Mannila named 2014 Featured Public Servant

Ray Mannila, theater technical coordinator for the Department of Theater, Communication and Media Arts, is GSW’s 2014 Featured Public Servant.

Initiated in 2008 by GSW President Kendall Blanchard, Ph.D., this award is presented to an employee of GSW who makes valuable contributions to the community where he or she lives and works. It is also a way to remind the Americus community that GSW faculty and staff play an important role in the social and cultural life of the community.

“Ray Mannila is one of those professionals who does it all,” Blanchard said. “His behind-the-scene contributions to both campus and community life are many and his talents unlimited. I fear that, should he leave Georgia Southwestern, we would have to hire several people to replace him.”

Mannila is indeed flattered by the recognition and is quick to thank those that support him in his efforts.

“I am honored to be selected for this award,” said Mannila. “Although I appreciate being selected, I cannot take all the credit. My supervisor, Jeff Green, has been greatly supportive of my public service, as have many of my friends and, of course, none of my public service would be possible without the love and support from my wife.”

Mannila’s public service has been consistent and the volume is nothing short of massive. In academic, community and professional productions, he has put together some very impressive stats:

- **Producer** – five productions
- **Director** – 16 productions
- **Actor** – 50+ productions
- **Scenic Designer** – 40+ productions
- **Technical director** – 50+ productions
- **Scenic carpenter** – 150+ productions

“Volunteering my time for the various agencies I have worked with allows me to interact with the truly gifted and wonderful people in our area that I normally would not get to meet otherwise,” added Mannila. “Also, being that I love theater so much, volunteering allows me to share my passion with our community.”

Much of Mannila’s activity off campus is spent working with the Sumter Players where he has been a board member since 2001. He currently serves as vice president of production, and he served as president from 2006 to 2010. His volunteer work also extends to local Georgia one-act play competitions as a respondent, assisting in the planning of the Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festivals, coordinating events for the Georgia Theater Conference of which he is a member, and providing technical support for the Lake Blackshear Regional Library’s annual dinner theater fund raiser.

Essentially, if work involving theater is taking place in this region, Mannila is there.

In recognition to his contribution to local volunteer theater, Mannila was given the “Mini Mo” award for outstanding contribution to the Sumter Players in 2009 – its highest honor. He also serves as advisor to GSW’s theater honor society Alpha Psi Omega and has received multiple “Most Supportive Staff Awards” from GSW’s Orientation Team.

Mannila earned a Bachelor of Science in theatre/English from Northern Michigan University and a Master of Arts in dramatic literature from Michigan State University.

Mannila and his wife, Stephanie Harvey, Ph.D., associate professor of biology, reside in Americus.
**Sirocco “Liberate the Muse” released, dedicated to Bryan**

“Sirocco,” GSW’s Arts Magazine, is published in April of each year by students. A reading and reception celebrating the release of the 2014 edition, “Liberate the Muse,” was held April 16 in the Marshall Student Center Faculty Dining Room.

The magazine features literary, visual and theater work, chosen by a student editorial staff, from students, faculty, staff and alumni.

The cover artwork, “Lightning,” is an oil painting by Sunni Zemblowski, alumna and public relations assistant. Her piece was selected after winning the “Sirocco” Cover Prize sponsored by Global Graphics. The magazine’s literary editors are Alison McCarter and Ellen Kay. Ashley Bratcher is the art editor. Lindley McGuire, Meagan Pierce, Faica Paul, and Hannah Ruiz serve on the editorial staff.

Made possible through the generous support of GSW President Emeritus William Capitan, Ph.D., and the late Dolores Capitan, the Dolores Capitan Writing Award winners were named at the celebration, as well. Academic Division winners were Kassandra Tuten, first place; Andre Ivey, second place; and Diane Tebbel, third place. Lauren Collier won the Editor’s Choice Award sponsored by Little Brother’s Bistro and Amanda Harrah won the “Pat’s Place Poetry Prize” for best poetry submission.

Each year, the magazine is dedicated to someone who has supported the arts or the magazine in some significant way. Genie Bryan, Ph.D., department chair and associate professor of English and Modern Language is this year’s honoree. Bryan served as the faculty advisor from 2011 to 2013 and participates in the Sumter Players and the Southwest Civic Chorus.

“Dr. Bryan promotes intelligent thought and creativity,” states the “Dedication” section of the “Sirocco.” “She encourages her students to challenge conventional interpretations and create their own meanings.”

The “Sirocco” has been distributed throughout the campus. However, if you are unable to locate one, you can get your free copy of “Sirocco” by emailing gswsirocco@gmail.com.

