

AFTER-WORDS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RETIREES OF THE
FOOTHILL-DE ANZA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



VOLUME XLX, ISSUE 10

WWW.DEANZA.EDU/FODARA

January 2026



Holiday Party 2025!

On December 11, 37 FODARA members and guests, dressed in festive holiday sweaters and tops, gathered at Three Flames Restaurant in San Jose to celebrate the holidays at our final event of the year.



The FODARA group gets ready to enjoy great food with great company at the Three Flames restaurant in San Jose.

The banquet room was warm and welcoming, beautifully decorated for the season with poinsettias and Christmas and Hanukkah napkins adorning each table.

Guests enjoyed delicious entrées of pasta, steak, and tilapia, along with assorted dessert bars, cookies, and coffee. One of the highlights of the event was the annual door prize giveaway. Once again, our FODARA “Prize Queen,” La Donna Yumori-Kaku, organized a table filled with assorted prizes generously donated by FODARA members. After checking in and receiving their name tags, each attendee who was not a board member received a raffle ticket, which they placed in a holiday gift bag next to the prize they hoped to win.

Toward the end of the event, La Donna drew a name from each bag and announced the prize winners. Prizes included See’s Candies, a Target gift card, tickets to Filoli and the de Young Museum/Legion of Honor, and a handmade wreath created by board member Janice Carr. In keeping with tradition, the beautiful poinsettias decorating each table were awarded to a lucky guest seated there. Thanks to the abundance of door prizes, everyone was a winner.



The table was so long that it was necessary to photograph both ends to see everyone!

When asked what they enjoyed about the annual event, Don Nickel shared, “I was the lucky winner of a handcrafted holiday wreath made by Janice Carr using native plants. The wreath adorned our front door, and we received many compliments from family and friends.” Mary Bennet added, “This was my first holiday party with FODARA, and it did not disappoint. I enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new ones. The meal was wonderful, and we even got to take home some delicious desserts. I also won a bottle of wine and a poinsettia, which I gave to Margaret Obenour.”



Melody stands ready to assist at the dessert table.

We hope to see many of you at our Valentine’s Day Wine, Cheese, and Chocolate Party on Thursday, February 12, from 3:00–5:00 p.m. at the home of FODARA Treasurer Barbara Illowsky. As a special treat, Barbara will also share a slideshow and stories from her recent experience climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in December.

We are currently looking for locations to host our annual St. Patrick’s Day Lunch on Thursday, March 12, as well as our holiday luncheon next year. If you have any suggestions, please text Linda Conroy at 408-966-5703.

Wishing you a happy and healthy New Year,

Linda Conroy
Member-at-Large

The Twelve Days of FODARA

(Sung as the last verse of The Twelve Days of Christmas)

On the Twelfth Holiday, FODARA gave to me -

- Twelve door prizes
- Eleven glazed donuts
- Ten board members
- Nine yummy pizzas
- Eight holiday napkins
- Seven wine bottles
 - Six fun events
 - Five newsletters
 - Four scholarships
 - Three popcorn bags
- Two hosts for board meetings
- ...And one FODARA President!

This parody was written by Linda Conroy and performed by Linda at a board meeting.

Our annual Valentine's Day event is coming!

It's that time of year again! Dry January will have ended and FODARA love is in the air! Please join us on February 12th, 3 – 5 pm, for our fourth annual wine, nonalcoholic drinks, chocolate, cookies, and cheese tasting. And if none of those options appeal to you, come join us for friendship! You may print the reservation form below, or find it here: <https://www.deanza.edu/fodara/calendar.html>

Barbara Illowsky recently returned from climbing Mt. Kiliminjaro in Tanzania and touring and volunteering in Uganda. From 2:30 – 3 pm, she will share a running loop of her pictures and answer any questions about her trip.

Note that here are different prices for wine drinkers and nonalcoholic drinkers. Come and join us!



What: Wine & Nonalcoholic Drinks and Chocolate Tasting!

When: Thursday, February 12, 3:00–5:00 pm

Where: Barbara Illowsky's house: 21363 Dexter Drive, Cupertino, CA

Bonus: Barbara will have a slide show looping from 2:30 – 3 pm of her recent climb up Mt. Kiliminjaro and trip to Uganda. She'll be happy to discuss the trip with anyone.

Please join us for this 4th annual FODARA event! Chocolates and a variety of wines and cheeses, along with non-alcoholic beverages, will be offered for tasting. Wear warm clothing—we will be in a heated building but with the garage door open for fresh air. Spouses, partners, guests, and designated drivers are happily invited, too!

