurdles captain had other plans for the springy Campbell.

“He shoved me really really hard,” Campbell said. “A hurdle was right in my way. I was going to crash into it, but instead I jumped over it. Lo and behold it was a high hurdle.”

It was love at first flight for Campbell who was a high hurdler from that day forward. He became a state champion and earned a scholarship to USC where



PODIUM IS ‘AWESOME’

Campbell finished second in the semifinals of the 110-meter hurdles at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics before finishing fifth in the finals. In 1988 he grabbed bronze, clocking 13.38. USA teammate Roger Kingdom won both races.

He said it was a thrill to be on the podium while the national anthem played.

“Imagine what it’s like to be in front of millions of people (watching on television) and (a packed) stadium. Having an Olympic medal hung around your neck and they hand you a bouquet of flowers. It’s awesome. It was an amazing moment in my life and I’ll never forget it. When I’m nearing my last breath and somebody asks me my most favorite memories in life, it’ll be the day I met my wife and the day I got my Olympic medal.”

Image Courtesy of Tonie Campbell



“We look forward to having him work with our student athletes as well as our athletic, kinesiology, and health education faculty and classified professionals.”

JESSICA ROBINSON
 Cuyamaca College
 Interim President



“I admire all the things he has done as an author, Olympian and philanthropist. He’s someone I’ve admired for years. I love him like a brother.”

JENNIFER HARPER
 SC Athletic Director



“Whenever I had a decathlon meet, we would always take his car or rent a van and it would be just us, hanging out and talking a lot. He knows so much, so to me he was a really great coach, a really great mentor. He was a really nice, supportive guy.”

JOSH GODFREY, UC Santa Barbara decathlete

CAMPBELL • PG 14

COACH HELPS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE FLIP THE SCRIPT

BY ALICIA RIVERO

Mariah had something taken from her when she was assaulted. Even though he is a man, Elias Gallegos said he understands the feeling.

Gallegos is helping women like Mariah to fight back and reclaim their confidence in a world that has beaten them down. Martial arts such as Brazilian Jiu Jitsu — a preparation for battle — can actually help assault victims find the road to peace.

One in four American women experience some form of violence and one in five women have been raped.

Practicing a male dominated martial arts form can be intimidating bordering on the unthinkable for many survivors. Benefits, however, can outweigh the doubt, according to Gallegos. Martial arts used for self-defense, he said, can be tremendously empowering.

Gallegos, owner of Alliance BJJ Eastlake and a black belt with 20 years experience, welcomes people he meets with warmth and enthusiasm. He is not a typical sensei. His background is rife with crime, juvenile jail and drugs. More than most people he



PHOTO BY ALICIA RIVERO / STAFF

FIGHTING FOR INNER PEACE — Alliance BJJ Eastlake teaches children but also women who survived violence.

JUJITSU • PG 15

STATUE

• CONT FROM PG 3

Latinos, LGBTQ community want monument to Wilson removed

Wilson was an unabashed supporter of both measures.

“For Californians who work hard, pay taxes and obey the laws, I’m suing to force the federal government to control the border and I’m working to deny state services to illegal immigrants,” he said during his 1994 campaign. “Enough is enough.”

Wilson’s statue was unpopular from the day it was unveiled in 2007. While a small group of supporters cheered at the sidewalk across from the Horton Plaza mall, hundreds of protesters fenced off by San Diego police voiced opposition across the street.

Morones said most elected officials in San Diego city and county indicated they oppose the Wilson statue, but claim to be powerless to remove it because it

is private property on private land. That is irrelevant, Morones said.

“It may be on private property, but thousands of people still see it every day,” he said. “If it were a confederate flag or a swastika it would be taken down. Symbols of hatred it the heart of a city do not deserve protection.”

Morones said he is disappointed in San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, an out member of the LGBTQ community, for not moving to have the statue removed.

“We talked to Todd Gloria before he was mayor,” Morones said. “He said he would support us. Same with (San Diego Council Member) Steve Whitburn. As soon as they were elected to office they backed away and did not keep their promises.”

Darwin Fishman, co-founder of the Racial Justice Coalition of San Diego, agreed. He said this is a relatively rare effort by Latino activists to have a statue removed. Most of the recent successful removals have been led by African-Americans, he said.

“I think it is a healthy movement in society to critically examine all statues, monuments and plaques that honor people,” he said. “I think it is safe to say that in the case of

many of the older ones most people do not know why they are put up in the first place. They might not be the best representations for society or for a particular community. It is okay to have that debate and discussion.”

Fishman said he remembers the contentious Proposition 187 campaign.

“It viciously attacked and demonized Latino communities and Mexican immigrants,” he said. “There are legitimate reasons why that community would not want that statue up. It is not a good representation for San Diego.”

Ricardo Flores, executive director of Local Initiatives Support Corporation, a non-profit that assists underserved communities with grants and economic partnerships, said he was “repulsed by Wilson’s xenophobic and racist agenda.”

“The statue represents fear and hate towards Mexican and undocumented immigrants,” he said. “I remember the ads (for Proposition 187). It was offensive and embarrassing. (The television advertisements) portrayal of hard working individuals – people I knew, people in my own family – was awful. They were portrayed as

parasites with no value.”

Flores said Latinos then and today are essential contributors to the regional and national economy.

“Latinos pick our food,” he said. “I do not see other people wanting to pick our food in 100 degree weather for 8-9 hours a day. We provide a valuable service to our community.”

Flores said he drafted a formal resolution to the San Diego City Council requesting removal of the Wilson statue and is awaiting a response.

Morones said Latinos and their supporters have battled the Wilson statue for 15 years. Victory seemed at hand in 2020 when the owner of the statue temporarily removed it, but it was replaced a short time later. He said he is optimistic that the statue will eventually be removed once and for all.

“Dr. (Martin Luther) King said ‘the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice,’” Morones said. “We will continue to oppose this symbol of hate in the middle of our beautiful city. Pete Wilson, like Robert E. Lee and Christopher Columbus, represents a racist past that America is moving away from. Someday that statue will go away, too.”

BOOK

• CONT FROM PG 2

47 years later tome finds its way back home

“He noticed my Jaguar pin, that’s really how the conversation started,” Sanchez recalled. “He let me know he had a late book to return. I gave him my card and (invited) him to call me if he ever wanted to return the book.”

Sanchez’ JEDI powers of persuasion worked and Applegate returned home locked onto a mission. “Someday” had finally arrived. Applegate dug through his dusty bookshelf for “Asimov’s Guide to Shakespeare” and ... it wasn’t there. Parting is such sweet sorrow!

Applegate said he was determined to keep his word to Sanchez to return the wayward 800-page tome, so he tracked down a gently pre-owned copy.

