



MARK S. BONHAM CENTRE FOR SEXUAL DIVERSITY STUDIES



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More than \$100K raised at Integral House

On Sept. 25, University College alumnus James D. Stewart opened his magnificent home, Integral House, for a fundraising party to establish the David Rayside Graduate Student Fund in Sexual Diversity Studies. The evening also served as an official launch for Canada's first graduate program in the field.

More than \$100,000 was raised for the fund, surpassing the goal set for the event. Three hundred guests were treated to a rare glimpse of a house that, even before construction was completed, was making international headlines for its stunning design by Toronto firm Shim-Sutcliffe Architects. Students, faculty, alumni, and community supporters mingled in the house's main entertaining space, which is wrapped in an undulating wood and glass wall, overlooking a Rosedale ravine.

University of Toronto President David Naylor welcomed supporters and paid tribute to David Rayside, the founding director of the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies. President Naylor lauded the program for its innovation and growth over its 10-year history. Stewart, an emeritus professor of mathematics at McMaster University



[Clockwise from top left] Matthew Strang and Adam Awad; David Rayside, James D. Stewart, and President David Naylor; Integral House; David Rayside addresses crowd; Ali Harrison and Kirsten Heymann; Sara-Marni Hubbard and Sarah Wayne. Photos by Jason Krugler-Baum



and current professor at the University of Toronto, welcomed guests to his home, noting that the name "Integral House" and the S-shaped curve of the home's exterior wall were inspired by calculus.

Stewart also introduced one of the architects of the house, Brigitte Shim. Other speakers included Paul Douglas, from event sponsor TD Financial Group, and graduate student Andrea Polonijo. SDS alumna Robbie Morgan, who works in University College Alumni & Development, was the MC. Other sponsors of the event included Greg Couillard's Spice Room & Chutney Bar, Context Developments Market Wharf, Stoney Ridge Winery, Steamwhistle Brewery, Polar Ice Vodka, Xtra! and Avenue Flower.

The Graduate Student Fund will provide much-needed support for students enrolled in the new collaborative M.A. and Ph.D. programs. Fifteen graduate students from 10 disciplines are already enrolled. Funds may be used to provide conference and travel research grants. The program puts U of T in the ranks of institutions like Cornell University and Yale University in recognizing the importance of post-graduate inquiry in the field of sexuality.

The Bonham Centre thanks all its generous supporters, the event's organizing committee, and the staff of the University College Alumni & Development Office for making the evening such a success.



Director's letter

It's been an exciting time to be director of SDS, with so much going on. One of the biggest projects has been the launch of our collaborative graduate program. We now have 15 students, and our first just graduated in November. They are working in such fields as English, history, East Asian studies, public health, and several OISE programs. We are also formalizing our relationships with the departments of Italian Studies and Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations to accommodate new applications.

These graduate students will go on to shape the field of sexual diversity studies in ways that likely none of us has imagined. For those of us who never had access to a program in sexuality or queer studies, there is much to envy. And while many queer thinkers and artists have clearly made important differences to our communities by working outside the universities, we at

SDS see this new program as a real complement to that foundational and ongoing work. Our strength is our ability to offer a place for collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of sexuality — a place where students and faculty can share ideas and learn from one another.

And now is the moment for us to flex those intellectual muscles. In a time when financial commitments to postsecondary education are uncertain, we must be able to defend and celebrate the work we do here. Some of you may be aware that SDS received a fair bit of media attention for our new collaborative program. The coverage in the *Globe and Mail* generated a lot of responses, some good, some bad. There were the homophobic comments that we've sadly come to expect, but it was the other, more general attacks by those who don't see the importance of studying sexuality

— or of other fields of inquiry in the university — that were more troubling. Some seem to believe that all education should be purely utilitarian in nature, overlooking the fact that knowledge for its own sake is a worthy pursuit, and, more importantly, that in taking our courses students acquire the skills necessary for any career they may pursue. What we provide is the environment for them to develop critical thinking, writing expertise, and the ability to synthesize, process, and communicate ideas, to those who share a lingua franca and to those who do not.

