

SDS

director's report

I'm back. After a wonderful sabbatical year of writing and thinking and writing some more, I have once again taken up the position as Director of the Bonham Centre. First, my heartfelt thanks to David Rayside and Scott Rayter, who both stepped up to run the program while I was away. They both did an extraordinary job. The Centre is bustling with new faces, new courses, new activities, and grand plans for the future.

In the grand plans department, the Bonham Centre will be hosting the World Pride Human Rights Conference (WPHRC14) in June 2014. In conjunction with World Pride, WPHRC14 is an exciting gathering of activists, artists, educators, journalists, policymakers, students, and others involved in LGBT human rights around the world. 400 participants from over 60 countries will gather in Toronto from June 25 to 27 to engage in a unique dialogue about the state of global LGBT rights and the on challenges of realizing these rights.

Speakers include Russian activist and journalist Masha Gessen, Ugandan LGBT activist Frank Mugisha, Kenyan human rights lawyer Justice Monica Mbaru, Venezuelan lawyer, professor and trans activist Tamara Adrián, and Canadian global HIV/AIDS leader Stephen Lewis. But, added to this illustrious list will be over 150 LGBT rights leaders from around the world. Panelists will address issues ranging from education and youth, HIV/AIDS, sex worker rights, trans rights, employment, aging. And the list goes on and on.

This is simply the most ambitious project we have ever taken on.

We have an extraordinary team of volunteers helping us. An organizing committee doing the heavy lifting of programming, fundraising, publicity and the like. And an advisory committee helping us make the right decisions along the way.

We will in turn need an army of volunteers to pull off the actual conference, so there will be plenty of opportunity for SDS students, friends and supporters to get involved.

I encourage you to visit (and like!) the WPHRC14 facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/TheWorldPrideHumanRightsConference2014>. And make to

watch some of Raymond Helkio's truly fabulous videos "What do Global LGBT Human Rights mean to you?" – interviews with a broad range LGBT human rights activists.

But as big as WPHRC14 is, it isn't the only thing we are doing at SDS this year. Following on last year's sold out success, we are in the midst of organizing our second annual Bonham Centre Awards Gala (BCAG). This year's BCAG, to be held on April 24, 2014, in the Great Hall, at Hart House is honouring LGBT writers. We will be giving the Bonham Award to four writers: Edmund White, Patricia Neil-Warren, Shyam Selvadurai and Waawaate Fobister.

The SDS Student Research Colloquium, where our graduate and undergraduate specialist students have the opportunity to present their research is scheduled for March 28, 2014. This is wonderful opportunity for faculty, students, friends and supporters of SDS to come and see the cutting edge work that our students are producing.

Our Sexual Representation Collection (SRC) has moved into its new quarters, and under the stewardship of curator, Nicholas Matte, will soon be open to researchers. Tours of the collection for students, faculty and researchers are being organized. The SRC is also organizing a large exhibit called "Archiving Public Sex" from Apr 29-June 28, 2014 in conjunction with the University of Toronto Art Centre. As part of the Contact photography festival, the Berkshire Conference on Women's History and World Pride, attendance is expected to be in the many thousands.

And then, of course, there is our regularly scheduled program: the many, many courses we offer to our students. This year, we have two new courses on offer: Queer Youth studies in Education taught by Associate Professor Lance MacCready from OISE, and Feminist and Queer Approaches to Technology taught by Assistant Professor Patrick Keilty, from the Faculty of Information Studies. For a full list of our courses, please visit our website at <http://www.utoronto.ca/courses-1>

It promises to be another extraordinary year.

Brenda Cossman
Director, Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies

Contributors:

Yvonne Palkowski

Brenda Cossman

Scott Rayter

CENTRE NEWS



Brenda Cossman wins Ludwik and Estelle Jus Memorial Human Rights Prize

Brenda Cossman, Professor of Law and Director of the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at University College, was honoured with the Ludwik and Estelle Jus Memorial Human Rights Prize from the U of T Alumni Association, for her positive and lasting contributions to education and action against discrimination; supporting the University's mission to realize an exemplary degree of equity and diversity; and extending knowledge as a consequence of diversity.

Bonham Centre Honours

Stephen Lewis, Dan Savage, and Gay-Straight Alliances at Inaugural Awards Gala

BY YVONNE PALKOWSKI

More than 220 advocates of sexual diversity education gathered at One King West in Toronto on April 25, 2013 for the first annual Bonham Centre Awards Gala, presented by the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at University College.

