HUMANITIES

George Saunders G’88, professor of English, has won the Man Booker Prize for his debut novel, “Lincoln in the Bardo” (Random House, 2017). He is the second American to claim the London-based award, one of the most prestigious of its kind in the world. Saunders also is the writer and executive producer of “Sea Oak” (based on his short story from 2000), starring Gloucester born and raising actor Andrew Lincoln.

Diana Spilota, associate professor of humanities, has won both the St. Francis College Literary Prize and the American Academy of Arts and Letters’ John Udzike Award for her latest novel, “Innocents and Others” (Scribner, 2016).

David Yaffe, assistant professor of the humanities, is the author of “Reckless Daughter: A Portrait of Joni Mitchell” (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017). An instant “National Bestseller” in Canada, the biography has topped multiple sales categories on Amazon.

Sydney Hutchinson, associate professor of music history and cultures, is the author of “Tigers of a Different Stripe: Performing Gender in Dominican Music” (The University of Chicago Press, 2016). A finalist for the 2017 Central New York Book Awards, “Tigers” also has won the Society for Ethnomusicology’s Marcia Herndon Prize (Gender and Sexualities Section).

Tej Bhatia, professor of linguistics and Hindi, is the newly elected president of the International Association for World Englishes (IAWE), and is the newest member of the Editorial Advisory Board of IAWE’s journal, World Englishes. This winter, he is a visiting research professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Bhatia recently organized and chaired IAWE’s international conference at Sydney, attended by more than 200 presenters from 35 countries.

The Phyllis Backer Foundation, chaired by Leonard E. Blumen ’52, has established the Phyllis Backer Professorship of Jewish Studies. A national search is underway for a teacher-scholar fluent in Jewish history, religion, literature, philosophy, language and politics.

The Democratizing Knowledge Summer Institute is preparing for its 2018 program at Atlanta’s Spelman College. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Institute brings together professors and graduate students from all over the world to examine the concept of “Just Academic Spaces.” Previous institutes took place at Rutgers University (2013) and Syracuse (2016).

“Belonging” is the theme of this year’s Syracuse Symposium, organized and presented by the Syracuse University Humanities Center. Upcoming headliners include social activist Leila Lakhmi Fezane-Samaraiwa, Teatro La Marla, singer Tracy Hammitt and activist Librarian Jenna Freedman.

SCIENCE/MATHEMATICS


Mary Karr, the Jesse Truesdell Peck Professor of Literature: “Tropic of Squaro” (HarperCollins, 2018).


GREGG LAMBERT, Dean of the Humanities and director of the Central New York Humanities Corridor: “Philosophy After Friendship: Deleuze’s Conceptual Persona” (University of Minnesota Press, 2017).


Seduna Soleniu, assistant teaching professor of Italian language, literature and culture; “Ideas: Reflections on Dante, Gramsci and the Common Sardarini” (EDES, 2017).


Peter Saulson (top), Duncan Brown (middle) and Stefan Ballmer (bottom), professors of physics, have made scientific history with their role in the discovery of two colliding neutron stars. When the stars slammed together about 1.30 million years ago, they generated a gravitational-wave signal that was observed by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) and Virgo detectors. Such collisions have created most of the gold and platinum in the universe.

The trio also helped discover gravitational waves, which garnered this year’s Nobel Prize in Physics. They co-lead Syracuse’s Gravitational-Wave Astronomy research group, part of the worldwide LIGO Scientific Collaboration.

Ryan Fisher, research assistant professor of physics, belongs to a multi-institutional effort at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, assisting with LIGO’s cyber-infrastructure. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded him nearly $750,000 to sustain and enhance the LIGO Data Grid, used by LIGO researchers to perform data analysis of gravitational-wave observations.

Cristina Marchetti, the William R. Kenan Distinguished Professor of Physics, is a newly elected member of the Commission on Statistical Physics, part of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.

Lisa Manning, assistant professor of physics, is the 2018 recipient of the Maria Goepert Mayer Award, an early-career award from the American Physical Society. Manning is a soft-matter expert who studies cell motility and mechanics in biological tissues, as well as the failure of disordered materials.

Marina Artuso, professor of physics, is overseeing the construction of a new detector for the Large Hadron Collider beauty (LHCb) experiment. Known as the Upgrade Tracker, the device will enable the LHCb experiment at CERN’s Large Hadron Collider—the largest, most powerful particle accelerator in the world, located in Geneva, Switzerland—to search for new fundamental forces.

Mitchell Soederberg (top) and Denver Whittington (bottom), professors of physics, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility (LBNF) in South Dakota. LBNF, which is part of the Sanford Underground Research Facility, will house the nation’s largest experiment devoted to the study of neutrino properties.

Timothy Korter, professor and chair of chemistry, is a newly elected fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry for his contributions to the advancement of terahertz spectroscopy in the chemical sciences. Such work has applications ranging from drug formulation optimization to explosives detection.

Ivan V. Korendovych, associate professor of chemistry, is using a $1.8 million grant award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to help treat neurodegenerative diseases, combat drug resistance and develop drugs for influenza and hepatitis C.

Carlos Castañeda, associate professor of biology and chemistry, has received an NSF CAREER Award to study how proteins self-assemble into “membranless” liquid droplets. He also has won a major grant from the ALS Association to study the protein UBQLR1 in Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig’s disease.