Words hold power.

They can heal and nourish, or they can challenge and dismantle. **They are a bridge**—the living tissue between my mind and yours, and a place where we can both live together in translation.

—Alberto Ríos
# The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing

## Annual Report 2020

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The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing: A unit of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences • Arizona State University • Annual Report: Academic Year 2019 - 2020 • Fiscal Year 2020 • Cover Photos: Mimi Snow Photography • miminewphotography.com • Cover and Book Design: Jake Friedman • JSF Literary • Staff: Alberto Ríos, Director • Dana Tríkle, Assistant Director • Angie Dell, Associate Director • Malik Torres, Education Programs Manager • Jake Friedman, Marketing and Outreach Specialist • Ashley Wilkins, Coordinator • M. McDermough, Coordinator, Outreach Programs • Kate Berke, Supervising Editor, Hayden’s Ferry Review • Charlie Mosley, Research Assistant • Ryan Koobs, Student Worker • Street Address: 450 E Tyler Mall, Tempe, AZ 85281 • Mailing Address: PO Box 875002, Tempe, AZ 85287 • Telephone: (480) 965-6018 • Fax: (480) 727-0820 • Website: piper.asu.edu • Email: pipercenterinfo@asu.edu
As we turn the page from this year to the next, all of us at the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing are reflecting on the moments that have brought us closer to our mission and to you, our community. We are grateful for the individuals and organizations who have worked alongside us, to the writers who have shared their voices and creativity with us, and to the challenges and transitions that continue to inspire us. We are experiencing radical growth as an institution and as a hub and a heart, drawing together and reaching out to the many individuals we serve.

It has been a busy, creative, and profoundly meaningful time. With new projects taking their exciting first steps and so much more on the way, I am filled with hope for what we can do in the wake of what we have done—all we can do, together, that has never been done before. We are building more and more outreach partnerships to better support writers within their own communities. The Thousand Languages Project translation database accepted its first interns this year and is generating new literary translations toward an exciting online launch. The center was recently awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support an extensive program series around Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House*, which will be hosted in Spring 2021 as a celebration of Indigenous arts and storytelling. To add to the excitement, our community is growing: the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference offered new scholarships and saw a boom in attendance, and closing our Fall events season, renowned children’s horror writer R.L. Stine spoke to a crowd of enthusiastic fans in our most highly attended event yet. Whatever lies ahead, we are committed to meeting the needs of those we serve, to finding new connections across great distances and differences.

Through this work, I have never been more confident in the importance of creative writing and communication. Words hold power. They can heal and nourish, or they can challenge and dismantle. They are a bridge—the living tissue between my mind and yours, and a place where we can both live together in translation. At the Piper Center, our deepest intention across everything we do is to connect in conversation, to share and learn from each other’s languages both personal and public.

I want to thank you for sharing your languages with us, and for inspiring our work. I also want to thank the dedicated Piper team and our many wonderful partner organizations for making all of this happen. And for making all of this possible, we are eternally grateful to Arizona State University and to the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

I invite you to join us this year for all we have planned, and reach out to us with ideas for what more we can do. We look forward to growing, adapting, and reimagining our programs with you in mind.
The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing is a dynamic community resource for storytelling and contemporary literature, serving the intellectual and artistic life of Arizona State University, the Phoenix metropolitan area, and the state of Arizona.

Who we are

**Our Historic Building**

Constructed in 1907, the Piper Writers House is one of three original buildings located in the heart of the historic quarter of campus, and has served Arizona State University for over 100 years as the residence of three university presidents, the Alumni Association offices, and the University Archives. Today, the Piper Writers House features offices for the center’s staff, a creative writing classroom, spaces for hosting events and receptions, and lush surrounding gardens that are perfect for reading, writing, and gathering.

Who is Virginia G. Piper?

Our center proudly bears the name of Virginia Galvin Piper, one of the most respected and influential philanthropists in the Southwest. Her charitable legacy has transformed the state of Arizona, and her life, values, and passion for the written word are at the heart of all we do. The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust founded the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing with a historic gift to Arizona State University in 2003. Today, the Trust is the largest private foundation in Arizona, enriching and improving the lives of people across Maricopa County through arts and culture, healthcare, education, and more.

What we do

As a center, we aspire to be a point of reference in people’s lives—a way of orienting oneself in relation to others, of finding a direction—by creating moments of individual, social, and cultural significance around creative writing and the literary arts.

In everything we do, we operate with a bias toward meaning. Committed to serving communities throughout Arizona with original, inspiring, and accessible events and programs, the center aims to:

- **Connect writers and readers** of all genres and backgrounds across multiple disciplines and fields of interest
- **Support writers at every stage of their development** by providing challenging, diverse, and accessible educational opportunities
- **Foster an active, engaged literary community** by enriching the Valley’s cultural life and thought
- **Drive a dynamic and creative environment** throughout Arizona and the entire Southwest
- **Encourage mutual understanding** through international artistic and cultural exchange
- **Make art integral to all our lives** and promote its value and benefits to the larger community in innovative ways
What a year!

Over the last year, the Piper Center has provided existing programs the space and care they needed to grow, and infused new initiatives with the goals, structures, and partnerships they needed to hit the ground running.

Looking to really dive in? Find descriptions and biographies for all events and speakers at piper.asu.edu/archive
From national bestsellers to your local community

The Distinguished Visiting Writers Series presents iconic writers alongside emerging voices for talks, readings, and other innovative and multi-genre literary engagements.