Meanwhile, in a library far, far away, busy minds calculated the fine for a 47-year-overdue book. The answer: \$4,197.50. It may have been cheaper to violate the time/space continuum.

Applegate was undeterred.

“My parents raised me to be a responsible man,” he said. “On the way back home, I talked to my mom (in Heaven). I told her I will always do what’s right, just not always right away.”

As he rolled his car on to campus he flirted with the notion that police might be waiting for him. Alas, Chief Marco Bareno declined to roll code and apprehend the serial procrastinator. Applegate slipped unnoticed on to campus and walked undetected to the president’s office. He and Sanchez then traveled the final part of the epic journey together, returning the book to a library building that did not exist when Asimov contemplated Shakespeare.

“If any of you find yourself in a similar situation with an overdue book, you’ll feel good completing that little piece of work,” he said. “I felt like I really accomplished something huge!”

“When I am at home, I am in a better place.”

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

UABC

• CONT FROM PG 2

Partnership may allow Mexican students to attend SC at local rate

would allow students who reside within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border to attend local community colleges.

Border hugging Baja California cities Tijuana and Mexicali have populations of about 2.26 million and 1.16 million, respectively. SoCal’s borderlands are uniquely binational, Pilco said.

“We are a community of 7 million people on both sides, and we exchange so many things every day,” he said. “More than 54,000 people cross (the border) every day for work or school. Our students work in San Diego and Tijuana and vice versa. We are not a separate economy like the border tells us. We are a real binational economy.”

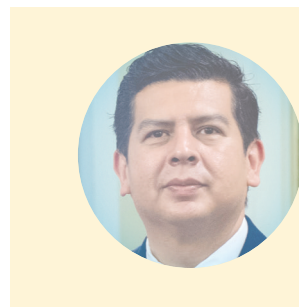
Borderlands commerce may exceed \$250 billion annually, Pilco said.

“We need to work together to prepare students so they can stay in this region, work in this region, get paid well and stay with their



Photo Courtesy of UABC

A NEW WAY FORWARD — UABC students within 45 miles of the border may soon be able to attend Southwestern College and pay California resident rates.



PAVING THE WAY

SC President Dr. Mark Sanchez worked with Assembly Member David Alvarez to introduce Assembly Bill 91, a revolutionary plan to lower costs and barriers for Mexican students.

relives his glorious moments on the podium as if it were yesterday.

“Imagine what it’s like to be in front of millions of people (watching on television) and (a packed) stadium,” he said. “You’re having an Olympic medal hung around your neck and they hand you a bouquet of flowers. It’s awesome. It was an amazing moment in my life and I’ll never forget it. When I’m nearing my last breath and somebody asks me my most favorite memories in life, it’ll be the day I met my wife and the day I got my Olympic medal.”

After working as a marketing executive for AMC Theaters and becoming a published author, Campbell accepted an offer to coach at Southwestern College and restore its moribund track program. Campbell was promised a new track and field facility as well as ample resources, which the college consistently failed to deliver.

Using SC’s dreadful tattered track, Campbell coached 15

teams to the state track and field championships, and sent Southwestern College athletes to the Olympics, including Guamanian sprinter Philam Garcia, who later became his assistant coach. His fellow coaches said Campbell and Southwestern College lost scores of athletes to other schools because they did not want to train on a crumbling track installed during the Johnson Administration of the mid-1960s.

UC Santa Barbara decathlete Josh Godfrey is an alumnus of Southwestern College who credits Campbell for his success in the California Championships and his university scholarship.

“His specializations were in sprints and hurdles, so he was kind of in deep water trying to coach me in pole vault, javelin, and other stuff,” Godfrey said. “We made it work and he was super supportive. Whenever I had a decathlon meet, we would always take his car or rent a van and it would be just us, hanging out and

families,” he said.

Colleges on both sides of *la linea* have worked to slash and burn red tape, Pilco said, by assisting with transcripts and other required documents. Colleges will handle the process of conducting a foreign credential evaluation and pay for it.

“We have made it easier,” he said. “Students do not know how to do it, some schools do not know how to do it. So we are taking this burden from students. All students need to do is have the transcript translated in Mexico before we take care of it.”

SC Governing Board President Roberto Alcantar said the program will provide binational experiences close to home.

“For the first time, people from this community are in charge,” he said. “We are people who grew up along the border and crossed every day to come to school. Now we can bring forward policies and changes that reflect the needs of the community because we are the community.”

Paloma Virginia Guadiana Murrieta, a psychology major in UABC, said she is excited about the binational program.

“I think it gives students an opportunity to study in the (United States) and to explore other possible job opportunities,” she said. “It could be a new way forward.”

talking a lot. He knows so much, so to me he was a really great coach, a really great mentor. He was a really nice, supportive guy.”

Campbell has a soft spot in his heart for athletes with disabilities. He provides pro bono coaching for amputees running on blades and has helped to send local disabled athletes to the Paralympics, including the most recent games in Brazil.

After 20 years at SC, Campbell became Athletic Director and Dean of Athletics at Cuyamaca College. He said leaving Chula Vista was a tough decision.

“I was a professional athlete for 13 years, then I coached and did another job for a while, and then I coached 20 years at Southwestern,” he said. “It was a great career, but it was time for me to move on while I still had something left to offer.”

SC Athletic Director Jennifer “Jefi” Harper worked closely with Campbell and considers him a dear friend, she said.

“I admire all the things he has

done as an author, Olympian and philanthropist,” she said. “He’s someone I’ve admired for years. I love him like a brother.”

Campbell said he will continue to honor Harper and SC in a unique way.

“I’m going to be at the rival college over the hill at Cuyamaca and I’ll probably be wearing their navy blue and sand colors, but somewhere on my body I’ll have some cardinal and gold,” he said. “Somewhere — might be a sock, might be some underwear — somewhere on my body I’ll still have Jaguar colors on.”

“On your Mark!”

Campbell said he plans to revive dead sports at Cuyamaca, including women’s soccer and women’s beach volleyball.

“Set!”

Existing sports will get a new kind of energy and focus, the kind an Olympic champion can provide.

BANG!

Campbell is already several meters down his new path.

CAMPBELL

• CONT FROM PG 13

Olympic medalist transcended SC’s dreadful track to forge champions

he became a national champion. He broke the collegiate record for the shuttle hurdle relay race in 1981.

He qualified for the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, but the American team did not compete due to a multinational boycott following the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan.

