

College mourns loss



Lora Whitfield, *second from left*, celebrates receiving tenure in 2017 with her Early Childhood Education colleagues Debi Jenkins, Michelle Mallory, and Sarah Theberge. Whitfield passed away in July 2019.

Clark College lost a beloved member of their community on July 9, when early childhood education professor Lora Whitfield passed away.

“She was kind, warm, and supportive of those around her,” said Vice President of Instruction Sachi Horback.

Whitfield’s connection to Clark went back to her own days as a student, when she attended the college to earn her associate degree in early childhood education in 2002. Whitfield went on to have a successful career in the field, working for both the Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium and Albina Early Head Start. She earned her master’s degree in human development with a specialization in early childhood education

and bicultural development from Pacific Oaks College in Seattle.



Lora Whitfield, *second from right*, stands with students and colleagues at this year's Commencement. *Photo courtesy of Rashida Willard.*

In 2014, Whitfield returned to Clark College to teach. She received tenure in 2017. At the time, she offered this statement on her teaching philosophy: "As an educator, I am committed to treating each individual with respect. I believe respect is paramount in creating environments that promote students' ideas, passions, and interest in a meaningful and organically wholesome way. I strive to provide settings where everyone can share their ideas without bias and be included in all aspects of learning."



Lora Whitfield, right, celebrates at Commencement with Interim Associate Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Rashida Willard. *Photo courtesy of Rashida Willard.*

Whitfield, who identified as Afro-Caribbean, was the second Black woman to receive tenure at Clark College. She actively worked to create networks of support for colleagues and students of color, participating in both the statewide Cross-Institution Faculty of Color Mentorship Program and Clark's Black Employees United Employee Resource Group. "She was an absolute joy to be around," recalled Interim Associate Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Rashida Willard. "She had a hilarious sense of humor and always made her work family laugh."

In addition to her work fostering inclusion, she was an active leader in her field, participating in the Clark College Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Council, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

On his last day as president of Clark College before his retirement, Bob Knight recalled his memories of Whitfield. "Because Lora began as a student at Clark College, she could relate very closely to the student experience," he wrote in a July 15 email to all college employees. "This made her a gifted instructor. She made Clark College a better place."

Services for Professor Whitfield have been scheduled for Saturday, July 20, with a viewing between 9:30 am and 10:00 am. The service will be from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The location will be at City Harvest Church at 8100 NW 9th Street, Vancouver, WA 98665. Funeral information will be on the Terry Family Funeral Home website.

Jim Archer, 1942-2017



Long-time art faculty member and gallery director James “Jim” Archer passed away on Tuesday, November 28. He was 75 years old.

Archer grew up in Vancouver and received his Associate of Arts degree from Clark College before going on to earn his Bachelor

of Arts in graphic design from Portland State University and his Master of Fine Arts from Washington State University. Afterward he returned to Clark College to teach. In addition to serving as gallery director, Jim taught art and art history at Clark College for 23 years.

Archer originally became curator of Clark's art gallery in 1982, when it was still located within the Clark College Bookstore and was called the Index Gallery. Successful in attracting well-known Northwest artists, the Index Gallery became known as one of the region's top alternative venues for contemporary artists. Archer announced his retirement in 1995. That same year, the gallery—which by then had been relocated to a larger space within Gaiser—was renamed in Archer's honor. It moved to its current location in the lower level of the Penguin Union Building in 2005.

In 2016, Archer donated much of his private art collection to Clark College; selected works from the collection were shown in the gallery that bears his name, in an exhibit called "Archer @ Archer."

Current and retired art faculty joined together to issue the following statement about their colleague's passing:

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Jim Archer. Jim was the first director of the Archer Gallery, a position he held from 1982 to 1995. He established the traditions and mission that are central to the Archer Gallery. Under his direction, the gallery quickly gained a regional reputation for exhibiting emerging Northwest artists due to his prescient eye for recognizing young talent. Through the next several decades, significant regional artists could point to their initial exhibition in the Vancouver-Portland metro area at Clark College's Archer (formerly Index) Gallery.

Jim was a passionate, sometimes fierce, man with strong

opinions. The gallery exists in its present form because of the battles that Jim fought to shape it. All of his strength and determination was needed for his struggle with AIDS. Jim was diagnosed with HIV in 1987 and AIDS in 1994 before medications had been developed to manage the disease. In the winter of 1995 Jim became dangerously ill but survived and became an early successful recipient of the AIDS drug cocktail. The dignity, resolve, and humor with which he handled the treatments and advancing illness was inspiring. He never yielded to his illness and continued to live and enjoy life fully.

After his retirement from Clark in 1995, Jim continued to champion young artists: collecting work, visiting studios, and curating exhibits – including “Next/Now” (Littman Gallery, Portland State University) and “Modern Zoo” (St. Johns, Oregon).

Jim returned to his own studio work after retirement creating and exhibiting collage and painting on paper. Both his work and his art collection (much of which was donated to Clark College and the Hallie Ford Museum at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon) were featured in “Archer@Archer” in 2016.

Jim was a great friend, father to Stephen and Peter Archer, and Grandfather to Isabella (Bella) Archer.

There will be a memorial service on December 16 at 6:00 p.m. Holladay Park Plaza (1300 NE 16th Ave., Portland, Oregon), the retirement community where Archer lived until shortly before his death. Time and details are still being determined by the family; this article will be updated as details become available. The Archer Gallery is collecting cards and letters to give to the family during the service.

This article was updated 12/6/17 to reflect the new date of the memorial service. It was updated again on 12/11/17 to include the time of the service.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley