Mizzou Honors English Professor Elisa Glick with Kemper Award

By Sara Strong

English and Women’s & Gender Studies associate professor Elisa Glick has earned a reputation in the 15 years she has been teaching at Mizzou, and if her most recent laurels are any indication, the university has taken note.

In April of this year, Glick, who was on leave at the time, was lured to campus under the pretense of a third-year review meeting. Instead, she found herself in the company of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who walked in to announce that Glick had been named one of this year’s Kemper Fellows. Accompanying the Chancellor was Glick’s partner, whom she soon found out had known about the prize for a month. “She was a vault,” said Glick, “a total vault!”

The timing of the Kemper announcement was especially gratifying for Dr. Glick. “It was a surprise, and an honor,” Glick explained, “but it was of particular significance for me because I was on medical leave for breast cancer treatment. It was heartwarming to receive this award during such a difficult time.”

Several of Glick’s students and colleagues banded together to nominate her as a Kemper fellow. According to Joan Hermsen, chair and associate professor of sociology and women’s and gender studies, “Glick challenges students to open themselves to dialogue about theories of gender and sexuality that are, for the most part, completely new to students. Students have said her courses push boundaries for them both academically and personally, teach them how to engage with difficult and challenging material in a thoughtful manner, and affirm students as important agents in their own education.”

Glick’s characteristic combination of academic rigor and a personal approach developed largely in response to her experiences introducing students to queer studies. When she was hired in 2000, she says, “there weren’t other people doing this [teaching queer studies] on campus. And it was rewarding because it felt like I was providing something in the curriculum that students needed both politically and personally—and I still feel that way.”

“I’m now focused not just on my students’ lives in my class, but on their whole lives,” says Glick. “It’s important to me to support them as well as to mentor them professionally.”

Glick, who says she regards the classroom as a locale for a “shared discovery project,” begins building trust and a personal connection with her students on day one. At the beginning of every semester, she has each student write her a letter, allowing them an opportunity to ask questions about the expectations for the course, but also to tell her their stories and give her a sense of their interests and aspirations.

This personal approach is not unidirectional, however. Glick also believes in using her personal experience as a teaching tool. “I make it a practice to come out in every class,” she notes. “But it has been an evolution for me to get there,” she says. Over the years, “I’ve become more comfortable showing more of who I am to students.”

Her students aren’t alone in earning an important education at Mizzou. Glick gets choked up just thinking about the students with whom she has shared the classroom. “Many of my students, especially my trans- and gender-nonconforming students, have taught me as much as I’ve taught them,” she says. “I’m honored to be a part of their life and their journey.

Professor Elisa Glick shortly after being told she was a 2015 Kemper Fellow. Photo by Rob Hill; originally published in Mizzou Weekly.
Job Placements

**Lauren Fath, PhD 2015**, has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of English at New Mexico Highlands University. There, she will teach creative nonfiction at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as literature and first-year writing.

**Joanna Eleftheriou, PhD 2015**, has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Literature at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She’ll be responsible for all graduate and undergraduate creative writing courses, as well as some literature.

**Jess Bowers, PhD 2014**, has joined the full-time English faculty at Maryville University in St. Louis, Missouri this fall, where she’ll be helping to launch new tracks in Narrative Arts and Video Literacy for English majors.

**Rebecca Mouser, PhD 2013**, Rebecca Mouser’s contingent position at Missouri Southern State University will convert to tenure-track this year.

**Katy Didden, PhD 2011**, has been appointed as an Assistant Professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, where she will teach creative writing courses in poetry.

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September 24
Jami Attenberg, fiction

October 15
Michael Czyzniejewski, fiction

October 29
F. Douglas Brown and Tyehimba Jess, poetry

November 12
Ryan Van Meter, nonfiction

November 19
Willis Barnstone, poetry

February 4
Steve Tomasula, fiction

February 25
Deb Olin Unferth, fiction

March 3
Roxane Gay, nonfiction

March 17
Christian Bök, poetry

April 14
Alicia Ostriker, poetry

Thursdays at 7:30p.m. in Tate 215
All readings are free and open to the public.