Four years later Campbell competed in the 1984 games in Los Angeles. He finished second to eventual gold medalist Roger Kingdom in the semifinals, but fifth in the final. Kingdom also won gold in 1988, the year Campbell captured bronze. He said he still

JIUJITSU

• CONT FROM PG 13

Martial arts help many victims of violence regain self confidence

understands the strength and intention it takes to endure life's ups and downs. Healing, he has learned, is not a moment of clarity, but a process.

His non-profit Eastlake Jiu Jitsu Foundation, a nonprofit organization describes itself as "a 501(c)(3) that gives hope and healing to veterans suffering from PTSD, female victims of domestic violence and at-risk youth."

Gallegos said the program for survivors of rape and domestic violence developed from his own experiences, including a presentation he made at a shelter for survivors of domestic violence.

"I was taken back in my memory to when I was a kid," he said. "Me, my mom and my younger brother had to leave the house and go to a hotel. Seeing those kids (at the shelter) shot me back to being a kid. It was a surreal moment for me and I (realized) there was so much more I could do."

His program for survivors of rape and domestic violence offers any women who is a victim of domestic violence or rape free training for life. Women just need to buy a gi and show up.

Women who join the program remain anonymous to the rest of the gym members.

"Just come in and train, meet other women," Gallegos said. "There is counseling if you need it. Just come and feel safe with your brothers here."

Women who work out at Alliance BJJ Eastlake said Gallegos and his team makes it feel like women are welcomed into a special community.

"I run my gym very differently," he said. "I run my gym like a family."

Many gyms have a much less friendly reputation with members that hit on women. Gallegos said he wants women to gain "big brothers and sisters" who will protect and support each other.

Survivors of domestic abuse or rape who find it very difficult to enter a male dominated sport may practice Muay Thai or Jiu Jitsu in women only class Tuesday for six months of the year.

"I want hope, health and healing," Gallegos said. "I don't want women in the program to feel like they have to be scared their whole entire life. There is a process and grieving moments that we go through. There are seasons in our life. My goal is for (survivors) to be whole again."

Healing from any type of mental or physical abuse can be a long-life process, Gallegos said, but practicing a martial art can help women gain empowerment, better health and a community.

Mariah said Jiu Jitsu has helped her and other women learn how strong they really are.

"To heal from any type of mental, emotional or physical abuse," she said, "it is necessary for survivors to reclaim their power. Just like in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, life will constantly have take-downs, but the key is to always get up and fight back. Do not accept defeat. One thing you learn about life is you do not accept defeat. You must get back up every time and you fight harder."



Photo Courtesy of SC Nursery, Landscape and Technology Program

MAYAN EXTINCTION

Selfish architects and an inattentive parade of out-of-town administrators have whitewashed Southwestern's striking Mayan aesthetic and removed the Latino from America's most Latino college.

CAMPUS

• CONT FROM PG 9

Evergreen admins allowed ego to extinguish SC's cool Mayan vibe

High School kid who attended Point Loma Nazarene College before leaving SoCal for decades. No disrespect intended, but it is fair to say we have no homegrown George Bailey or Chunky Sanchez. We have no homegrown leaders, and no one we can count on to stay here and grow with us. Churn has left its mark on our campus.

So our Mayan architecture is dismantled piece by piece, new building by new building. Ego trumped our culture. Proud architects who wanted to "make their mark" selfishly whipped up their own little monuments rather than working cooperatively to maintain a cohesive theme that represents our unique borderlands community. Our previous administrators allowed them to do it. From the flat-out ugly science building to the Soviet-era cafes and IT building, our college has become a drive-through collection of random, generic designs that could be plugged into Iowa, Wisconsin or Kentucky.

Even Dr. Mark Van Stone's elegant and striking Mayan glyphs on the gym and theater are aesthetic afterthoughts, attempts by architects to cover up the fact that the buildings are not Mayan at all. His lovely art deserved a better canvas and our community deserved a better corner at Chula Vista's busiest intersection.

Our campus mascot, the jaguar, once represented our Mesoamerican Latino heritage. Johnny Jaguar will soon be an irrelevant and untethered big cat with no connection to the emerging whitewashed college culture.

BOTANICAL GARDEN

Where there's life, there's hope, so here's hoping we can preserve at least a few of the elements from



Photo Courtesy of SC NLT



Photo Courtesy of SC NLT

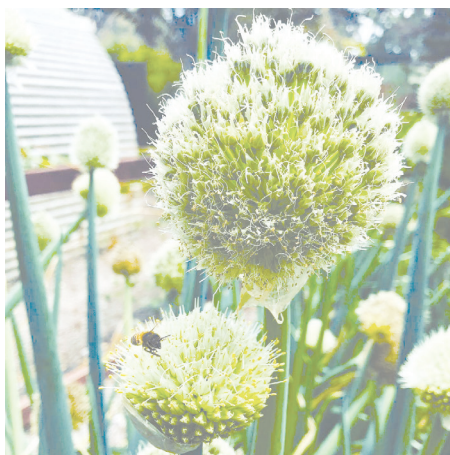


Photo Courtesy of SC NLT

NATURE OFFERS HOPE — SC's best hope to salvage the sterilized campus is to expand the Botanical Garden and commit to native plants and wildlife.

the 1964-2014 Mayan pyramid era of SC.

Our South Bay Botanic Garden was once the aesthetic pride of the campus. It was an oasis of loveliness and spirituality in a sea of concrete. It was the fingerprint of God where students and faculty could escape to distress and re-center.

College planners have said it will be built back, but they have not said it will be built back better. We have an opportunity to double or triple the size of the garden and we should. We should also think big and dream up a way to create a "natural" pathway from the center of campus to the garden, perhaps even an elevated footbridge that takes pedestrians safely over the busy perimeter road.

Mental health benefits alone would justify expansion of the Botanical Garden, but there are many other reasons. It could become a living laboratory for environmental science students, a meditation center, and a gathering place for respectful celebrations and memorials.

RARE PLANTS SANCTUARY

SC is home to a few specimens of the world's rarest tree, the Torrey

Pine. We should plant more. We should also plant other endangered San Diego County species on our grounds and give them protected status. Our breezy mesa-top topography lends itself to many threatened plants found in the transition zone between coastal and inland climates.

Besides serving as a sanctuary for the plants, our college should be a sanctuary for visionary students. Being among endangered plants will expose students and the community to species they may not know about. To care for something, you must first know it and love it.

CAMPUS WILDLIFE

Prior to construction SC had a charming and healthy array of nocturnal wildlife. We shared the college with the same animals that lived here long before we studied here.

As the night students and faculty headed out around 10 p.m., the animals reclaimed their turf. Raccoons, skunks, opossums, coyotes and even bob cats crossed the lawns where just hours earlier lounging students strummed guitars and read Shakespeare and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Owls perched high above it all, giving constant notice that the coast was clear and the nighttime court of the Animal Kingdom was once again in session.

