

# CIIJ Newsline

WINTER 2005

## “Local Hero” No Stranger to Journalism Department *Cristina Azocar honored as part of American Indian Heritage Month*

**Matt Itelson**

Cristina Azocar's passion and pride for her Native American culture has shaped her career as an activist, scholar and mentor. The director of the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism (CIIJ) at San Francisco State University not only inspires students and colleagues, but also influences the way journalists cover communities of color.

Azocar was one of four “local heroes” honored at KQED Public Broadcasting's celebration of American Indian Heritage Month celebration Nov. 1.

“Cristina's perspective on Native American issues ... has increased my own understanding tremendously,” said Erna Smith, journalism professor and CIIJ senior director.

Smith, whose research focuses on race coverage and social justice issues, remembers Azocar in the early 1990s as a self-motivated SF State journalism student who stood out among her



CIIJ Senior Director, Erna Smith, left, poses with Dr. Cristina Azocar at the KQED American Indian Heritage celebration on November 1.

peers and developed a diversity guide for journalism teachers that is widely used.

Smith said Azocar is still the same loyal, dedicated person.

“She knew who she was, what she wanted to do with her life, and was always very grounded in her culture,” Smith said.

Azocar, also an adjunct assistant professor of journalism, considers her mentorship role most crucial, having benefited from CIIJ as a “directionless” student who almost changed her major.

“I think that we should all try to replace ourselves” to continue the cycle of developing future generations of top-flight journalists, Azocar said.

She now helps fill the shoes of her faculty mentors, including Smith, CIIJ founder and journalism Professor Emerita Betty Medsger, former CIIJ Director Jon Funabiki and American Indian studies professors Barney Hoehner and Elizabeth Parent.

Azocar completed her bachelor's degree at SF State in 1993. She earned a master's degree in ethnic studies from SF State in 1996 and helped organize the University's first Native American graduation ceremony. In 2002 she earned a doctorate in communication studies from University of Michigan.

A member of the Upper Mattaponi Tribe of the Powhatan Nation of Vir-

ginia, Azocar is also active in Native American organizations nationwide. She has done more than 100 workshops, lectures, presentations and panels on journalism education, and has published her work in academic and professional journals.

Her research and teaching focuses on how people of color are portrayed in the news. She is interested in exploring portrayals of the Upper Mattaponi Tribe in Virginia's mainstream media since the colonial era, a topic she first addressed in her SF State master's thesis.

Azocar's interest in diversity in news media was inspired by her long-time concern of Native American representation. Most coverage these days, centers on casinos, while key issues like sovereignty and cultural revitalization are overlooked, she said.

“Indians should try to have an impact on their own profession,” she said. “The role of Native American journalists is to explore issues in Indian country that are often ignored.”

## CIIJ Job Fair Draws Diverse Crowd

**By Donna Tam**

Recruiters and journalism students from across the country gathered at San Francisco State University for CIIJ's 16th annual Journalism Job and Internship Fair on Oct. 18.

Among the 31 news organizations participating were major daily newspapers; The Seattle Times, The Boston Globe and The Dallas Morning News, smaller local publications; El Tecolote and Marin Independent Journal, and VoIP Magazine. “I like that CIIJ always manages to get diverse papers from different parts of the country,” said Kristi Dyes, SF State journalism major. “It makes me feel like I can go anywhere if I am qualified.”

The event started with students showing up as early as 8 a.m. to meet with recruiters, and wrapped up at 5 p.m.

For many students this was their first job fair. However they still managed to impress many of the recruiters with their resumes, clips and portfolios.



Contra Costa Times Assistant Managing Editor/News Operations, Bob Nishizaki (right), critiques the clips of Timothy Martin at the 16th annual CIIJ Journalism Job and Internship Fair.

Several recruiters said the students were well-prepared.

“The CIIJ Job Fair is always a stimulating experience for me as an interviewer,” said Scott Faust, the executive editor of the Salinas Californian. “I go with the expectation of finding good candidates, and I am never

disappointed.”

The job fair gives students the opportunity to make connections with professional journalists and improve their interviewing skills.

Since the event, Marie-Pierre Bac, a senior at SF State, has been reporting for El Re

## CIIJ's Prestigious Anniversary Bash

**By Poh Si Teng**

Prominent national and local news organizations, Bay Area news anchors, reporters, philanthropists and newsmakers are expected to grace the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism's 15th Anniversary Fundraiser in February.

CIIJ will be celebrating its 15th year in promoting diversity in newsrooms and reporting.

The anniversary dinner is part of CIIJ's efforts to match the \$38,000 Challenge Fund for Journalism, administered by the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, The Ford Foundation, and The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Funds raised will help CIIJ produce top-notch journalists and programs for many years to come.

CIIJ founder and former SF State department chair Betty Medsger is the guest speaker for the fundraiser. The emcee that night will be Yumi Wilson, San Francisco State journalism professor.