For more information, check out the calendar at english.missouri.edu, find us on Facebook, or contact Sara Strong at strongsn@missouri.edu.

This summer, the English Department and The Missouri Audio Project was thrilled to host a Transom traveling radio workshop from August 2-9, 2015. Renowned radio producer Rob Rosenthal took 10 attendees through the basics and best practices of feature production and to provide an understanding of the radio storytelling and production process. Thanks to the generous support of Mizzou Advantage and the Jonathan Murray Documentary Journalism Center, there was no cost to participants. The Missouri Audio Project is a new collaboration between members of the English Department and the School of Journalism. It will be the home and platform for audio storytelling at the University of Missouri.
It may be a cliché to speak of a “year of transition,” since probably most years would qualify in this regard, but 2015 has definitely been such a year in the English Department. Five of our senior faculty members have retired this year. We say goodbye to Elaine Lawless, one of the most prominent folklorists of her generation, after thirty-two years at MU; to Ellie Ragland, distinguished theorist and expert on Lacanian psychoanalysis, as well as former chair of the department, after twenty-five years; to Martha “Marty” Townsend, former director of the Campus Writing Program and an essential contributor to the department’s curriculum in Rhetoric and Composition, also after twenty-five years; to Richard “Dick” Schwartz, former Dean of Arts and Science, expert on eighteenth-century British literature, and writer of hard-boiled detective fiction, after fifteen years; and to Marly Swick, respected novelist and short-story writer, after fourteen years. We will never be able to duplicate the knowledge and talent of these five professors, all of whom have had a significant impact on the campus.

Yet there is reassuring continuity in the midst of these changes. English has been known for many years as a great teaching department, and this year is no different. We are proud to have yet another winner of the Kemper Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching represented on our faculty: Elisa Glick, who has a dual appointment in English and Women’s and Gender Studies, is our eighth Kemper Fellow in the past fifteen years, and joins the largest number of Kemper recipients to reside in one department on the entire campus. We might add an honorary member to the list: Rachel Harper, another 2015 Kemper Fellow, earned her doctorate from the English Department. She currently serves as director the MU Writing Center as well as coordinating (and teaching in) the Honors College’s popular four-course Humanities Sequence. Speaking of the Honors College, we’re very glad that Nancy West, another of our previous Kemper Fellows, will be back teaching in the department after a successful four-year stint as Director of that college.

The quality of teaching in the department reaches all parts of the campus, since so many of our courses help to meet requirements in other majors and programs. Our “front door” course, though, is English 1000, a.k.a. Freshman Composition, still the initial contact with the department for the majority of students at MU. With the increase in the size of the student body, we are now offering around 125 sections of this course every semester. English 1000 not only represents a huge commitment to serving the needs of our first-year students, but it introduces a sizeable number of those students to what the English Department has to offer as a learning community. Indeed, quite a few of our majors made the decision to pursue a degree in English based on their positive experiences in English 1000. Thus awards like the Kemper are simply the “tip of the iceberg.” The influence of excellent teaching in the English Department runs deep, as both MU’s current students and generations of alumni can testify. That kind of continuity is well worth celebrating, this year and every year.
A Note from the Leaders Board

By Katy Didden
Leaders Board
Steering Committee

I joined the Leaders Board for the first time in 2009, when I served as the graduate student representative. At our meetings, I loved hearing stories from the other alums about their favorite Mizzou professors, and I appreciated seeing the many ways that Leaders Board members have adapted their English degrees to build vibrant careers in business, law, arts administration, and education. Above all, I was inspired by this group of people who were willing to donate their time and talents to ensure that Mizzou students, faculty, and alumni would be not just supported in the choice to study literature, but enthusiastically celebrated. This is why I was happy to join the board again, this time as an alumna, in 2012.

In those first years, the board established annual scholarship funds and faculty awards; with the help of our fellow alumni, we still fund these each year. I know how much faculty and students appreciate this recognition of their hard work, and how happy the board is to be able to contribute to the success of Mizzou English in such a tangible way.