Let's hope our facilities team and the building crews will respect and guard the streambeds that border the northwestern quadrant of the campus. They are the daytime homes of most of the animals we share our campus with. We also need to be mindful of their pathways to the campus center.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE

Much is already lost, but there is still time to build a beautiful Southwestern College. The angels are in the details. Our urban forest needs to be re-established. Our spiritual center needs to be expanded and improved. Our thin but inspiring connection to nature must be fiercely defended.

We are going to suffer construction for many more years. Let's hope it is all worth it someday.

BACK PAGE

Voices In Our Communities

MESSENGERS OF HEAVEN

Gente Unida volunteers walk along the U.S.-Mexico border in a solemn remembrance of refugees around the globe.

BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA

It was actually pretty quiet at the border on a sunny but brisk winter morning. Not a riot or humanitarian crisis in sight.

There were foxes, but no FOX, open fields but no open border. Indeed, a hulking metal wall was a rusty slice of nationalism vivisectioning a binational hillside festooned with blocky concrete houses on the developed south and fragrant chaparral mixed with a touch of salty sea breeze on the still natural north.

There were no teeming swarms of immigrants, just a swarm of gnats and a team of human rights activists in running shoes and hiking boots trudging along a sandy path threading a riparian oasis between Tijuana's

MARCH • CONT ON PG 4



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA



PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA

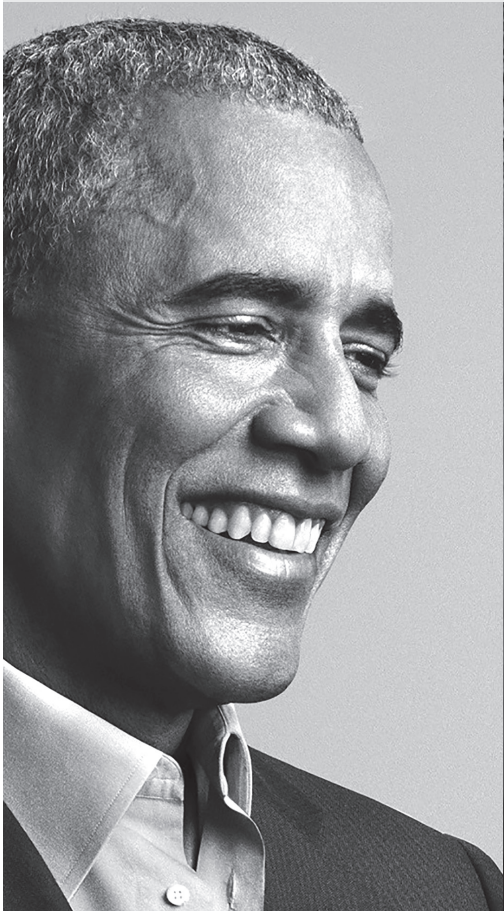


PHOTO BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA

WING AND A PRAYER — Franciscan Friar Dermot Rogers leads marchers through Border Field State Park, stopping periodically to remember migrants who died in transit. Activists released monarch butterflies to inspire hope and encouragement.

Special Section

EXPLORATION



BLACK HISTORY ALL YEAR

PANDEMIC WARRIOR

Alum battles virus inside and outside the emergency room

BY JULIA WOOCK

Dr. Cleavon Gilman returned from Iraq to find an even more deadly war raging in America. Coronavirus trumps even Isis.

Gilman, a Southwestern College alumnus and emergency medical physician, is in the trenches of a pandemic battle that has killed more Americans than the Revolutionary War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam combined. Gilman and his colleagues have engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the novel coronavirus and its enablers — denial, misinformation, political cowardice and anti-maskers.

Gilman said he recently worked a fortnight of 14-hour shifts. Even for a war-hardened former Navy corpsman, battling this pandemic is a nightmare.

“I’ve seen more death in this pandemic than (six months in) Iraq,” he said with a sigh. “I’m in a war zone at home.”

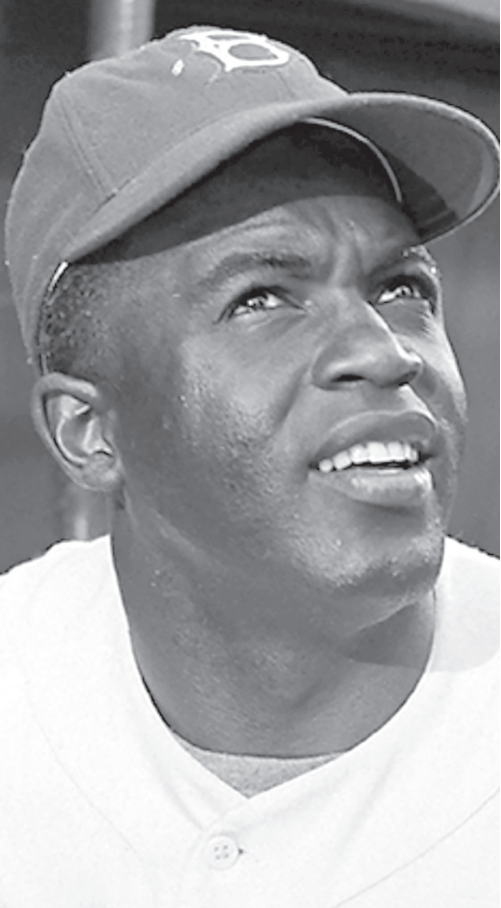
Former President Trump and his supporters created and regularly fed the misery, Gilman said, with politically-motivated coronavirus denial and damaging rhetoric. Gilman said he was saddened and offended by the disregard for the health of Black, Latino and Native Americans by the government.

“I’m watching people who do not care about this war (on COVID-19),” he said. “Returning to America was like going back into the war zone, being traumatized again and watching my (Black) community die.”

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE SPRINGBOARD

Gilman was a U.S. Navy veteran of five years when he enrolled at Southwestern College in 2005. Professor of Chemistry Dr. David Hecht said he recalls Gilman as a young man with laser focus. Not satisfied with 100 percent on his labs and exams, Gilman craved a deep understanding of the subject matter, Hecht said, that made him a generational student. Besides being a talented scientist, Hecht said, Gilman was a gifted public speaker who, as a student, gave one of the best and most professional presentations he has ever seen.

“He was on a mission to become a doctor and nothing was going to get in his way,” said Hecht.



GREAT AMERICANS — (l-r, from top) President Barack Obama, poet/actor Maya Angelou, abolitionist/writer Frederick Douglass, NASA mathematical genius Katherine Johnson, abolitionist Sojourner Truth, civil rights icon Rosa Parks, poet/playwright Langston Hughes, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, human rights advocate Dr. Cleavon Gilman, scientist/educator Booker T. Washington, civil rights leader/Nobel Peace Prize recipient Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball Hall of Famer/civil rights hero Jackie Robinson, legendary Congressman John Lewis.

