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## SMC's Professors of the Year Celebrated

By Amanda Kuehn



Myrna Santiago Photo Tony Burditt

Saint Mary's College professors, students, alumni and community members packed into the Orinda Room at the Soda Center April 9, eager to hear history professor Myrna Santiago present an address entitled "Anger, Love, and Teaching," which focused on the resilience of her students and her love of teaching about the past. With a bachelor's degree from Princeton, Fulbright experience in Mexico and a Ph.D. in Latin American History from UC Berkeley, Santiago already had quite a resume. She has now added to it the honor of being named Saint Mary's College 2013-14 Professor of the Year.

At some universities, the professor of the year is given a substantial load of responsibilities and speaking engagements. At SMC, however, this isn't the case. Though the professor of the year is expected to give a presentation in the spring, the

award, which comes with a \$5,000 stipend, is seen as recognition of what has already been accomplished. "It should be an honor of achievement, celebratory of the [professor's] accomplishments and impact on campus," said SMC Provost Bethami Dobkin, Ph.D., who was recently named as one of the "Most Influential Women in the Bay Area" by San Francisco Business Times.

Santiago was given carte blanche regarding the topic of her address. "It took me pretty much the whole year to think about the frame and title," said Santiago, who knew right away that she wanted to focus her message on why she teaches and what motivates her year after year. The presentation and reception is open to all. "This particular one had a lot of students," Dobkin noted, "which speaks to [Santiago's] engagement with her students."

Nominations for the award can come from any member of the Saint Mary's community, including students, faculty and staff. The incoming Professor of the Year is announced each spring at an end-of-the-year dinner hosted by the provost. Two months prior to the announcement, the Rank and Tenure Committee, joined by the provost and the deans, meets to discuss nominations. According to Dobkin, selection is made based on "all around achievement" including academic research, service and teaching, as well as the information provided by students and peers.

On receiving the award, Santiago was flattered and surprised. "It felt like it was a little early," she said, noting that she has only been at Saint Mary's for 15 years, far less than past recipients. Santiago, who is used to working more or less anonymously, found herself frequently blushing. "It feels funny to be in the spotlight," she said, also noting that, "It's a great honor that your colleagues think you deserve that recognition."

On Thursday, May 15, David Bowen was named the 2014-15 Professor of the Year. With a strong background in business management, Bowen helped to set up Saint Mary's MBA program, (the first executive MBA program in Northern California), back in the mid '70s and has been teaching as a full-time professor since 1983. Bowen was scheduled to teach a class the night of the banquet before he was summoned by an email from the provost.

"Of course I knew what happens that week," said Bowen. "My first reaction was sort of disbelief. I couldn't imagine how I pulled that off; there are so many wonderful professors at the college."

Dobkin countered, stating, "Professor Bowen has earned the highest regard from his

colleagues, particularly for his wise and compassionate leadership, his mastery of the theory and practice of organizational behavior, and his inspiring work with students."

Needless to say, Bowen made it to the dinner. "Once I got over the shock I rearranged the class."

Alongside Santiago, Dobkin was proud to recognize yet another outstanding member of Saint Mary's faculty. "Any chance we have to show them off we need to take," she said.



David Bowen Photo courtesy Saint Mary's Magazine

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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