That said, at every meeting, we also discuss ways that we might foster camaraderie among English alums. We would like our current students and faculty to know the students and professors who came before them. We feel that this is important both for career networking, and also because we believe that our shared passion for literature can be a transformative force in our lives and in the world.

This desire to connect current students, faculty, and alumni sparked an idea that we hope you will enjoy: The Mizzou Favorite Poems Project. This idea was inspired by Leaders Board member John Shaw, who took his cue from Robert Pinsky’s Americans’ Favorite Poems. A number of current board members, faculty, students, and alumni have already contributed reflections, and you can read them online at mizzoufavoritepoemproject.wordpress.com.

We hope you will stay tuned as we post new reflections each month. The easiest way to read the latest installments will be through the University of Missouri English Department Leaders Board page on Facebook, but we will also archive them on the website.

The Leaders Board is eager to support the Mizzou English Department, and connect with more alumni. If you have an idea for an alumni opportunity, or if you’d like to send a Favorite Poem reflection, please email Sara Strong at strongsn@missouri.edu.

Meanwhile, we hope you will enjoy these Mizzou Favorite Poems as much as we have. Send us your reflections! We’d love to read them.

Katy Didden graduated from MU with a Ph.D. in English and Creative Writing in 2011. Her first book, The Glacier’s Wake, won the Lena Miles Wever Todd Prize from Pleiades Press, and was published in 2013. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Ball State University.

Meet one of this year’s Alumni Scholarship Recipients, Trisha Henderson-Brown!

Trisha’s primary area of focus is contemporary American literature, and she mainly studies literary representations of violence and silence in relation to the gendered and racialized body. Since Trisha is in her second year of Mizzou’s literature PhD program, she is in the process of completing her course requirements with the hope of starting the beginning stages of her comprehensive exams in the spring. In addition to working on her own research, Trisha searches for ways to improve the writing courses she teaches, and she is excited to serve as a member of EOSA’s 2015-2016 composition committee.

Retirements

We are grateful for the cumulative 112 years of service of our 2014-2015 retirees:

Elaine Lawless        Ellie Ragland         Dick Schwartz
Marly Swick        Marty Townsend

Have you benefited from your experience with any of these professors? Please consider making a gift to the English Department in honor of one or more of these distinguished emeriti.
Faculty
Bookshelf

Aliki Barnstone, Winter, with Child
Red Dragonfly Press
2014

Scott Cairns, Slow Pilgrim: The Collected Poems
Paraclete Press
2015

Johns Hopkins University Press
2015

Andrew Hoberek, Considering Watchmen: Poetics, Property, Politics
Rutgers University Press
2015

Johanna Kramer, Between earth and heaven: Liminality and the Ascension of Christ in Anglo-Saxon Literature
Manchester University Press
2015

Lee Manion, Narrating the Crusades: Loss and Recovery in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature
Cambridge University Press
2014

Thomas McAfee, There is Not Fashion to It: Selected Poems
BkMk Press
2015

Julie Melnyk et al., eds. “Perplex in Faith”: Essays on Victorian Beliefs and Doubts
Cambridge Scholars Publishing
2015

Karen Piper, The Price of Thirst: Global Water Inequality and the Coming Chaos
University of Minnesota Press
2014

Routledge
2015

Faculty News

Pat Okker is currently serving as Senior Associate Provost. Her essay “The Madness of College Sports” recently appeared in Inside Higher Ed.

Noah Heringman was a 2014-15 Fellow of the National Humanities Center, where he conducted research on the idea of “deep time” and its history. He has been studying the brand-new geological epoch called the Anthropocene and recently published articles on this topic in Representations and the minnesota review. This year, he will serve on the planning committee for MU’s 12th Annual Life Sciences and Society Symposium, scheduled for March 2016, which will focus on climate change in the Anthropocene. Professor Heringman also gave invited talks at the Clark Library (UCLA) and the Universities of Vienna, North Carolina, and Western Ontario.

Trudy Lewis published a roller derby novel, The Empire Rolls, with Moon City Press in 2014, and has since given readings at the College of Charleston, Westminster College, UMKC, UMSL, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Copper Nickel, Cream City Review, and Natural Bridge have published several of her stories over the last year, and she was selected for a 2015 MU Gold Chalk Award for Graduate and Professional Education.

