

History Lesson



Readers of the Gettysburg Address were, *left to right*, Tracy Fortmann, Rowena Tchao, Claire Bauer, Rosalba Pitkin, Bill Charles, Tim Leavitt, Julie Eddings, Bill Ritchie, Pat Jollota, Lisa Gibert, and Sirius Bonner.

Four score and five people attended a recitation of the Gettysburg Address on November 19, the 150th anniversary of that famous speech's delivery by President Abraham Lincoln. The event, which was organized jointly by Clark College Mature Learning and the National Park Service's Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (FVNHS), took place in Foster Auditorium.

The event was part of the Learn the Address project, an effort by documentarian Ken Burns, along with numerous partners, to encourage Americans to video record themselves reading or reciting the address.

Eleven different presenters recited lines of the speech: Vancouver Mayor and Clark alumnus Tim Leavitt, Clark College Foundation President and CEO Lisa Gibert, Clark College Assistant Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education Kevin Kussman, Fort Vancouver Superintendent Tracy Fortmann, Clark College Special Advisor for Diversity & Equity Sirius Bonner, Skyridge Middle School student Claire Bauer, Mature Learning student Bill Charles, Northwest Indian Veterans Association Color Guard member Julie Eddings, Crossroads Community Church pastor Bill Ritchie, Clark College Diversity Outreach Specialist Rosalba Pitkin, Clark College Foundation

Annual Fund Specialist Rowena Tchao, and Clark College Mature Learning instructor and Clark County Freeholder Pat Jollota.

The program also included period Civil War music by “Illinois” Doug Tracy; a presentation of the colors by the Northwest Indian Veterans Association Color Guard; lecture on Lincoln by Mature Learning instructor Dr. Elliott Trommald; a lecture on Fort Vancouver’s role in the Civil War by Tracy Fortmann; a welcome by Clark College Vice President of Administration Bob Williamson; and the reading of a Walt Whitman poem by Clark College Trustee Royce Pollard.

“This program is one of several this year that we are doing in a partnership we have inaugurated with the National Park Service and Fort Vancouver National Historic Site,” said Mature Learning Manager Tracy Reilly Kelly, who emceed the event. “Our co-programming will focus on history and archaeology.”

Reilly Kelly added that FVNHS staff had told her that they appreciated that Clark College President Bob Knight made it back from China just in time to attend that evening’s launch of the Fort’s new exhibit, “The Civil War in the West: A New Birth of Freedom.”

Story submitted by Tracy Reilly Kelly

Photo: Clark College Mature Learning/Don Gardener

The End of an Ara



Ara Serjoie bids a heartfelt

farewell to the Penguin
Nation.

More than 100 guests gathered to say goodbye to Clark College Foundation's Ara Serjoie, who has accepted a position in California, and to share funny and touching memories of their relationships with him during an August reception at Gaiser Student Center.

Jan Oliva, a philanthropic partner of Clark College and community leader, called Serjoie a visionary who excels at inspiring others to give of their time and treasure. "You cannot say no to Ara," she said. "He has a vision and shares it with everyone."

Oliva also expressed what many in the room had experienced: Serjoie's genuine compassion for others and deep belief in the mission of Clark College has left a legacy at the college.

Jeanne Firstenburg, also a major donor to Clark College, said Serjoie has become a personal friend whom she will greatly miss.

Serjoie, senior vice president at the foundation, announced his departure to California State University, East Bay, in Hayward, Calif., in June. He will serve as the vice president for university advancement and president of the foundation.

Bob Williamson, vice president of administrative services at Clark College, said, "The era of Ara is over, but he will be more than remembered: He's a legacy. We are a better place for Ara being here."

Williamson referred to several facilities and programs on campus that have been created or enhanced due to Serjoie's fundraising adeptness and strong community relationships: the Oliva Family Early Learning Center, Little Penguins' Gardens, Firstenburg Family Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center, and Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy, as well as many

student scholarships.

Greg Wallace, Clark College Foundation Board of Directors chair, called Serjoie a “remarkable talent,” adding, “Ara has a quick wit, he’s engaging, very bright and he knows everyone from the region and remembers each of them.”

Lisa Gibert, president and CEO of Clark College Foundation, said that when she was searching for a vice president of development seven years ago, she was looking for a partner who would work side-by-side with her. “I needed someone who could bring the foundation to a new level and could teach me about the amazing world of development,” she said.

She said she found that and more in Serjoie: “He has my deepest respect and admiration. The community holds the college in high regard because of his professional ethics, responsibility to philanthropy and his unwavering belief in the mission of Clark College.”

When Serjoie rose to speak, he said, “This evening is not about me; it’s about you. It’s about the students and the wonderful work faculty members and staff do every day in service to our students.”

Then, with tears in his eyes, he said, “All of you have been kind to me over these past seven years, and for that and more you are forever in my heart.”

Photo: Clark College Foundation/Rhonda Morin