Reservation form due by **February 5**

Retiree:

Phone/email (if new):

Guest(s):

Indicate number of choices:

Red wine only ___ White wine only ___ Red & white wines ___ non-alcoholic beverages only ___

Indicate number of people for each category:

___ Red and/or white wines: \$20 per person ___ Non-alcoholic beverages: \$10 per person

_____ \$10 FODARA 2025-26 membership dues (voluntary)

_____ Donation for FODARA scholarship fund (voluntary)

_____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Is this your first FODARA event? _____

Make check payable to "FODARA" and mail it along with this reservation form to Barbara Illowsky, 21363 Dexter Drive, Cupertino, CA 95014; for questions, contact Barbara at illowskybarbara@fnda.edu.



Transitions...



One of the best things about growing old are the transitions from one chapter of life to another. And so, in 2026, several of our FODARA Board Members who have each served 14+ years on the Board will be transitioning off. We are hoping that some new retirees will step up and volunteer to join this enthusiastic group and steer FODARA into the next chapter!!

Will you join us?

We'd like to keep FODARA going into the future. We provide a widely read newsletter, After-Words, coordinate events locally where retirees can join other retirees for fun and food and drink!! We also help students with our annual scholarships giving back to the field of education where we all spent a chapter of our lives. And, we have fun working together!

We'd love to train, mentor, and introduce you to the joys of FODARA.

If you are interested (even mildly), please contact ANY of our Board members OR simply contact our president, Mike Paccioretti, and he can answer questions. All of our contact information is on our website at <https://www.deanza.edu/fodara/board.html>.

-Cindy Castillo

Congratulations to the Following Recent FHDA Retirees:



- Patti Chan, Health Services, Foothill
- Cynthia Kaufman, Vasconcellos Institute for Democracy in Action, De Anza
- Kent Bradburn, De Anza Electrical, Central Services

From the Archives -

A. Robert DeHart



In 1987, De Anza College President A. Robert DeHart made his opening day speech to the faculty and staff, as he had done each fall for the past twenty years. During that speech, he took a moment to succinctly describe why he chose to work in the field of education:

“Through the years, I have attempted, not always successfully, to guide myself toward a meaningful, moral life by following two non-negotiable principles: knowing that I, as an individual, was making a difference and that my life and my actions belonged to the people. I believe there is no other occupation so well suited to following those principles as education.”

If there is a better summary of the life of A. Robert DeHart, it has not been found.

Born in 1924 in Bonner Springs, Kansas, Arla Robert DeHart and his family moved to Oklahoma and then to Whittier, California, in the early 1930s. He played basketball in high school and served three and a half years in the Navy during World War II. It was during his tour of duty in the Navy that he developed a focus on, and passion for, quality and excellence. He would continue to focus on excellence throughout his educational career.

After the war, Bob DeHart attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he completed a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering. He was then hired by UC Berkeley to lecture and perform research in the mechanical engineering field. It was during his stint at UC Berkeley that he was noticed by Dr. Calvin Flint. Dr. Flint had just been chosen as president of a new college in Monterey, and he hired DeHart to teach engineering, mathematics, and astronomy. Flint noticed DeHart’s passion for learning and leadership skills and quickly moved him into counseling, followed by administrative roles as Dean of Men and Dean of Students.

A dean at Monterey Peninsula College once received a complaint about Bob DeHart during the time that he was an instructor. DeHart played classical music in the engineering labs, to the dismay of some students. When interviewed by the dean, DeHart reportedly said that “engineering students need to know more than engineering and math.”

In 1958, Cal Flint was offered the position of first president of Foothill College. He brought his trusted associate, Bob DeHart, with him to Foothill as Dean of Students. In 1960, while working at Foothill, DeHart completed his Ed.D. in Higher Education at Stanford University. Three short years later, he was appointed Director of Research and Planning for the new district. It was this new job that placed him deeply into the planning and design of the second college, later to be named DeAnza.

Cal Flint had closely supervised the design and construction of Foothill College, but he now held large responsibilities as Foothill College president and district superintendent (later called chancellor). As a result, Flint handed the management of the design and construction of the second college to Bob DeHart. DeHart, with his constant focus on quality, took on this enormous responsibility with relish. He dove into every aspect of campus design, from architecture to landscaping, artwork, athletic

facilities, and community-focused amenities. By any measure, the completed campus was a resounding success. For many years after the college's opening, De Anza was sometimes referred to as "the house that Bob built."

Beginning in 1967 with an enrollment of about 5,600 students, Bob DeHart presided over a community college that briefly reached nearly 28,000 students near the end of the 1980s, making De Anza College the largest community college in the nation at that time.

During the quarter century that Bob DeHart was president, there were constant and numerous challenges to the stability and focus of the college. One such period occurred in 1970, when the U.S. military invaded Cambodia. A wave of protests swept college campuses across the country, with National Guard units mobilized on 21 campuses in 16 states. This unrest resulted in the deaths of four students and the wounding of nine more at Kent State University.