KHALIL ADISA SDSU

SDSU Criminal Justice graduate Khalil Adisa is also a SODA recipient. He was secretary then vice president of the SC Black Student Union. He said he strongly recommends that SC BSU members join the Afrikan Student Union at SDSU, which he served as treasurer.



"Follow their Instagram (@asu_sdsu), talk to them," he said. "They help make your transition much smoother. I recommend every student, if there is an identity that you identify with, make yourself at home. There are so many resources that can help you out."

Adisa shared a personal story about a protest he attended in spring 2019 when SDSU's Black Resource Center was vandalized.

"You could definitely see so many student's frustrations, there were students crying," he said.

"It was so hurting to see our safe spot on campus vandalized. A whole mass group of Black students and allies were there supporting us and saying 'we are not going to stand for this!'"

Like Hudson, Adisa copped to a brief bout of imposter syndrome, but shook it off.

"Comparison is the thief of joy," he said. "Don't dim your light for others. You are there for a reason and you deserve to be there."

Photo Courtesy of Khalil Adisa

SOLÉ ORTIZ-RUIZ UC SANTA BARBARA

Solé Ortiz-Ruiz is studying English, journalism and film at UC Santa Barbara. At SC she was president of Soul Sisters and the award-winning Sports Editor of The Sun — one of the few female sports editors in the state. She was named the nation's best community college columnist by the Associated Collegiate Press.



Ortiz-Ruiz said she loves UCSB, but felt more at home in Southwestern's diverse culture.

"At UCSB it's predominantly white and everyone is really nice and sweet, but you don't see people that look like me," she said. "That (means) people don't share the same experiences as me."

Ortiz-Ruiz said her most amazing memory at SC was being the Sports Editor of The Sun.

"The greatest thing that Southwestern has given me has to be the newspaper and Professor Max and just all my friends that I made there," she said. "I walked into Southwestern thinking, 'this is the worst because I'm going into community college', but my opinion changed after three months on campus."

Ortiz-Ruiz left SC with its highest student honor, the Student of Distinction Award, and was selected a Bonitafest Youth Ambassador.

"Now I am going to one of the top universities in the nation and I wouldn't have without Southwestern College," she said.

Photo Courtesy of Solé Ortiz-Ruiz

MONTE CLARK SAN JOSE STATE

San Jose State biology major Monte Clark said Delta Sigma Phi, the most diverse fraternity on campus, was exactly what he was looking for. Clark was president of the Black Student Union at SC and is now Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at his frat.

"I saw that they didn't have a position, so I offered to create it and unanimously they agreed," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Monte Clark

BRAINY EDITOR SHINES AT HBCU

Pernisha Gaines led her college magazine staff under impossible circumstances to a national championship and earned admission to the HBCU of her dreams

BY JULIA WOOCK

Pernisha Gaines is an award-winning journalist, an accomplished poet and a talented leader who guided a national champion publication. Her favorite title, though, is Mom. Gaines, her adorable daughter Ayris and her array of talents have left Southwestern College for North Carolina A&T State University, an elite HBCU (Historically Black College or University). Transferring to an HBCU was her dream, her goal and her mission — all of which crystallized during a painful divorce.

Gaines, her adorable daughter Ayris and her array of talents have left Southwestern College for North Carolina A&T State University, an elite HBCU (Historically Black College or University). Transferring to an HBCU was her dream, her goal and her mission — all of which crystallized during a painful divorce.

"In 2019, when my divorce was finalized with my daughter's father, I started to recognize that I needed to put myself in a position to win," she said. "I needed to put myself in a position to succeed in life, take care of my daughter, my health and my education."

Gaines said she faced many challenges that would have made anyone want to quit. Being a single parent in college in a city with no relatives made it rough when she or her daughter got sick. There were times she cried and prayed to God for strength to get through the divorce. As she realized she was going to make it, a new confidence took hold.

That same strength to survive divorce could also power her dreams.

"Divorce taught me that I can overcome anything, because that is the most challenging thing any woman with a child can go through by herself," she said. "I didn't have family or friends holding my hand during the process and it instilled confidence that to this day cannot be shaken."

Her other motivator is Ayris. Gaines said she is earning a degree for herself and because her daughter watches her every move.

Coronavirus was a hurdle, one that almost torpedoed the publication of Southwestern's El Sol Magazine she was leading as Editor-in-Chief. When The Sun broke the story on March 10, 2020 that SC was closing, El Sol was a beautiful vision that was nowhere near finished. Staff scattered to every corner of San Diego County and into Mexico. Slowly, relentlessly, Gaines and her staff pulled together the contents and published El Sol Magazine in July. It was named National Community College Magazine of the Year by four collegiate journalism organizations so far, as well as Best Collegiate Magazine by the San Diego Press Club and the Society of Professional Journalists.

SC graphic design instructor Kenneth Pagano worked closely with Gaines on the publication of El Sol. He said he noticed a natural leader with the perfect balance of managerial and interpersonal skills.

"She's so bright," he said. "She could talk about anything, she can talk to anybody. She could listen and she really inspired us."



"I would much rather go to a school which considers me and my legacy a top priority, than to attend a college or university that plays down my relevance."

PERNISHA GAINES

Pagano said Gaines was good at working with diverse, creative people.

"One thing I've always liked about the journalism program is that it attracts people from all backgrounds, all races, nationalities, politics, ethnicities and she was such a guiding light," he said. "Even though she's had her own struggle, she used her own struggle as a source of determination and did not let her struggle define her success."

Dr. Cynthia McGregor, dean of the School of Arts, Communications and Social Sciences, said Gaines is smart, visionary and tough.

"I remember her coming in looking like she wasn't feeling well, but she was so committed to her studies and committed to her work in journalism that she had the perseverance to flourish," McGregor said. "I could tell by her commitment that she's got a bright future."

McGregor said an HBCU is a wonderful choice for Gaines because she would have the support to continue to flourish and become the best version of herself. She said Gaines was invaluable to the journalism program and "did a great job as Editor-in-Chief of the national champion school magazine, El Sol."

"When you see students like Pernisha embrace those challenges and move forward, it's the best feeling," she said. "It is very inspiring."

Gaines said the pandemic brought on additional challenges, but she embraced a mindset that she can tackle anything, making her unstoppable.

"I only see myself winning," she said, "nothing is a fail. Everything is a lesson and I'm going to continue to go to my lessons and win in my own way, whatever that means for me."