Michael Marlo received a four-year $343,479 grant from the National Science Foundation for his project “Structure and tone in Luyia,” which provides linguistic documentation of four languages of western Kenya. Marlo was also selected as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar and will be a lecturer at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya in Spring 2016.

Julija Šukys won a nonfiction writer’s fellowship from the Canada Council for the Arts this past year. In April, she taught a Master Class called “Filling in the Gaps: Dealing with the Unknown and Unknowable in Creative Nonfiction” at the Creative Nonfiction Collective.
Conference in Victoria, BC. Her essay “The Missouri Compromise” appeared in the Spring 2015 issue of Queen’s Quarterly.

Karen Piper’s The Price of Thirst is a winner of the 2015 Next Generation Indie Book Award in the category of current events/social change.

Chris Okonkwo’s essay “Chinua Achebe’s Blue Notes: Toward a Critical Re(h)ordering of Things Fall Apart’s Blues and Jazz Sensibility” was accepted for publication in Research in African Literatures.

Marty Townsend gave talks on writing across the curriculum at six universities in Ireland in December. She received the 2015 MU Alumnae Anniversary Award given by the Women’s and Gender Studies Department, an award recognizing faculty women on the Columbia campus who are notable for their teaching excellence and other contributions to the education of women. Previous recipients from the Department include Win Horner, Elaine Lawless, Devoney Looser, and Catherine Parke. In addition, Professor Townsend gave the annual Dean William Parks Colloquium lecture at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia, and she was recently featured on the Columbia Missourian for her course on the Letter as Genre.

Johanna Kramer published Between Earth and Heaven: Liminality and the Ascension of Christ in Anglo-Saxon Literature with Manchester University Press. Part of the Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture series, this monograph examines the teaching of the theology of Christ’s Ascension in Anglo-Saxon literature, offering the only comprehensive examination of how patristic Ascension theology is transmitted, adapted, and through a wide range of liminal imagery. The ‘Sea of This Life’ and the Wave of Heaven in the Anonymous Prose Life of St. Michael” at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI, in May 2015. She also gave presentations about Anglo-Saxon art and culture to elementary-school groups in Columbia Public School’s gifted program. She is currently at work on an edition and translation of twenty-two anonymous Old English prose saints’ lives for the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library series (co-edited with Hugh Magennis and Robin Norris) and is planning a research trip to the UK in Fall 2015 to consult the early medieval manuscripts that contain these saints’ lives.

LuAnne Roth was selected for the 2015 Mary Lago Teaching Award by the Department of English.

Gladys Swan’s story “Jungle” will appear in the winter issue of Sequane Review. Two of her paintings, “Speaking from the Desert,” and “The Secret Lives of Stones,” were juried into this year’s exhibit of “Paper in Particular,” a national show that has been sponsored by Columbia College for the past 35 years. Her novel, A Dark Gamble, a Western epic set in New Mexico, has been published by Serving House Books. It is the first of a trilogy of novels set in New Mexico; the second, Ghost Dance: A Play of Voices, first published in hardcover by LSU Press and nominated for the PEN/Faulkner and PEN/West Awards, is being re-issued in paperback, and the third, Ancestors, will appear in the spring. She is doing cover paintings for the series.

Julie Melnyk will serve on this year’s National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) British Literature Panel in Washington, D.C., helping to select which grants will receive NEH funds.

Andrew Hoberek has been named the Comics/Graphic Novels Editor for the Los Angeles Review of Books. The University of Missouri recently published a feature exploring his work on the landing page of the university website.

Chun Ye (a.k.a. Ye Chun)’s latest book, Lantern Puzzle, came out in March 2015 from Tupelo Press. The book is the winner of the Tupelo First/Second Book Award, selected by D. A. Powell in 2011. She has also been selected as one of this year’s NEA fellowship recipients.

Travis Scholl’s Walking the Labyrinth was published by IVP in 2014. The book is a blend of memoir and lyric essay, centered in the labyrinth—which Scholl walked daily for forty days—as an image of life and spirituality.