On May 5, 1970, hundreds of De Anza students gathered in the main quad to protest American involvement in Cambodia and the killing of four students at Kent State. The protest was held with the



Bob DeHart addresses students protesting at De Anza.

blessing of Dr. DeHart, who spoke briefly at the event. Among his comments was the thought that "we've just got to get off the theory that killing can save lives." After the peaceful protest, President DeHart canceled all classes for Thursday and Friday of that week. All faculty were invited to meet with Dr. DeHart on Thursday at 10 a.m. to discuss the situation. The decision to cancel classes came after a series of meetings and phone calls, ranging from concerned students to an equally concerned chancellor of the California Community Colleges.



Both U.S. and California flags were lowered to half mast in mourning of the students killed at Kent State.

Being the president of a large community college brought joys as well as stressful challenges. Dr. DeHart had been romantically involved with Reba Frobonny, a counselor at De Anza and, on December 29, 1978, they were wed. This occurred shortly after DeHart's doctors discovered a kidney tumor. Bob said that the illness brought the two closer together. He would be treated for cancer again after this first diagnosis.

Bob DeHart was firm, decisive, and action-oriented. A mid-1970s story in *La Voz* gave some readers the impression that he could be dictatorial. The story reported that DeHart announced there "will be a Native American Studies program next year." When questioned about that statement, Dr. DeHart explained that the funds for such a program were already budgeted, that student demand for the program was large, and that nothing should delay the new course offerings in the fall. Being responsive to students



The president of the college and the president of the student body learn how to affix the new parking stickers.

and a strong planner, Bob was simply pointing out that this program was ready to go.

During his twenty-five-year tenure at De Anza, DeHart achieved many firsts and received numerous awards. He supported the annual community event called De Anza Days, held in late spring and attended by more than 30,000 local residents. He served on the board of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, which for the first time set goals and directions for addressing technological and satellite communications needs for community colleges. In 1987, he helped establish the Community College Satellite Network during one of his sabbaticals and later served as chair of the National Community College Satellite Network. Eventually, he secured a grant to install a satellite uplink at De Anza, which was used to distribute educational content live from De Anza to audiences worldwide. De Anza had already been well known in the United States, but the satellite uplink helped place the college in the international spotlight as well. Under his leadership, De Anza was named one of the top five community colleges in the nation for "Leadership and Commitment to Teaching Excellence."

Both De Anza College and Bob DeHart continued to excel throughout the 1980s, and many believed that Bob would never retire. It is likely that he would have stayed longer at the college had he not been slowed by cancer. Dr. DeHart, who valiantly fought cancer since the fall of 1978, passed away on January 21, 1993, at his home in Cupertino, just eight weeks after he had officially retired.

His focus on excellence continues to inspire staff, faculty, and administrators at the college. Dr. DeHart put it best when he said:

"What each one of us does every day matters. Any time shoddy work is tolerated anywhere, at least one leaf on our tree dies, and maybe more. And when enough leaves die, a branch dies, and when enough branches die, excellence dies. And I truly believe that without educational excellence, our nation will surely decline."

Faculty Senate President Paul Setziol fondly recalled DeHart saying "If we're the best, God help the rest!"

"I never saw his mind in neutral," said John Lovas, a Language Arts instructor who knew DeHart for 27 years. "He was a problem-solver."

"De Anza students will benefit from Bob's outstanding visionary leadership for a long time to come," said Roy Hartenberg, 1993 President of the De Anza Associated Student Body. "Our student government has far more power than at any other community college in the state because he truly believed that students need to play a role in creating a successful academic environment."

"Dr. DeHart *was* De Anza College," said Mary Wallace Wheat, a trustee. "It was his heart and soul and dreams that went into it. You just cannot separate Bob DeHart from De Anza College."

- Marty Kahn

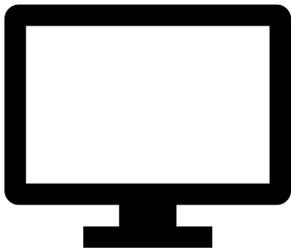


Caution!

We are passing along a message from the FHDA District Benefits Office that a retiree had reported being contacted by individuals presenting themselves in connection with retirement or financial matters. That retiree later expressed concern about potential fraud. While we are not aware of any confirmed wrongdoing, the retiree felt vulnerable and alarmed by the interaction.

We wanted to flag this as a reminder for retirees to be cautious about unsolicited calls, emails, or meetings related to retirement benefits, financial planning, or CalSTRS accounts. Retirees are encouraged to verify the legitimacy of any outreach, avoid sharing personal or financial information, and work directly with trusted, official resources when questions arise.

