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NAGPRA at DU

February 2015

DU's Commitment to Building Relationships with Native Tribes

One of the most rewarding events in Anne Amati's career took place this past October when she was invited to attend a reburial ceremony for six individuals by the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Amati is the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) coordinator for the University of Denver Museum of Anthropology. NAGPRA fosters close relationships between tribal communities and museums, which work together to repatriate cultural artifacts and human remains back to tribes across the United States.

"NAGPRA is about building meaningful relationships with tribes and righting wrongs of the past. It's important work that isn't always easy, but can be extremely satisfying," said Amati. She enjoys teaching students about NAGPRA and how to comply with the spirit and letter of the law.

The power of NAGPRA lies not only in its ability to return important cultural objects and human remains to native tribes, but also in the law's ability to build lasting relationships between museums and indigenous communities, according to Amati. The [University of Denver Museum of Anthropology](#) is part of a larger community of museums, agencies and tribes throughout Colorado that is proactive in NAGPRA work. Contact [Amati](#) for more information on DU's NAGPRA initiatives.

AHSS ADVISORY BOARD

AHSS Advisory Board Members Give Their Time to DU

The [AHSS Advisory Board](#) is a national group of alumni and friends who generate ideas and share recommendations with faculty and administrators to enrich the AHSS community at DU.

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“An AHSS education leaves you with many treasures – ideas grappled with, novels explored, art appreciated, history revealed – that enrich your life forever. I have benefited immensely, both personally and professionally, from the legacy of my undergraduate studies at DU,” said Dr. Tom Kulik (BA '73, psychology), pediatric cardiologist and AHSS advisory board member.

Founded in May 2011 by an appointed alumni task force, the board meets twice a year on campus. Members perform much of their work via three committees devoted to community outreach, student engagement and fundraising. For example, the Connections Committee created the [AHSS Alumni Achievement Awards](#) program that grants four awards to meritorious alumni each spring. Nominations are now being accepted. Committee members need not be board members; [contact us](#) if you are interested in joining a committee.

Board President Amelia Ribneck Kleiman (BA '79, political science and economics) welcomes your [questions or comments](#).

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

MGM Executive Endows Scholarship for Theatre Students

Anyone who watched television in the 1990s likely recalls the nerdy character of Steve Urkel on *Family Matters* and his signature line, “did I do that?”

Geoff Gordon (BA '73, theatre), retired vice president at MGM Worldwide Television, created the character and coined the line while he was an executive story editor at ABC. He helped break down racial divides by imbuing African-American narratives into mainstream television through his work on several shows, including *The Jeffersons*, *Roc* and *Baldwin Heights*.

Armed with his theatre degree from DU, Gordon entered the entertainment industry as an actor. One of Gordon’s earliest professional acting experiences introduced him to breaking new ground in Hollywood: he landed the voice role of television’s first cartoon rapper when he played Haggie in *The Gary Coleman Show*, a Hanna-Barbera cartoon.

In February 2015 Gordon made an estate commitment to endow a scholarship for DU juniors studying theatre. His gift is part of DU’s scholarship matching program that matches donations dollar-for-dollar to double the impact of an endowed scholarship fund. Gordon’s scholarship will be a gap-closure award to offset the burden of the recipients’ loans. Preference will be given to students from underrepresented populations, including self-identifying LGBT students. [Read more...](#)

[Photo: Dean McIntosh (left) and Geoff Gordon sign an endowed scholarship gift agreement.]



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor's Work Sheds Light on Islam, Past and Present

While most Americans catch news updates of crisis in the Middle East sporadically, Andrea Stanton has her finger on the pulse of the region. The assistant professor of Islamic studies regularly has a browser page opened to [Al Jazeera's](#) live stream. Her



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interest in the region runs from its history to its media and religious identity.

Stanton has a PhD in Middle Eastern History from Columbia University. While pursuing her degree, she spent summers in Damascus studying Arabic and developing a fondness for the people and the country.