Honoured for substantial contributions to the public understanding of sexual diversity were Stephen Lewis, longtime HIV/AIDS crusader, co-founder of AIDS-Free World, and a UC alum; Dan Savage, writer, pundit, and co-founder of the It Gets Better campaign to help prevent suicide among LGBT youth; and Bent on Change, a gay-straight alliance at Harbord Collegiate Institute in Toronto, representing other such groups across Canada.

"Bent on Change, Stephen Lewis, and Dan Savage are each at the forefront of education in sexual diversity, an area that I would describe as the civil rights issue of our time," said Bonham Centre Director Brenda Cossman, a professor in the Faculty of Law and an expert in the field of sexuality and the law.

In addition to the honorees, distinguished guests included Centre founder and namesake Mark Bonham, former University of Toronto President David Naylor, and the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario.

Presiding over the festivities was master of ceremonies Tré Armstrong, dancer, choreographer, and judge on *So You Think You Can Dance Canada*, and the founder of the Tré Armstrong Foundation. Musical entertainment was provided by Juno award-winning jazz artist Molly Johnson, founder of the Kumbaya Foundation and Festival in support of people living with HIV/AIDS.

While the Bonham Centre Awards were established in 2007, 2013 marked their first year as a gala event. "Now more than ever, we want to help our students and the broader community understand what genuine inclusivity means," said Bonham Centre founding director Professor David Rayside. "The challenges here are complex, and our own students are constantly raising new questions that go beyond what those of us in older generations can imagine. This is crucial work, and we need to do more of it," he said.

Past recipients on the Bonham Centre Award include Oscar-winning screenwriter and LGBT rights activist Dustin Lance Black, *Degrassi* television series co-creator and executive producer Linda Schuyler, filmmaker John Greyson, lawyer Barbara Findlay, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and renowned sexual educator and counsellor Sue Johanson.

1 Honouree Stephen Lewis **2** Bonham Centre Director Prof. Brenda Cossman **3** Bonham Centre namesake Mark Bonham and honouree Dan Savage **4** Former University of Toronto President David Naylor **5** Premier Kathleen Wynne and Bonham Centre founding director Prof. David Rayside **6** Juno award-winning jazz artist Molly Johnson **7** Members of honoured group Bent on Change, a gay-straight alliance at Toronto's Harbord Collegiate Institute



STUDENT SUCCESS

A Conversation with **Jessica Ng**

BY SCOTT RAYTER



While a student in SDS, Jessica has initiated and led community-oriented projects related to HIV/AIDS. She has won scholarships and awards for her academic and extracurricular work, and has been involved in university governance, campus theatre, and student publications. A playwright, she is also currently Co-Editor of the Canadian Studies undergraduate journal.

What attracted you to do the minor in SDS?

Early on in my Canadian Studies specialist, issues of queer sexuality dominated my academic work as research interests. But, while I could successfully draw upon a range of literature, I didn't have the crucial historical and theoretical perspectives. In SDS, I was able to fill that gap and hone my skills in critical inquiry. I really am a much stronger student having been in SDS. Of course, the other draw to SDS was the focus on sexuality, in an interdisciplinary context - wanting to take nearly every course offered is one of the best dilemmas to find yourself in!

How did *The Philadelphia Project* come about?

The idea for *The Philadelphia Project* came about over two and a half years ago, when I read an article about the accelerated aging phenomenon amongst people with long-term HIV, many of them gay men who had survived the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. A few months after that, I was re-watching Tom Hanks's Oscar acceptance speech for *Philadelphia*, and it brought to mind that article. I was experimenting with playwriting at the time, and I pitched an idea to the theatre director that I was collaborating with: how about a play that will mark the upcoming anniversary of *Philadelphia*, to see where we are twenty years after what is arguably the most recognizable mainstream representation of HIV/AIDS? And so began our work on this new play, *The Philadelphia Project*, which has involved collaboration with academics (I met Scott Rayter while working on this project, actually, before taking SDS courses) and doctors, interviews with AIDS epidemic survivors, and archival research.

This entire experience has been a steep learning curve, but one of the most important things that I've learned relates to grassroots activism: the power that you have to make things happen and initiate change at the level of the community. Ultimately, this play is an important cultural work that draws attention to the often-overlooked contemporary ('post-cocktail') history of survivors of the AIDS epidemic in Canada. Two and a half years, nearly ten drafts, and many rewrites later, it will premiere at Victoria College this fall with a three-night run. It has also snowballed into a much larger event, forming the first part of the "20 Years of *Philadelphia*" event that I am currently chairing and organizing (the second part is a symposium on living and aging with HIV/AIDS in Canada), also to be held at Victoria College for World AIDS Day. But it really did begin with just a passing idea and no contacts to speak of - except for the name of the journalist who wrote the article that started it all.