The other thing we do for our students, though, is help them understand why sex matters, and why the study of sexuality matters — whether it's because of current debates about age of consent laws or anti-same sex marriage initiatives, the ways queer people experience injustice around the world, or the

ways we come to define and experience sexuality, pleasure, and desire. What was so wonderful to see following the *Globe* piece was the way our students took up these debates in venues like the newspaper's website, Facebook, and Torontoist.com. In other words, it's not simply up to us to make clear to people outside universities why the work we do is relevant to everyone. We give our students the resources to make those arguments — and they do. The better we are able to provide them with critical tools to challenge inequity and intolerance, by understanding how power operates and how knowledge formation works, the better prepared they are to overcome injustice and help others achieve that, too. I feel lucky and proud that I have the privilege to work with so many of you to make that happen.

Scott Rayter
Acting Director
Bonham Centre



Bonham Centre directors present, past, and future: Scott Rayter, David Rayside, Brenda Cossman

New leadership at Bonham Centre

Scott Rayter, a long-time SDS instructor, has been serving as Acting Director of the Bonham Centre since founding director David Rayside completed his term in June. Rayter will continue in that role until next summer, when Brenda Cossman will become the Centre's next director. Cossman, a distinguished professor in the Faculty of Law who has a

long association with Sexual Diversity Studies, has been named to a two-year term beginning in July 2009.

SDS is also lucky to have a new program and centre assistant, Wendy Koslow, who began work in August. She has worked in education and the public sector for 10 years, including at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

Lesbian Studies takes off

A new third-year course was added to the undergraduate curriculum of Sexual Diversity Studies this fall. Lesbian Studies considers historical and theoretical approaches to questions of lesbian identity. Along with two other new courses — Introduction to HIV/AIDS, and Transgender Studies, made possible by a generous anonymous donation — it brings the total of the program's core course offerings to nearly 15.

Topics covered in Lesbian Studies include the butch/femme paradigm of the 1950s, lesbian representation in pop culture, and early lesbian feminism. Students have been grappling with questions such as whether there is such a thing as "lesbian identity," and what is the relationship between queer theory and lesbian studies. Instructor Tori Smith, herself a University College alumna who was taught by SDS instructors,

says she has been impressed by the engagement and enthusiasm of students in the inaugural course. And the students themselves offer praise for the class.

"A course such as Lesbian Studies is crucial to the Sexual Diversity Studies program," says Sherrie Chang. "This class has been personally meaningful to many students, and provided an atmosphere where questions and ideas that are not explored elsewhere were posited, investigated, and challenged."

Emma McKenna, another student in the course, says, "Lesbian Studies is something that I have always felt the absence of in the curriculum. Tori Smith has created a syllabus that reflects the tensions and contradictions of the category of 'lesbian' itself over time."

She adds, "Doing the work in this course is like candy — it's a sweet reward after all the other readings."

Robbie heads for the Golden State



The Bonham Centre will soon be losing one of its most dedicated supporters, as well as one of its most striking personalities. Robbie Morgan, an SDS alumna and former student organizer who has continued to help the program grow in her work with University College Alumni & Development, will be leaving Toronto in early 2009 for sunny California. She'll be deeply missed by the SDS community.

"One of the things that has been so great about working with Robbie — both when she was a student in the program and now that she's been working in Alumni & Development — is her initiative," says Scott Rayter, Acting Director of the Bonham Centre. "Her dedication, her dynamism, and her critical acumen have helped make SDS a stellar program. And most of all, her personable nature and sense of humour make her an amazing person to be around."