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**Student Appreciation Day 2014**

May 2          11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Sanford Lawn

There will be free lunch, popcorn, snow-cones, cotton candy, T-shirts, giveaways and more for students. There will be inflatables, corn hole, talent show, music, massages, volleyball and horseshoes.
Announcements

Evening of Italian Opera

The GSW Chamber Concert Series, coordinated by Dr. Julie Megginson, together with the Friends of the Rylander, presented a concert at the Rylander Theatre on April 13, 2014. The Albany Symphony performed “An Evening of Italian Opera”, featuring soloists from the Atlanta Opera, and a 100+ chorus made up of choirs from Georgia Southwestern State University, Albany State University, Darton State College, Middle Georgia State College, the Albany Chorale and the Southwest Civic Chorus.

Upcoming Book by Glenn Robins

Glenn Robins, Ph.D., of the History and Political Science department, has a new book coming out this August.

Transforming Civil War Prisons: Lincoln, Lieber, and the Politics of Captivity (Critical Moments in American History) examines the experiences and politics of captivity during the Civil War.

The book was co-authored by Paul J. Springer.

Josh Curtin wins APCA award

Josh Curtin, director of Campus Life at Georgia Southwestern State University, was named APCA Advisor of the Year for the Southeast Division at a conference last week in Atlanta.

An acronym for the Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities, APCA has five divisions across the U.S. Curtin was selected as the only Advisor of the Year among representatives from 630 other colleges and universities within seven states in the southeast division.

APCA is a national campus events and educational training organization that was founded in 1994 and serves the programming needs of all College Campus Activities Departments and Military bases throughout the United States and globally.

Sandra Daniel, Ph.D., dean of the School of Nursing, was surprised by her department on April 10, in celebration of her 60th birthday. The Dean’s office was decorated in flowers and festive birthday decorations, including Top Ten lists of Songs and TV shows from 1954, and celebrities born on April 10th.

School of Nursing surprised Lynn Bailey with a cake, flowers and gift certificate for Admin. Professional Day.

Bonnie Simmons, Ph.D., and Teresa Teasley, DNP have been awarded Full Professorship beginning August 2014.

Joy Humphrey, DNP, has been asked to serve a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Association of Vascular Access (AVA) Foundation for Education and Research.
Students attend GA Psychology research conference

On April 12, seven GSW students, along with faculty members Elizabeth Uhl, Judy Orton, and Gary Fisk, attended the Georgia Undergraduate Research in Psychology conference at Kennesaw State University. Two pairs of students gave poster presentations at the conference. Claira Austin and Caleb Graves gave a presentation entitled “Unconscious Perception: The Word Discrimination Experiment.” Felipe Howell and Matt Gladney made up the second pair; their poster presentations was “Semantic Priming and Unconscious Perception.”

The other students who attended the conference were Jessica Durrett, Trenisha Hallmon, Esther Delva, and Chelsea Hooks.

Wu publishes articles, gives presentation at conference

Chuchu Wu, Ph.D., associate professor of Early Childhood Education has had two works published in the last few months.

One, entitled “Using the standards for mathematical practice (SMP) connecting literacy and mathematical learning with suggestions for English Language Learners (ELL),” was published in the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ e-reflection journal. The article focused on helping teachers use Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP) to connect English Learners for math and literacy learning.

The other article, “Taiwanese preschoolers’ emergent reading behaviours with an unfamiliar storybook,” is a peer-reviewed article published in the journal of Early Child Development and Care.

In addition to these publication, in February, Wu represented the GSW’s Near Peer program and presented a summary of the program’s outcomes at the College Connections for Student Success Conference in Stone Mountain, GA.

GSW Students present papers at Auburn University

On April 5, Susan Bragg, Ph.D., and Jason Berggren, Ph.D., travelled with eleven GSW students to Auburn University for the 2014 Phi Alpha Theta regional meeting. Undergraduates and graduate students from eight universities presented research essays at this history conference, with the largest contingent of participants being GSW students.

Students orally presented their individual papers to an audience of undergraduates and faculty, receiving useful feedback and commentary in the process. The students who presented papers were Davis Duffey, Andre Ivey, Lenard Martin, Zach Moates, Erin Stroup, Whitney Thornton, Jake Timmerman, Kassandra Tuten, Michael Van Ham, Mallory Wall, and Jairus Whitley.

Student papers covered many different topics, including feminist activism in the 1960s, religion and presidential politics, genocide in Armenia, the social role of child actors, race, labor, and the blues, competing historical interpretations of the age of discovery, race and the family, race, ethnicity, and children’s literature, and women in politics.