**The dinner will be held Feb. 1, 2006 at the Seven Hills Conference Center at San Francisco State University. To sponsor a table or purchase an individual ticket, please contact CIIJ at (415) 338 – 2083.**

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# Scholarship Highlights My Responsibility As A Filipino American

By Kristofer Noceda

To be awarded a Maria Elena Yuchengco Memorial Journalism Scholarship has given me confidence to move forward with my journalism career as a Filipino American.

Mona Lisa Yuchengco – former publisher and editor of Filipinas Magazine – created the annual scholarship through the Asian Pacific Fund in honor of her late sister. The scholarship's purpose is to provide educational opportunities for Filipino American students to pursue journalism as a major and career.

I have often questioned whether or not journalism is the right career path for me. I love writing and enjoy the whole reporting process, but there are not many Filipinos in the industry I can look up to and identify with.

I do not view receiving the scholarship as a simple means of financial



PHOTO BY CRAIG YOUNG  
Kristofer Noceda listens to KTVU Channel 2's south bay bureau chief Lloyd LaCuesta talk about his journalism experience and the future of the news business.

gain. Rather, I see it as an invitation to help increase the representation of Filipinos in newsrooms.

Caroline Perez, a 2004 Maria Elena Yuchengco Memorial Journalism Scholarship recipient and former CIIJ Assistant Program Manager, is doing her part in creating news stories about Filipinos.

When Perez first became a Chips Quinn intern for Florida Today this summer, she noticed a lack of Asian or Filipino issues being covered in the newspaper.

Currently a multimedia producer for Florida Today, Perez wrote and produced a multimedia feature story on Andy Zavalla teaching Filipino Combat Arts in Florida.

"Even though Filipinos make up 0.4 percent of our county's population, they should still have a voice in the newspaper," she said.

Knowing how important it is for under-represented communities to have a voice and be recognized in the news, I have made it one of my career goals to increase coverage of Asian American communities.

I thank the Asian Pacific Fund and Mona Lisa Yuchengco not only for their financial support, but for also helping me realize I have a responsibility in this industry as a Filipino American journalist.

## Norcal Conference Turns Up the Heat

*Speakers, workshops and contests, put community colleges to the test*

More than 300 students, faculty and volunteer speakers converged at San Francisco State University Oct. 22 for the Journalism Association of Community Colleges' annual Norcal Conference.

The event drew 290 journalism students and faculty advisers from 24 community colleges in northern California. Twenty four speakers and workshop presenters spoke on topics ranging from news writing basics to next-generation journalism.

Doris Owyang, the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism's program director, welcomed the guests to SF State and provided logistical support for the day-long conference that featured workshops, contests, meetings and an award ceremony.

Keynote speaker Nanette Bisher, creative director of the San Francisco Chronicle and past president of the Society of Newspaper Design, enlightened the audience of future journalists and journalism educators with her speech on how to create reader-friendly news products for an audience that increasingly carries web-enabled cell phones in their pockets rather than newspapers under their arms.

San Francisco State University journalism professors John Burks, Rachele Kanigel and Yvonne Daley were among the presenters of 25 conference workshops. Educa-

tors from CSU Sacramento and Humboldt and San Jose state universities also participated in the journalism event, as well as news and public relations professionals from northern and southern California.

In addition to attending workshops, students also competed in eight on-the-spot journalism contests, participated in an organizational business meeting, and were honored at an awards ceremony that highlighted the best student work in more than 30 categories of writing, photography, editing and design.

CIIJ has hosted the Norcal Conference since 2001. San Jose State University sponsored from 1996 to 2000. Prior to that the conference rotated among community college campuses in northern California. The location of next year's conference has not been determined.

The JACC southern regional conference was held at CSU Fullerton Oct. 28 and 29. The annual statewide convention, at which CIIJ is a frequent participant, will be held at the Wilshire Grand in downtown Los Angeles March 30-April 2, 2006.

In April, JACC honored CIIJ Director Cristina Azocar at the 2005 annual statewide convention in Sacramento with its Distinguished Service to Journalism Education award for her support of JACC and community college journalism.

## CIIJ Job and Internship Fair Continues to Strive For Diversity

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portero, and has had internship offers from New California Media, and the Press-Enterprise in Riverside. She met recruiters from all three organizations at the job fair.

On CIIJ's website, students could view materials providing tips on preparing resumes, clips and portfolios as

well as information about the recruiters attending the event. On Oct. 5, Bob Nishizaki, assistant managing editor of the Contra Costa Times, spoke to students enrolled in SF State's publication classes about how and what to prepare for the job fair.

Martin Reynolds, assistant city editor for the Oakland Tribune recognized the importance of meeting

young journalists with diverse backgrounds.

"CIIJ provides a vital service to not only students, but the profession of journalism," he said. "Newsrooms must better reflect the diversity of society, and CIIJ's mission and execution is helping to lead that change."



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Founded at San Francisco State University in 1990 by Betty Medsger, the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism believes that accurate and responsible journalism reflects the changing demographics of the society it serves. We develop programs and conduct research aimed at recruiting, retaining and revitalizing journalists and journalism educators. We seek to make journalism more inclusive from the classroom to the newsroom.