We appreciate your help in sharing this general awareness message with retirees to support fraud prevention and member safety.



And, a message from a Manager of Retirement Readiness in the Santa Clara County Office CA State Teachers' Retirement System:

We (STRS) do not call or email members to meet with them via zoom or in person.



Members can schedule a STRS benefits planning session (group or individual if qualify for one) calling our 800-228-5453, option 3 – to do so.

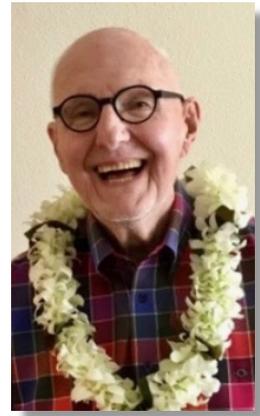
Members can come into our centers without an appointment to ask questions but not get estimates. We all want to keep our members and their money safe!





Doyne Mraz - Foothill College Drama Department

4/21/34 – 9/21/25



Doyne Mraz, along with colleagues Jack Ford and Dale Dirks, helmed the Foothill College Drama Department from 1967 until his retirement. Along with directing a full set of theatre classes, Doyne directed countless plays and musicals on the Foothill campus.

In the early 1970's, Doyne founded SummerRepertory, an innovative program presenting five, fully-staged productions in repertory with a dedicated company of actors.

“Dr.” Mraz wrote his doctoral dissertation on the women in Tennessee Williams’ plays, and in doing so, forged a working relationship with the playwright. As part of the 1977 SummerRepertory season, he directed a production of Williams’ *The Two Character Play*, with Williams present, involved and revising. He produced this new work in repertory with the Williams’ classic, *The Glass Menagerie*.

Doyne also founded a unique program at Foothill which extended the reach of the Drama Department into other major theatre companies in the community, providing participants with class credit and the theatre companies themselves with much-needed funding. Some of their productions came to the Foothill campus as a part of Foothill’s annual Summer Festival of the Arts.

In 1978 Doyne took an abandoned bus repair barn in Los Altos and created a community theatre which produced plays year-round. Originally named Los Altos Conservatory Theatre its first season opened with a production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Doyne ran the theatre, which he called L’ACT, for a dozen or more years before he retired from Foothill and with his wife Connie, moved to Ashland, Oregon. L’ACT continues today, known now as Los Altos Stage Company.

In Ashland, never content to really “retire,” Doyne continued to teach for a number of years at Ashland’s Southern Oregon University.

One of his former students, Kimily Conkle, now a highly-respected Bay Area dialect coach, wrote, “Doyne profoundly shaped my understanding of dramatic literature and the essential qualities of a theatre professional. His instruction and training aimed to prepare students for a life in the theatre.” He is missed by a legion of students for whom he was teacher, inspiration and mentor.

(This article was submitted by Jay Manley, who joined Doyne on the Foothill drama faculty in 1975 until his own retirement, and Scott Williams, one of Doyne’s exceptional students and later, long-time Foothill adjunct faculty member and South Bay theatre leader, before relocating to London, where he founded and leads Impulse Theatre Company, an actor-training program with international reach.)

Mia Park
De Anza College Real Estate Department

It is with a very heavy heart that I share the devastating news that adjunct faculty member Mia Park passed away on Nov. 27, following complications of a lung transplant surgery she underwent in 2019.

Mia was a dedicated member of the Real Estate Department at De Anza since April 4, 2005. Throughout her 20 years with us, she consistently demonstrated deep commitment to her students, colleagues and the Real Estate program. She was also a 22-year member of Intero Real Estate Services management team.



“Mia loved teaching and cared profoundly about her students. She brought warmth, positivity and exceptional dedication to everything she did,” said Manisha Karia, Ph.D., dean of the Business, Computer Science and Applied Technologies Division.

Even recently, Karia continued, Mia was working with Department Chair Mark Sherby—who was, himself, her student—to build new internship opportunities and expand support for De Anza students.

“She will be dearly missed,” said Karia.

In addition to being an active real estate agent, Mia also served as the director of Intero's Development Academy. Her final position with Intero was as the broker of record.

Mia earned a B.A. from Cal State East Bay in 1992 and an M.A. from the University of Birmingham in 1998. Born in Seoul, Korea, she migrated to the United States at an early age. She is survived by her parents and her three children.

Please join me in holding Mia's loved ones in our thoughts and celebrating a life well lived.

Omar



Omar Torres, Ed.D.

President, De Anza College

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FODARA CALENDAR 2026

Valentine's Wine and Chocolate	Thursday, Feb 12, 3pm	Treasurer's Home
Board Meeting	Tuesday, March 3, 1pm	Treasurer's Home