

FKCC establishes “Seize the Clay” arts endowment, dedicates landmark fountain to late Artist-in-Residence Jay Gogin



FKCC President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra and ceramics assistant Bruce Berkowitz unveil the dedication of the College's "Essence of Life" fountain to Jay Gogin, ceramics instructor of 24 years, during the "celebration the life" in his honor on June 30.

KEY WEST, FL, July 2, 2014— Two major announcements highlighted the “Celebration of Life” held Monday evening to honor Florida Keys Community College’s late artist-in-residence Jay Gogin: the establishment of the “Jay Gogin ‘Seize the Clay’ Arts Endowment” and the dedication of the College’s marquee fountain to the ceramics instructor of nearly a quarter century.

A mass of current and former students, colleagues, friends and fans of the popular teacher gathered in the Tennessee Williams Theatre lobby on the Key West Campus to pay homage to the “Hairy Potter” who passed away on June 13. Bruce Berkowitz, a former student who later became Gogin’s assistant shared memories of the legacy Gogin created as well as Lynne Bentley-Kemp, a fellow artist and instructor.

College President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra proclaimed the dedication of the “Essence of Life” fountain to Gogin by unveiling a depiction of a bronze plaque that will be mounted in front of the landmark that resides in the heart of the Key West Campus. The announcement came moments after a video which featured clips of Gogin discussing his vision of working with clay and water and the experience of constructing the fountain alongside his students.

“It is a symbol of his talent, dedication and indelible impact on the College, its students and the community,” said Gueverra of the crown piece of the dozens of ceramic murals, sculptures, pots and vases that provide the campus its signature aesthetic.

Long-time FKCC supporter Mike Dively, who was an avid student and friend of Gogin’s, spoke to the crowd via Face Time from his home in California. He hailed Gogin as a visionary with a “why not?” attitude that led him to pursue many of the activities for which he will be remembered—such as bringing world-class artists to the College, organizing educational trips for students to Japan and Europe, and introducing generations of young students to the art of pottery and kiln-fired pizza. In that spirit, Dively announced his contribution of \$5,000 to establish the “Jay Gogin ‘Seize the Clay’ Arts Endowment” in the FKCC Foundation and encouraged all friends and supporters to also “seize the clay in honor of Jay” with a donation to build the new initiative.

Funds generated through the endowment will enable the College to strengthen the arts courses and activities, which Gogin cultivated and valued so dearly. It will also allow the College to continue traditions started by Gogin such as presenting guest artists to educate, entertain and delight FKCC’s students and community at large.

Gueverra concluded the tribute by inviting the guests to tour the campus with the guidance of a map indicating the locations of the dozen major art pieces created by Gogin and his “Mud-Pi” students.

For more information about or to contribute to the “Jay Gogin ‘Seize the Clay’ Arts Endowment,” contact the FKCC Foundation at foundation@fkcc.edu or at 305-809-3531.

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