North Carolina A&T was warm, welcoming and made her feel important, she said. After earning a BA in African-American Studies, Gaines said she aspires to a Master's from Howard University, an HBCU in Washington D.C. Her down range goal is to become an HBCU faculty member or administrator where she can empower students like herself to accomplish their dreams.

"I want to reach back one day and help someone else," she said. "I think we should focus not just on ourselves, but also on our community."

NCA&T called to her, she said, because she consistently read motivating things about the college. At predominantly white institutions, she said, African-American culture and history is an afterthought. At an HBCU they are at the forefront.

"I would much rather go to a school which considers me and my legacy a top priority, than to attend a college or university that plays down my relevance," she said.

Black women are no different now than they were years ago when icons like Coretta Scott King were fighting in the hot Southern sun for the civil rights of African Americans, said

GAINES • PG B4

NABRESSA LILLY UCSD

Nabressa Lilly entered Southwestern College looking for a smart, cool role model.

Now she is one.

A recent UCSD psychology graduate, Lilly acknowledged that Black community college students face challenges and Black university students face larger ones. She

insists they are surmountable.

"You are worthy and you are exactly where you should be," she said. "You can do this!"



Lilly said she

attended the Black Student Welcome event during her first semester at SC and heard the president of Black Student Union give an inspiring speech. She said she clearly remembers thinking, "that would be an amazing thing to do someday."

A year later, Lilly was herself president of Black Student Union.

One of her most important lessons learned at SC was, "define yourself outside of institutional labels."

"I have had this idea that if I got to a certain level of education or if I got to a certain point in my career where I am making enough money, that (race and identity) wouldn't matter and that is simply not true," she said.

Lilly confessed to being over-eager at SC and at first overcommitted. Stress and exhaustion followed. She learned to balance her activities to preserve her physical and mental health.

"You cannot pour from an empty cup," she said. "I'd rather do a few things in excellence than do everything on a lower level."

Photo Courtesy of Nabressa Lilly

AYONA HUDSON UCLA

Ayona Hudson, a political science and African-American Studies major at UCLA, advised SC students to "go for it!"

"You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take," she said. "So never be scared, never be hesitant."

Hudson recommended that first-year Jaguars connect with UMOJA (Kiswahili for UNITY). UMOJA



changed her life, she said.

"That's where I had great counselors, where I felt encouraged with my academic journey, where

I met great people," she said.

"UMOJA opened me up to so many opportunities in terms of going to conferences and navigating my financial aid, knowing who to talk to and getting help."

Starting at UCLA was a bit intimidating at first, Hudson confessed, partly because all the students surrounding her seemed so outstanding. She entered UCLA with a 3.6 GPA, she said, and knew that students with higher GPAs did not get in. She said for a while she felt unworthy, and wondered how and why she was admitted.

She got over her imposter syndrome.

"We're always looking at the next person instead of just looking at ourselves," she said. "I was accepted (to UCLA) for a reason. I can do this!"

At SC Hudson was vice president of the Black Student Union and secretary of Soul Sisters, a club to empower women of color.

"I had the opportunity to help really uplift those clubs and create a community for fellow Black students at Southwestern," she said. "I know we are a minority in the population, so being a part of BSU and Soul Sisters, having leadership roles, I felt very empowered to make sure other Black students know that we are in this together."

Photo Courtesy of Ayona Hudson

Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs)

Historically black colleges or universities (HBCUs) are schools that were founded on the belief that every individual deserves access to a college or higher education. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended defines an HBCU as, "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education."

Source: hbculifestyle.com

STORIES WRITTEN BY XIOMARA VILLARREAL-GERARDO

GILMAN

Ex-Marine found a home and a mentor during his time at Southwestern

No one outworked Gilman, whose legendary 14-hour days on campus usually began before dawn and ended with security asking him to leave at 10 p.m. General Chemistry was hard, he said, but fascinating, fueling an intense passion to learn. Hecht was a crucial mentor, Gilman said, who was always there with support, advice or a swift kick to the rear when required. Both men were from New Jersey, which completed the bond.

“Like-minded souls, Jersey boys,” said Hecht.

Hecht was also there with the right advice at a crucial moment. Gilman had the pleasant problem of choosing between UC Berkeley, UCSD and UCLA.

“You got into UC Berkeley?” Gilman recalled Hecht saying. “You gotta go there! That’s where all the Nobel laureates are and they even have (chemical elements) named for them!”

An East Coast guy, Gilman said he was unfamiliar with California universities, so he decided to drive to Berkeley. When he saw Cal’s Gilman Hall he figured it was a sign, he said.

Hecht also saw Gilman himself as a sign. He was a young teacher and Gilman was one of his first students, Hecht said. Gilman was exceptional and a pleasure to teach.

“A great way to get into teaching,” said Hecht.

Transferring into an elite institution was very hard for a Black Jersey kid, said Gilman. He said attending UC Berkeley opened his eyes to the privilege other students had, but also proof that someone from humble beginnings can succeed. He attended UCSF for medical school and then did a four-year emergency medicine residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan through Cornell and Columbia universities.

POLITICS AND THE PANDEMIC

Gilman said the Trump administration inexplicably downplayed the pandemic from the beginning, even though Trump and members of his inner circle told Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward they knew from the beginning exactly how deadly this virus was. Trump’s ill-advised comparisons of COVID-19 to the flu, flippant remarks about masks and disparagement of scientists were damaging, he said.

“It doesn’t work when you have a president that is saying this (misinformation) to his followers,” said Gilman. “We were really doomed. I knew at the beginning it was going to be a test of American solidarity like 9/11.”

Gilman worked in New York during its grim COVID-19 outbreak last spring when hospitals and morgues were overwhelmed. Refrigerator trucks that usually hauled beef and dairy products to supermarkets were brought in to store bodies as they piled up. Affluent travelers who had returned home from Italy and Spain unknowingly brought the novel coronavirus with them, Gilman said, launching one of America’s worst ever urban contagion episodes. Coronavirus got loose in crowded low-income neighborhoods of color, he said, killing thousands.

After months of grueling work in New York, Gilman transferred to Yuma, Arizona. There he saw firsthand the stark differences between Democratic- and Republican-led states and the effect governors had on public health policies during a crisis. New York lost 20,000 people in 10 weeks, he said, but moved



Photo Courtesy of Cleavon Gilman

“I’m watching people who do not care about this war (on COVID-19).”

“Instead of caring for the norm of two ICU patients, some people are caring for five or six, because they just aren’t enough nurses to go around.”

DR. CLEAVON GILMAN
SC Alumnus

assertively to enact stringent measures to curb the spread of the virus. New York’s efforts were painful, but worked, Gilman said.