Mike Petrik’s essay “Island Endemics” was featured in the January 2015 issue of Animal, and another essay, “Under the Umbrella,” was featured in the Spring 2015 issue of 1966: A Journal of Creative Nonfiction.


Khem Aryal guest edited the America-Nepal special issue of Snow Jewel, recently published by The Grey Sparrow Press, Minnesota. The journal contains fifteen Nepali and twelve American poets, including Robert Bly, Maya Angelou, M.J. Luppa, and Lianuska Gutierrez. Aryal’s
short story "A Father’s Worry" has been accepted for publication in Hawaii Pacific Review.

Shelli Homer’s article “Replacing the Mother, Reclaiming the Daughter: Silence and Othermothers in Elizabeth Nunez’s Brinsed Hibiscus and Patricia Powell’s The Pagoda” has been accepted into Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal for a special issue on Chinese in the Caribbean. This article began as a seminar paper in Dr. Sheri-Marie Harrison’s “Gender and Sexuality in Caribbean Literature and Literary Theory” course.

Shelli Homer and Brie Jaquette’s piece, “American Women Writers and Wars on Foreign Soil,” has been selected as a two-part post for the Society of the Study of American Women Writer’s featured blog series for U.S. Studies Online’s Women’s History Month celebration.

This summer, Deanna Benjamin received a Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship and completed an intensive eight week session in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian at Indiana University’s Summer Language Workshop.

Anne Bangrover’s poem “Hallucinate the House, Hallucinate the Woods” has been accepted for publication by North American Review.

Mike Horton was profiled in a feature by the Columbian Missourian. The headline: “Veteran’s passion for reading leads to pursuit of a doctorate in English literature.”


One of Naira Kuzmich’s stories, “The Kingsley Drive Chorus,” has been awarded an O. Henry Prize, and will be included in The O. Henry Prize Stories 2015.

Allison Coffelt’s essay “Cotton Frames” was accepted for publication by the Los Angeles Review. She was admitted to the Kenyon Review Writers’ Workshop this past summer, and more of her recent work can be found in Crab Orchard Review.


Alumni News


Steve Wiegenstein’s (MA 1981, Ph.D. 1987) novel This Old World was published in September and was recently named a finalist for the M.M. Bennetts Award for Historical Fiction.

Gretchen Henderson’s new book, Ugliness: A Cultural History, is forthcoming from Reaktion Books of London/University of Chicago Press. It was recently reviewed in the Guardian. Recent interviews include Australian National Radio and Irish National Radio. In November, her opera libretto, Cassandra in the Temples, is being staged in Boston by the ensemble Cappella Clausura. She is currently a Lecturer in English at Georgetown University and Affiliated Scholar in Art History at Kenyon College, and also teaches in the Kenyon Review Writers’ Workshop. In 2016, she will be the Hodson-JCB Fellow at Brown University and Washington College.

George Hodgman’s memoir, Bettyville, was released earlier this year to critical praise from The New York Times. He is teaching the Graduate Nonfiction Workshop for the English department this fall.

Ramsay Wise (PhD 2012), Instructor of Film Studies, received a 2015 Excellence in Education Award presented by the MU Division of Student Affairs.


Cary Stough (BA 2012) began graduate work towards an MFA in poetry at Brown University this fall.


Michael White (BA 1984) has been longlisted for the National Book Award for his book Travels in Vermeer (Persea Books, 2015).

Jon Hamm (BA 1993) received an Emmy award for his role as Don Draper on the critically-acclaimed AMC drama Mad Men.
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The department appreciates hearing from alumni and friends. Send announcements or milestones to the address listed above.

Above: Posters designed by students in a Spring 2015 course, “Reading William Blake.” After researching a variety of primary sources from Blake’s time, students worked together to illustrate their discoveries about Blake’s historical and mythical worlds - from child labor laws at the end of the 18th century in England to the prophetic tradition; from early maps of London to the “marriage of heaven and hell.”

Stay social! Find the University of Missouri Department of English on Facebook and LinkedIn.