



A U T U M N 2 0 1 9

## Alumni Letter

It's a typically gorgeous fall in Santa Fe, which means that it's time for my annual letter to SAR's more than 1,700 alumni.

I continue to be gratified by the impact this small institution has in the scholarly and artistic worlds. Our Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Latino Studies fellowships were renewed for another three years, thus helping to sustain SAR's commitment to Latinx Studies. We've continued to expand our website, and we'll soon be launching the Indian Arts Research Center's eMuseum, bringing the IARC's collections to the world. In collaboration with the Vilcek Foundation of New York, the IARC is planning a major traveling exhibition of Pueblo pottery scheduled to open in 2022. We're hosting seminars on topics as varied as imperial politics, intergenerational epigenetics, and the changing nature of citizenship. Our regional profile has been raised by an ambitious series of public lectures that recently included a talk and salon discussion by journalist Nicholas Carr, author of *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*.

**News about SAR scholars and artists.** David Treuer (Ojibwe) drew a standing-room-only crowd to his talk about *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (Penguin Random House, 2018), a finalist for the National Book Award. A significant part of the book was written while Treuer was the 2015 Lamon resident scholar at SAR.

In April, former Weatherhead fellow Barbara King (professor emerita, William and Mary) presented a TED Talk on [animal emotions](#) that has already been viewed nearly 1.4 million times.

Kelli Jo Ford (Cherokee), a summer 2016 Indigenous writer in residence at SAR, received the 2019 Plimpton Prize for fiction from the *Paris Review* for her forthcoming book *Crooked Hallelujah* (Grove Atlantic).

Advisory board member Douglas Preston published a long-awaited article in the March edition of the *New Yorker*, "The Day the Dinosaurs Died." On October 23, SAR will present the Southwestern premiere of a new documentary film based on Doug's best-selling book *The Lost City of the Monkey God*. The next day, Doug and members of the research team will discuss the significance of the archaeological site, the controversies surrounding its exploration, and the process of developing the documentary film.

Finally, Jeffrey Gibson, SAR's 2008 Dubin Native artist fellow, has just been awarded a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant.

**Looking ahead.** Several of our upcoming public lectures and salons will focus on the future of work in a world increasingly dominated by artificial intelligence. We're also looking forward to talks by Glenn Shepard (Goeldi Museum, Belém do Pará, Brazil) on Kayapó use of new media, Ruth Van Dyke (Binghamton University) on Chaco Canyon,

and Leo Chavez (UC-Irvine) on Latino immigration. Future seminars include studies of “oikography” — the ethnographic documentation of the house and its social significance — as well as new research on human spiritual experiences.

**Staff changes.** Brian Vallo (Acoma), director of the IARC, resigned at the end of 2018 after being named governor of Acoma Pueblo. In that role he has testified before Congress and led the fight against fracking around Chaco Canyon, which Acoma people consider ancestral territory. Elysia Poon, longtime IARC education curator, was named [director](#) in September.

Sarah Soliz, SAR Press’s acquisitions editor, has been named SAR Press director, and we welcomed a new vice president for finance and administration, Alex Kalangis.

**Public communication.** We have just released the fifth issue of our newsletter, [SAR Now](#). We hope to distribute several short scholar videos and podcasts in the coming months. The [Guidelines for Collaboration](#), developed at the IARC with the help of many public and tribal museums, are featured in a new and expanded website that presents them in a more accessible form.

**Advancement news.** This fall we begin a fund-raising initiative focused on expanding the IARC facility and SAR’s programs. During the initiative’s first phase we are dedicating resources to campus improvements: renovating residences, repaving walkways, and upgrading the landscaping that makes the SAR campus unique and inviting to scholars, artists, and the public.

As scholars and artists who have enjoyed all that the SAR campus has to offer, you know how integral this setting can be to a successful fellowship or residency. We hope that all those whose careers were advanced by their time at SAR will consider supporting the betterment of the campus and ensuring that the next generation of scholars and artists can further their academic and creative endeavors. This year I am personally offering to match the first \$5,000 received as part of our fall appeal, and it is my hope that the SAR alumni community pitches in to [meet this challenge](#).

We also want to continue to share important career achievements with your fellow alumni and the broader SAR community. If you’d like to see news about your professional accomplishments included in the rapidly expanding [SAR blog](#), by all means forward us the relevant information. We’ll do our best to see that it gets the attention it deserves.

Wishing you continued success in your endeavors,



Michael F. Brown  
President