Celebrating Fifty Years of Excellence in American Studies Graduate Education at SLU

An open house commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first American Studies Ph.D. granted at Saint Louis University

Stop by to say hello or stay for the entire event. Alumni, students, friends, faculty, and supporters from across SLU campus and beyond are invited. Light refreshments.

Friday, May 1, 2015, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
Il Monastero, 3050 Olive St. (just east of Compton Ave.)

Refreshments and social time from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., with brief remarks at 5:00 p.m. from professor emerita Sister Elizabeth Kolmer, department chair Matthew Mancini, and others.

In 1965, the recently founded American Studies Ph.D. program at SLU granted its first doctorate. Since that time, more than 160 doctorates have been earned by SLU American Studies students. This spring, we honor the achievements of our graduates and the half-century legacy of committed doctoral mentoring in American Studies.
Department of American Studies Celebrates Half-Century of Excellence in Graduate Education

American Studies department faculty pose at the celebration. From left to right: Heidi Ardizzone, Ph.D., Katherine Moran, Ph.D., Cindy Ott, Ph.D., Elizabeth Kolmer (emerita), Ph.D., Benjamin Looker, Ph.D., Matthew Mancini, Ph.D. and Emily Lutenski, Ph.D.

Alumni, students and faculty from the Department of American Studies, along with guests from many other departments and from Washington University, gathered at Il Monastero on the afternoon of Friday, May 1, to celebrate a half-century of excellence in graduate education in American Studies at Saint Louis University.

In 1965 the department approved its first dissertation, Albert McCarthy's "The Oswego River: A Study in Historical Geography," directed by Martin Hasting, Ph.D.

Since that time, more than 160 doctorates have been earned by SLU American Studies students. With the open house, the department honored the achievements of its graduates and the half-century legacy of committed doctoral mentoring in American Studies at SLU.

In his eloquent remarks to the audience, Arts and Sciences Dean Michael Barber, S.J., spoke of the great strides the department had made and characterized American Studies, which is interdisciplinary in scope and method, as "a microcosm of the College which is itself inescapably interdisciplinary."

Sister Elizabeth Kolmer, Ph.D., former director and chair of the department who served SLU for more than 40 years, also recounted some of the early struggles and achievements of interdisciplinary study and scholarship. Many of the assembled alumni came specifically to see Kolmer, as well as former chairs Shirley Loui, Ph.D., and Lawrence Barmann, Ph.D.

The American Studies department, along with the College of Arts and Sciences, also announced the establishment of the Matthew J. Mancini Award for outstanding dissertation or thesis in American Studies, in honor of Mancini, who is stepping aside as department chair after 15 years.