“The refugee crisis today is almost impossible for anyone who knows Syria and Syrians to believe. Syria reminded me a lot of my childhood — different religion and culture, yes, but the same focus on family, family values, a kind of general but non-extreme conservatism and a general contentment with life,” said Stanton, who grew up in Iowa. “Today, these same people struggle to survive as refugees and see their future slipping away day by day.”

Stanton is often sought after to provide expert commentary on the Syrian crisis and other contemporary Middle Eastern issues. She has been interviewed recently on the evolving role of women in Islamist militant groups, including [this piece by CNN](#) in January. [Read More...](#)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Student Thrives on Breadth of Asian Studies Program

After spending nearly two years, off and on, traveling and living in China, Denver native Hsing Tseng learned a thing or two about Chinese culture, and it sparked an interest to learn more about Asian cultures as an Asian studies major at DU.

The fourth-year undergraduate, who is also a journalism studies major, cites the variety of classes and interdisciplinary nature of the Asian studies program as what she enjoys the most.

“I like being able, and actually required, to take courses in a wide variety of departments, including history, religious studies, foreign language, politics and art history,” she said.



Tseng began her travels to China in 2008, first to a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site where she lived amongst other American students and didn't need to learn the language. She decided upon her second visit in 2010 to fully immerse herself in the culture.

“Armed with a 1988 Chinese-English dictionary and a very rudimentary knowledge of Chinese, I dove into the language and ended up becoming fluent and literate in that second, eight-month trip,” Tseng said. “That opened a lot of doors for me professionally and in terms of being able to really learn about China and its culture.” [Read More...](#)

FEATURED EVENTS

CHOPP TALK: Feb 3, 2015, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Washington, DC – The Listening and Learning Tour

The University of Denver's new Chancellor, Rebecca S. Chopp, has packed her bag and is hitting the road to speak directly with alumni, parents and friends across the country. First stop, the Willard InterContinental Hotel in Washington, DC. Join us for an opportunity to hear from the Chancellor and ask her questions about the future of DU. This event is free. [RSVP here](#), or call 303-871-2777.

FACULTY LECTURE: Feb 12, 2015, 4:30 p.m. – Hopeful Pessimism: Can Public Health Practice Address Social Exclusion in Guatemala?

In this lecture, Alejandro Cerón, assistant professor of anthropology, will share his research findings and personal insights on what it would take for public health (and other development-related) practitioners to help improve one of the most unequal societies in the Western hemisphere. After a brief introduction to Guatemala's history of social inequality, the lecture will describe recent case studies, and draw lessons from them. Case studies include the responses to epidemiological emergencies, child under nutrition and low availability of pharmaceuticals in rural health care facilities. This lecture will be held in the [Lindsay Auditorium, Sturm Hall room 281](#).

KIRK LECTURE: Feb 12, 2015, 7:00 p.m. – Anthea Butler

The department of religious studies invites you to the annual Kirk Lecture featuring Anthea Butler, scholar, author and media commentator. Butler is associate professor of religious studies and Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her forthcoming book, *The Gospel According to Sarah*, explores the role of religion in Sarah Palin's political action, and Palin's influence on the Republican Party. Butler is a regular guest on the Melissa Harris Perry Show on MSNBC and a sought after media commentator. This free lecture will be held in [Anderson Academic Commons Special Events, Room 290](#). Registration is not required.

THEATRE: Feb 26-28, Mar 6-7, 7:30 p.m.; Mar 8, 2:00 p.m. – Stage Door

Join us at The Footlights Club in New York City and share the hopes and dreams of the ambitious young actresses who reside there. They've all come to New York to make it big on Broadway and through this delightful romp we share in their struggles and triumphs as they grapple with auditions, day jobs, bad shows, bad pay, all kinds of men and the ever present temptation to pack it all in and to give up their art to the glittering lure of tinsel town! Stage Door will be held in the [Byron Theatre](#), the Newman Center for the Performing Arts. [Tickets are \\$10.](#)

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