Arizona, on the other hand, politicized the virus and took little meaningful action. Masks were never encouraged, much less required, and everything remained open to such an extent that COVID deniers from California and other states traveled to Arizona to engage in sports events, political rallies and other super spreader

activities. Politicizing the novel coronavirus, blaming it on Asians and downplaying its danger in an inexplicable effort to prevent an economic slowdown were all catastrophic moves by conservative elected officials, he said.

Yuma, much like the San Ysidro-National City corridor of the South Bay, is still getting hammered by COVID-19, Gilman said. The U.S. Army has deployed personnel to Yuma due to a severe shortage of doctors and nursing staff, he said.

Almost 90 percent of Gilman’s patients are people of color, including Latino and Indigenous people. He said there is an enormous and uncountable population of Mexican farm laborers considered essential workers that have been hit particularly hard.

PEOPLE OF COLOR DISTRUST HEALTHCARE

The U.S. has a long and dark history with people of color and health care due to heinous

COVID HERO’S JOURNEY

Cleavon Gilman joined the military in August 1999. He served five and a half years in the Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps.



In 2009, Gilman transferred from SC to UC Berkeley. He completed physiology coursework at UCSF East Bay.



In 2016, Gilman earned a Doctor of Medicine and became an emergency medicine resident physician at New York Presbyterian Hospital.

During his residency, Dr. Gilman submitted “Rise Up Now,” a multimedia art project, to the National Academy of Medicine’s Expressions of Clinician Well-Being Project. He wrote and performed the song lyrics heard over the imagery.



On March 20, 2020, Dr. Gilman began documenting the pandemic on Twitter at #cleavonmdjournal.



In the summer of 2020, Gilman was terminated for tweeting about the conditions in the ER hospital in Yuma, AZ, where he worked. He was reinstated after inspectors concluded he was right.

In Dec. 2020, President-elect Joe Biden called Dr. Gilman to thank him for his humanitarian efforts and courage.

In Dec. 2020, Dr. Gilman returns to SC to support STEM students and the Southwestern College Foundation.

Photo Courtesy of Cleavon Gilman

GILMAN

SC alum battled COVID-19, exhaustion and racism in some American hospitals

experimentation on African-Americans and Native Americans. Cells harvested from Black cancer patient Henrietta Lacks without her knowledge in 1951 continue to be used in laboratories across the nation without compensation to her family. “HeLa Cells” are used in cancer research, in vitro fertilization, immunology and — most recently — development of COVID-19 vaccines.

An even more notorious case, the brutal Tuskegee Syphilis Study, was a 40-year observation of the effects of untreated syphilis in Black men. It began in 1932 when syphilis had no cure. Even when penicillin became available for treatment, the U.S. Public Health Service made sure study subjects did not receive it so researchers could watch the gruesome disease run its course, blinding victims, infecting their brains and killing them. It was not until 1972, when the gruesome story was leaked to journalists, that the horrific syphilis study ended. By then 128 patients had suffered terrible deaths from syphilis or complications, 40 of their wives were infected and 19 of their children developed congenital syphilis. Countless others suffered from the painful, pernicious disease, including severe brain damage.

Fanny Lou Hamer, a mid-century Black Civil Rights activist, was sterilized without her knowledge. She later discovered that six of 10 hospitalized Black women were unknowingly sterilized by a procedure so common it was known as the “Mississippi Appendectomy.”

Native American women in the 1960s and 1970s were victims of mass sterilization at the hands of the Indian Health Services, an agency originally created to help them. Data indicates more than 25 percent of Indigenous women of child-bearing age were sterilized. Researchers insist that figure is probably much higher. Between 1970-76 up to 50 percent of all Indigenous American women were sterilized, according to investigator Jane Lawrence. Dwindling Native American populations are the result, Lawrence reported.

Gilman said people of color have every reason to be angry about past abuses and to be wary of American health care, but he said change is afoot and doctors of color are leading it. He encouraged Black Americans, Latinos and Native Americans to get vaccinated as soon as possible to help stem the COVID-19 crisis in their communities. Gilman praised people of color who are recording themselves getting the vaccine and posting on social media in an attempt to earn the trust of their communities. He also documented his experience with the vaccine on



Photos Courtesy of Spectrum News NY1

FRONTLINE WARRIOR — Dr. Cleavon Gilman, left, an emergency room doctor in New York during the coronavirus pandemic with an unidentified medical professional.

his social media.

“I got the second shot on Inauguration Day and had a bit of fatigue the next day, but I documented that,” he said. “I told people about it, ‘here’s what I have.’ I’ve been normal ever since (and) nothing’s happened to me.”

Gilman said he thinks people of color need people they trust to show the way out of the pandemic. He is trying to be one of those role models, he said, by being authentic and transparent.

Gilman said other physicians are also documenting on platforms like Twitter. He said being kind and truthful is essential in a nation where procedures against people of color are still taking place, such as hysterectomies in ICE detention centers in Irwin County, Georgia.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Gilman said he has lost track of how many of his patients have died due to the virus. He was finishing his residency in Manhattan when New York City became ground zero for COVID-19. For a stretch he was calling at least three families a day to inform them that loved ones had died. Most of the patients he intubated did not survive, he said, and their deaths were difficult.

“The amount of trauma and the amount of patients that I’ve lost, that I’ve had to intubate, the families I’ve had to call, the shrill cries when I tell them that their loved ones (are) dead was extremely difficult,” he said. “It just chips away at your heart, chips away at your soul.”

Ghosts inhabit his fitful nights, he said, as he dreams of patients he could not save, he said.

“It’s really hard, because I feel like we’re alone in that there is no way out of this and that all this trauma, all this burden, all this emotional stress is being put on those healthcare workers,” he said. “I have to live with the fact that these patients died and I was at their bedside.”

Gilman said it is insulting to health care workers when belligerent people are out and about without wearing a mask. Listening

to legions of Americans whine about “lost personal freedom” and “individual liberty” is a narcissistic manipulation of American values, he said. Selfishness has replaced altruism, belligerence has replaced patriotism, indulgence has replaced sacrifice, cowardice has replaced heroism.

While entitled gym rats and foodies bellyache about missed weight lifting and fancy dining, healthcare workers are battling Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, marathon shifts with few days off to rest and their own brushes with COVID-19 illness and death. Each dead, ill or overwrought healthcare professional means the survivors have to work even harder with less help.

“Intubating a patient is a very dangerous thing,” he said. “The process releases aerosols full of the virus. The new hurtful (rhetoric) is that healthcare workers are vaccinated and have nothing to worry about. (It is nonsense) because I can still contract the virus and bring it home to my fiancée, and she can die. I can still bring it home to my mother in law who is in her 60s. There has been a constant narrative to try to downplay the severity of this pandemic at the expense of healthcare workers. (Many people downplay) what we’re going through.”