What are your plans after graduation?

Grad school, definitely - here in Canada and/or abroad. Social policy is the program that I have my eye on, and it's the field that I hope to enter in the future, perhaps with a PhD in tow. There may also be a side career as a playwright, but those are plans for a slightly more distant future. I am currently looking at establishing a journal or biannual anthology of writing on HIV/AIDS, so that will be a major project of mine immediately post-graduation. There is also a humorous fictional memoir of sorts that has been in the works for several years now; I've recently resurrected the project, so I hope to continue working on it after I graduate. And I think I'd like to get back into painting; my involvement in the arts has been mostly in theatre for the past few years, so I'm looking forward to picking up the paintbrush after a bit of a hiatus. My first acrylic work as a newly-minted Honours BA? A portrait of Freddie Mercury.

Thank You for your support!

The following individuals generously donated to the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies between October 2012 and October 2013.

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*These donors created endowed funds to support the Bonham Centre in perpetuity.

FORCED TO CHOOSE”:

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by Arik Day

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EROTIC
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(dis)identification and Self Representation in
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The Undergraduate Journal of Sexual Diversity Studies

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VALERIE SOLANAS WAS NOT A

FEMINIST, BUT... BY BROCK HESSEL

THE MARK S. BONHAM CENTRE FOR SEXUAL DIVERSITY STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESENTS



AN EVENING IN HONOUR OF

**CHARLES
PACHTER**

in recognition of his legacy of support for the LGBTQ
community. Proceeds from the event will go towards the
newly created Charles Pachter Program Fund in support of
innovative courses in Sexual Diversity Studies.

THURSDAY
JANUARY 30, 2014

University of Toronto Art Centre (UTAC),
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Tickets \$100

RECEPTION 5:30- 8:00 P.M. | REMARKS 6:30 P.M.

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with Shelley Craig, PhD

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Where can sexual and gender minority youth and their families go for support?

The development of empirically supported strength-based interventions for youth and their families is critically absent in the research literature. Despite this gap, there are amazing organizations throughout the GTA such as PFLAG for parents and families and many organizations for youth. My work is to engage with communities and youth and develop community-based solutions that engage youth strengths to reduce their risks.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I am honoured to be a conduit for youth and community voice to help co-create knowledge. Through my varied community activities I have found that bountiful opportunities exist to conduct research that amplifies the needs of vulnerable populations as well as the innovations of emerging community organizations. I enjoy working closely with my faculty and student colleagues at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work on grappling with significant practice based challenges such as reducing risks and capturing resiliencies.

What is the hardest thing about your work?

It is at times challenging to bridge the gap between marginalized youth and community needs and the requirements of the Academy. In addition, creating and testing culturally grounded interventions that enable youth strengths, meet the evidentiary standard, and can be easily implemented in community requires attention to many competing factors.

How has your involvement with the Bonham Centre affected your work?

It has provided an interdisciplinary academic lens to consider the research approach and supports for sexual and gender minority youth and the larger community context. It has been incredibly instructive to learn from the engaged students and faculty.

What is your next project?

During the past few years, I have recognized and incorporated into my research the importance of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other smartphone applications) on the risks and resiliencies of sexual and gender minority youth. In particular, my recent efforts are considering the opportunities afforded by Internet and communication technologies to enhance social work research and interventions to promote queer youth health.

BY YVONNE PALKOWSKI

What is your involvement with the queer community?

My research portfolio emerges from over twenty years of serving on Boards and running agencies that serve the community, including PFLAG National and Heartstrong. Locally, I have recently been elected as Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of Pride Toronto and am excited about the possibilities to expand our support of the diverse community. My practice background helps me understand that attending a Pride event is a critical developmental milestone for many sexual and gender minority youth. Since human rights parallel the existence of Pride celebrations, there are critical opportunities and responsibilities for Pride to continue our work of reducing discrimination on a larger scale.

What are the main challenges facing sexual and gender minority youth today?

Sexual and gender minority youth still experience high rates of suicide, homelessness, and other health and mental health disparities that are exacerbated by chronic discrimination. These cumulative risks and stressors create barriers to a sense of internal safety and allow for few opportunities to celebrate their intersecting identities and their resiliencies.



"It was a relief to know that all the work I have done within the Sexual Diversity Studies program and all my volunteer work outside of SDS was worthy of recognition. These awards made a difference not only in terms of finance but in terms of my level of self-confidence."

BROCK HESSEL

Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies, 2014

BOUNDLESSIMPACT

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