This conference was a rewarding experience for both students and faculty alike. Berggren and Bragg were very proud of GSW student research and presentations. Students demonstrated their engagement through the conference discussions and in their enthusiasm throughout the day. We look forward to attending the 2015 Phi Alpha Theta regional conference with a similarly motivated and interdisciplinary group of students.
On April 11, 2014, Dr. Leisa Easom and Laura Bauer of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving attended an invitation only “Joining Forces” event hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama and Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden at the White House.

Former First Lady and RCI Board President Rosalynn Carter was a featured speaker at the event, along with Senator Elizabeth Dole. Mrs. Carter spoke about her decades of work supporting caregivers through her institute, housed at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia. She also highlighted the RCI’s national effort to support military caregivers, Operation Family Caregiver. RCI Board Co-Chair Kathy Cade also attended.

For more information, visit: www.operationfamilycaregiver.org or contact Laura Bauer, Operation Family Caregiver Program Manager, at (229) 931-2034.

On March 5, 2014, the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site held its annual History Academic Bowl for Georgia middle schools. About a dozen middle schools competed in a “battle of the minds” inside the Plains High School Auditorium. Students were asked questions pertaining to American History, Presidential History, World History, Economics, and Geography. The event was organized by Annette Wise, the Director of the Jimmy Carter NHS Education Program. Bill Cranshaw, Ph.D., a former Georgia Department of Education manager of Social Studies, served as the moderator. D. Jason Berggren, Ph.D., assistant professor of political science, served as one of the judges.

Earlier this month, the GSW AIPG Chapter held an open presentation by Ron Wallace on Careers in the Geosciences. Wallace is an advanced geologist with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and the past National President of the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG).

As part of the talk, Wallace discussed how the demand for geoscientist is rapidly surpassing the number of graduates from undergraduate programs in geosciences and the importance of networking when trying to locate jobs. During his visit, Wallace gave out two cash awards. The first was an Outstanding Undergraduate in Geosciences Award to Sarah Welter. The award included a plaque and check for $250. Welter is a senior at GSW and is currently serving as President of the Geology Club.

The second award, a check for $500, was to the newly formed GSW Student Chapter of AIPG. The money will help fund field trips and other events. Wallace presented the award to Joe Kinard, president of the GSW AIPG Student Chapter.

Georgia Southwestern recently formed the chapter to increase and improve scholarship opportunities, to establish more professional contacts for employment and to develop cooperative programs with other Georgia universities. The GSW AIPG Chapter has already helped organize a regional field trip to the kaolin miners in Andersonville, participated in a well drilling and groundwater sampling demonstration on the GSW Campus.
Leeder named interim Athletic Director for 2014-2015

Georgia Southwestern State University men's head basketball coach Mike Leeder will serve as interim athletic director (AD) and head coach during the 2014-2015 academic year. The national search to replace Jaclyn Donovan who resigned in December was closed and will reopen in a year. Leeder will take over for current interim AD Randolph Barksdale on June 1.

“Coach Leeder has proven himself as a leader, both on and off the basketball court,” said GSW President Kendall Blanchard, who made the announcement. “I am grateful to him for taking on this interim position. I am confident he will be instrumental in moving our athletic program to the next level and look forward to working with him in this new capacity.”

Leeder embraces the challenges ahead.

“I'm appreciative for the opportunity provided by Dr. Blanchard and Coach Barksdale to add the responsibilities of athletic director to my current position as head men's basketball coach,” Leeder said.

Already involved in fundraising and partnership efforts for the men's basketball program, Leeder will build upon those relationships in the community as his role as a university ambassador broadens.

“I look forward to strengthening relationships with members of the community, building new partnerships and further interaction with the student body, faculty and staff of Georgia Southwestern,” Leeder added.

Another priority will be supporting the Hurricanes and Lady Hurricanes as they compete and represent GSW. “We must continue to enhance the student-athlete experience,” he explained.

Leeder recently completed his eighth season at the helm for the Hurricanes. Under his leadership, GSW has placed 10 players on the Peach Belt All-Conference men's basketball team. He has coached two PBC Freshmen of the Year, nine PBC Players of the Week and GSW's first All-American in any sport during the department's NCAA era. Leeder was named the 2010-11 PBC Coach of the Year.

GSW has spent 13 weeks in the NCAA Division II Men's Basketball Coaches Poll, including five weeks this past season when they climbed to No. 18 on two occasions. Leeder has led the Hurricanes to a pair of NCAA National Tournament appearances.

For the full article, please click here.