Watching people die never gets easier, Gilman said. He recounted an episode in a COVID ICU where he witnessed sobbing members of a young family say goodbye to their father, who was on the brink of death. The man’s wife and young children lost something that was wonderful and irreplaceable, he said. Gilman said he has endured similar encounters hundreds of times in a dozen settings.

“These young children lost their father, who was also young,” he said. “Then I go home and see (on TV) people galavanting, like at the Super Bowl, without masks.”

Gilman said it is frustrating and lonely to be a healthcare worker under these conditions.

“I’m in a constant war where it’s not supported (by the

entire nation) and I’m being traumatized,” he said. “My staff of healthcare workers are being traumatized.”

Thousands of experienced healthcare workers are leaving the profession because they feel unsupported and are no longer willing to risk themselves and their families in an endless war, Gilman said. Many have collapsed under the depressing and exhausting conditions, he said, and the aftermath is alienation from their own families, nightmares, trauma and constant stress due to the emotional toll of working under brutal conditions.

“(We are losing) the ICU nurses who have been there for years and who know how to work everything,” he said. “They are being replaced with new grads who haven’t really had any experience.”

To compensate, the remaining experienced nurses overextend themselves in a heroic but unsustainable effort to pick up the slack, said Gilman.

“Instead of caring for the norm of two ICU patients, some people are caring for five or six, because they just aren’t enough nurses to go around,” he said.

Gilman said healthcare professionals are not receiving adequate PPE and are often forced to attempt to re-sterilize N95 masks and other items meant for one use. Cleaned up PPE is never as effective as new equipment, he said, and can be a cause of coronavirus spread among doctors and nurses.

Even with the sunny narratives cropping up in COVID-exhausted America, the reality in many parts of the country is still grim, Gilman said. There are still not enough beds for all COVID-19 patients and ICUs across the nation are still jammed. Non-COVID patients suffering other ailments are often unable to be admitted to hospitals or treated, he said, which is also unnecessarily driving up fatalities. Thousands of very ill people are parked in emergency rooms or makeshift facilities because COVID-19 wards have swallowed up so much of America’s hospital footprint.

MISINFORMATION A LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

Coronavirus has been a two-front war, Gilman said. COVID-19 is one front, misinformation the second. Misinformation, magical thinking and denialism creates a never ending stream of patients and perpetuates relentless suffering and death, Gilman said. Misinformation comes in many forms, he said, from the ignorant (“young people cannot spread COVID”) to the preposterous (“hydroxychloroquine will save us”) to the flat-out delusional (“Bill Gates is using the vaccine to inject us with microchips”). People died when Trump suggested ingesting bleach and some of his followers did it.

Anti-vaxxer groups are capitalizing on the crisis to fan misinformation and further their anti-science agenda. Vaccines are the key to leading humanity out of the pandemic, he said, and time is of the essence.

“We just haven’t gotten a break as healthcare workers and as educators throughout this pandemic,” said Gilman. “We are constantly battling to stop the spread of misinformation. During the (Trump) administration there was not a clear public health message, so the misinformation filled in.”

Misinformation and political denialism led to the COVID-19 breakout in America, Gilman said, and these forces have slowed progress against the pandemic. Trump’s attempt to convince Americans that the novel coronavirus was not dangerous and his administration’s slow roll of countermeasures was catastrophic, Gilman said, and could well be again.

“There are new variants of the virus spreading and hopefully the vaccine holds up against these,” he said. “It may be (that Americans will require) an annual vaccine because when you let a virus spread uncontrollably, this is what happens.”

ESCAPING THE PANDEMIC

Emerging from this pandemic is going to be difficult, Gilman said. A critical percentage of the population must receive the vaccine, continue to wear masks and social distance for the foreseeable future, he said. Though he has great faith in the medical profession, he said, he has grown wary of Americans who lack the courtesy and discipline to remain vigilant. Gilman said watching televised super spread events like maskless Trump rallies, careless holiday gatherings, the Capitol Riot and the Super Bowl were demoralizing to him and his colleagues. Super spreader events overwhelm hospitals and their staffs, knocking down all the coronavirus dominoes again.

“I think it’s patriotic to wear a mask,” said Gilman. “It’s the most patriotic thing that you can do right now at this moment for your country and for other human beings here and around the world.”

GAINES

Editor led student magazine to multiple national titles

Gaines. Vice President Kamala Harris exemplifies that spirit, she said, paving the road for all women of color. Black women should care about all people who are burdened, she said, and be a force for goodness.

“I think Black women are the mothers of this earth and that is only because we’ve given birth to so much,” she said. “We’ve given birth to the race. We’ve given birth to our families. We’ve

given birth to ideas, careers and innovations. We will continue to make a way out of absolutely no way. When there is a wall, we find a way to break it down.”

Black women face myriad issues, she said, and so do young Black children. Black women must fight to keep families together, Black communities together and Black culture together, Gaines said.

“Representation is essential because my young Black daughter can look up to me as a Black woman and say, my mommy did it, so can I,” she said. “And if my daughter doesn’t say it, my granddaughter can say it, and if my daughter happens to bring a set of friends around who are also

young Black women, they can say it.”

Gaines said it is important for Black women to see themselves in other Black women.

“As a Black woman, I’m looking up to Black women,” she said. “I’m looking up to the familiar race and that is how important representation is. If I don’t see that, then I have to go off of someone who doesn’t necessarily experience the culture I do.”

Work remains to make American a place where all men and women are created equal, she said.

“I can’t believe that after hundreds of years we are still not there,” she said. “I want my daughter to be able to walk

outside and know that she’s not going to be harmed or killed by someone who is not Black because of her skin tone. I want her to have a very Black experience, but I also want her to be able to feel comfortable in her skin in any room. I feel like that is what we’re struggling with now as Black individuals — feeling uncomfortable being Black because someone else is uncomfortable with us.”

Former SC President Dr. Kindred Murillo said Gaines is a deserving student and she hopes others will follow her from SC to HBCUs.

“Our Historically Black Colleges and Universities are doing such an amazing job

getting students into great jobs and advanced degrees such as law and medicine,” she said. “Pernisha will thrive at her HBCU and continue toward her potential.”

Gaines has advice for Black women and girls: Work hard, ask for help and do what you can with whatever resources you have.

“You never know when the opportunity that changes your life may present itself,” she said. “Never give up on yourself no matter how hard it gets and learn what it means to go above and beyond for yourself. A lot of times we go above and beyond for people who don’t value us enough. Learn to go above and beyond for yourself.”