Morgan moved to Toronto from the U.S. and enrolled in SDS in 2004. She'd been inspired to pursue studies in sexuality while working as a sex education teacher on Chicago's South Side, where she felt she needed more knowledge to help youth and their families negotiate the complicated terrain of sexuality and culture. "The curriculum that I was handed to teach in these classrooms just did not address the issues and experiences of the students," recalls Morgan. "I started looking around for an academic program that might help me understand why there was such a huge gap between the curriculum and their lives." She was drawn to SDS because it "had an internal logic about sexual diversity that wasn't housed entirely in one discipline."

While an undergraduate, Morgan was heavily involved



in the Sexual Diversity Studies Student Union. She also founded and co-edited the *Undergraduate Journal for Sexual Diversity Studies* and worked with the Bonham Centre to organize a conference on religion, politics, and sexuality in 2006.

Despite her outgoing nature, one of Morgan's most fulfilling experiences was a task that's usually solitary and unheralded: preparing an index. Morgan provided research assistance and wrote the index for former Bonham Centre director David Rayside's latest book, *Queer Inclusions, Continental Divisions*. "It was a really interesting process to think about how someone who picked this book up might conceptualize its contents just by looking at the index," says Morgan. "Is there a way to express your politics in an index? Is there a way to combat a bit of homophobia and all the 'isms' in an index?"

Morgan remains proud of her work on the undergraduate journal because the publication gives students a chance to participate both as writers and editors in the peer review and publication process. "As undergraduates, we are always navel-gazing and obsessing about how our thoughts are perceived by the authority in the class — the professor or the TA," says Morgan. "The journal allows students to work within

their own peer group and build value and respect for the work that is taking place right next to them and will continue to take place after they graduate. They can see how their own thoughts and ideas are contributing to their immediate community." The journal accepts submissions from students in all disciplines, allowing for diverse views and approaches to be heard and contrasted.

Morgan is looking forward to her move to L.A. after one more blustery Toronto winter. She says she plans to "bike up mountains, run from snakes, and figure out how to secure my antique egg collection from the earthquakes." Beyond that, she hopes to continue her work in fundraising and explore options for graduate school.

No one will forget Morgan's creative mind, her gregariousness, or her sharp wit. In leaving, she urges students to continue using their voices to contribute to the growth and diversity of the program. "Although SDS provides an important critical lens through which to examine sexual diversity, it is important that we don't become myopic," she says. "The program is not all-encompassing, nor should it be. It is necessary that students who are in other disciplines continue to challenge us to explore sexuality as well. We should not strive to work in isolation."

FAREWELLS TO ROBBIE

Robbie Morgan has single-handedly raised from the dead my sinking research projects. She is a force of nature, a whirling dervish, and just a great gal. I will miss her, terribly.

Adam Green

Asst. Prof., Sociology & SDS

Robbie has been an amazing public figure in the growth of SDS, but so much of what she has done was behind the scenes. The online student journal; our big conference on religion, sexuality, and politics; the development of the graduate program; the Integral House event — she was a central player in all that and more. I'm not sure I could have survived as director of the Centre without her.

David Rayside

Founding Director,

Mark S. Bonham Centre

Robbie has made a significant impact on our UC Alumni & Development efforts. She greatly expanded the student-alumni mentorship program, increased our annual giving campaign, and was largely responsible for the success of the Integral House event in support of SDS. We will greatly miss her wonderful sense of humour, her southern charm and enthusiasm. I have no doubt that her fundraising career will reach great heights.

Ken Aucoin

*Director of Alumni & Development,
University College*



In Brief

First Lynch lecture draws crowd

In October, more than 100 people attended the first annual Michael Lynch Lecture, organized by the Bonham Centre and made possible by a generous bequest from the estate of Roger Spalding. The inaugural event was titled “Trans, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: A Conversation With Viviane Namaste and David Valentine.” Namaste, a professor at Concordia University, and Valentine, who teaches at the University of Minnesota, discussed the relationship between sexuality and gender studies, as well as issues such as sexual re-assignment surgery. Both speakers’ careers have bridged academic and community work, making them particularly fitting choices for the lecture series, which honours the memory of scholar and activist Michael Lynch. The lively discussion was moderated by Nicholas Matte, a senior doctoral candidate in history who teaches Transgender Studies for SDS.

Riches of kings and queens

The Imperial Court of Toronto recently held a fundraiser for its Emperor I Sergio Apolloni Scholarship, which is given annually to an SDS student to recognize academic achievement. A total of \$1,200 was presented to the scholarship fund. The group’s College of Monarchs hopes to host a fundraising event at University College in 2009 to add more funds to the scholarship.

What’s new at SDSSU

The Sexual Diversity Studies Student Union has had a busy start to the year. Following elections held in November, the group welcomed Corina Tudor and Nikki Stratigacos to the executive. After last year’s successful conference, “Fetish: Working Out the Kinks,” SDSSU has begun planning for its second annual conference, to be held in 2009. The theme will be the role of government in the legal regulation of prostitution and

the sex industry. SDSSU is eagerly seeking input from members on programming, as well as volunteers for the conference and other projects. Check the SDSSU website at www.uc.utoronto.ca/content/view/309/1810 and join the Facebook group to stay in touch. SDSSU can also be contacted through the Bonham Centre at sexual.diversity@utoronto.ca.

CyberLit

If you missed the chance to see Queer CanLit: Canadian LGBT Literature in English, an exhibit held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library this past summer, you can still catch it online. View the exhibit in photos, and download the catalogue, at <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/16670>. The launch of the exhibit in June was attended by 180 writers and guests and featured readings by authors Wayson Choy, Shani Mootoo, and Shyam Selvadurai.

We Need Your Support!

To make a donation, or to discuss a planned gift to support the Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies and its students, contact:

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MARK S. BONHAM CENTRE FOR SEXUAL DIVERSITY STUDIES

Q & A: Paul Halferty



Paul Halferty

Paul Halferty is a student in the new collaborative doctoral program in SDS.

What has been your involvement with the Bonham Centre and with Sexual Diversity Studies?

I became involved with SDS in 2006 as a member of the Steering Committee, and as a co-organizer — with fellow graduate student Andrea Laing Marshall and Professor Adam Green — of the SDS Faculty and Graduate Colloquium series.

What is your area of study? What are your plans beyond graduation?

I am at the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama. My dissertation, tentatively titled “Queer Theatre Communities,” focuses on representations of gay men in Canadian theatre from the late 1960s to the present. It primarily concerns how queer playwrights have represented gay identities and communities onstage, and makes the argument that theatrical

performances of homosexual “identities” and “communities” are often marked by an ambivalence about the very social categories they represent. This is to say that gay male sexual identities in theatrical performance are characterized by dramaturgical conventions that simultaneously assert and question, posit but decentre, gay identity. I hope to be finished by the end of next year. After that, I would love to be fortunate enough to do a post-doc, or teach.

What’s one of your most memorable experiences related to SDS?

In the summer of 2007 I aided David Rayside and Robbie Morgan with the various applications and paperwork necessary to get the new collaborative graduate program underway — work which had been carried on by many Steering Committee members in previous years. I was then part of the first graduate seminar, taught by Mariana Valverde, which became the program’s core course this year.

Being a part of the planning, the execution, and then being able to benefit from the program itself has been a tremendously satisfying experience.

What are the strengths of the new collaborative graduate program?

There is a real trend toward interdisciplinarity in the academy; this program increases U of T students’ options for learning in such environments. It will allow them to acquire knowledge and skills through interactions with peers and faculties outside their own discipline, giving them a unique experience that will benefit them in their pursuits beyond U of T.

What would you tell someone about SDS if they knew nothing about the program?

That it’s a warm, vibrant, and intellectually rich place for anyone interested in the study of sexuality from almost any vantage point. And our end-of-year parties are also the most fun.



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