During the 2019-2020 season, the Distinguished Visiting Writers Series expanded its reach in the community through new program umbrellas and collaborations, including a growing partnership with the newly-renovated Burton Barr Central Library.

As the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing is committed to ensuring that all individuals have the ability to participate in the literary arts, these momentous events are always offered free and open to the public and are held in a range of community venues throughout the Valley.

During their visits, authors also host small workshops in partnership with the Piper Writers Studio, engage in intimate craft talks with undergraduate and graduate Creative Writing students, visit ASU classes, and participate in other activities that create more meaningful experiences for the writers we serve.

Learn more about the Distinguished Visiting Writers Series and see who’s coming to visit us next year at piper.asu.edu/visiting-writers

Literature brings us together
Writing connects us as human beings. Meet some of the writers who visited us last year.

Cutting across the politics of the border
Javier Zamora was born in El Salvador and migrated to the United States when he was nine—traveling unaccompanied for 4,000 miles and across multiple borders to be reunited with his parents. He is the author of the chapbook Nueve Años Inmigrantes/Nine Immigrant Years and Unaccompanied, a poetry collection exploring how immigration and civil war have impacted his life and family. Zamora’s writing confronts borderland politics on a profoundly personal level, simultaneously remembering and reimagining the country he left behind.

Interrogating our nation’s legacy of race
Danez Smith is a black, queer, non-binary, and HIV+ writer and performer, and the author of the award-winning poetry collections [insert] boy, Don’t Call Us Dead, and Homie. Smith’s poem, “dear white america” became a viral sensation for its resonant interrogation of white indifference. Homie, rooted in the loss of one of Smith’s close friends, is his latest achievement—a magnificent anthem about the saving grace of friendship, and the search for joy and intimacy in a nation where both can seem scarce.

Navigating the landscape of queer desire
Jake Skeets is Black Streak Wood, born for Water’s Edge. A Diné poet from the Navajo Nation, he is a 2018 National Poetry Series winner and the recent recipient of a prestigious Whiting Award. His debut poetry collection, Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers, is a dazzling excavation of queer Eros and an unflinching portrait of the American West—a place full of beauty, brutality, language, and landscape, and rooted in Navajo history and thought.

Empowering youth with radical creativity
Gabby Rivera is an outgoing, outspoken creator and activist invested in fostering better dialogue, inspiring radical creativity, and improving our most vulnerable communities. The author of A Great andTerrible Beauty, a critically acclaimed coming-of-age story starring a queer puertorriqueña, and the writer of the new Marvel series America, which features the first-ever queer, Latinx teen-girl superhero, Rivera encourages people of all backgrounds to create, daydream, and tell their own stories—and in so doing, open a radical space for creativity.
Supporting writers at every stage

The Piper Writers Studio offers a diverse array of creative writing classes, workshops, and other in-depth educational opportunities across multiple genres, subject areas, and levels of skill.

The Piper Writers Studio is dedicated to supporting and developing an active writing culture in the greater Phoenix area. Through a dynamic workshop approach that encourages innovation, improves craft and technique, and offers inspiring creative analysis, writers are guided and nurtured in developing the tools they need to meet their goals. Individual classes range in length, and are offered throughout the year in both face-to-face and online settings. Class sizes are intentionally kept small to ensure that each person’s work is honored with the care and attention it deserves.

Over the past year, the studio has continued to grow and adapt in response to the needs of the community, ensuring education remains accessible to writers—even from a distance. Innovative online courses serve remote students while in-person meetings and classes are on hold, and new syllabi and learning models are in development for the coming year.

Learn more about the Piper Writers Studio and browse upcoming classes and workshops at piper.asu.edu/classes

Everyone has a story

It’s our job to help them write it down. Meet some of our students from the Piper Writers Studio.

Salimah has always been a storyteller

Growing up in an immigrant household, “I was always making up stories and that kind of stuff to distract my sister from what was going on—just the classic story of what usually ends up for minorities coming to the US.” Though her demanding job at a construction firm has made it hard to keep the craft alive, classes with the Piper Writers Studio have helped Salimah find new momentum with her work, which includes a memoir about her grandfather’s involvement in the Civil War. “I would love to be able to add to that narrative from a Caribbean perspective. There’s a deep history that’s been covered up. It needs to be brought out.”

Lou got into writing by accident

After retiring from a long career in medical pathology, Lou decided he wanted to preserve the memory of his childhood for his own kids. “I just sat down and wrote right after my mom passed away and I said, gee, if I don’t do it now, when am I going to do it?” After self-publishing a social industrial history of the steel industry, Lou is currently working on a historical novel set in WWII. For Lou, the Piper Writers Studio keeps him motivated with new ideas and techniques. “The last time I had talked about writing a novel, nobody talked about close point of view. That was an eye opener. Now I’m very critical when I read stuff, too. The workshops are great.”

Yolatl found her place at Palabras

While Yolatl studied historical Spanish literature at Arizona State University, she wanted to find writers who were creating now. At Palabras, Phoenix’s only bilingual bookstore, “I felt like I could be myself in terms of culture and the way I saw the world. In a lot of other spaces, I was having to acclimate to the way people expected me to be.” Since her Piper Writers Studio workshop with Diné poet Jake Skeets, Yolatl has been reflecting on the body as land. “He really opened my mind to it. It was something I just hadn’t been able to verbalize.” Moving forward, Yolatl is considering MFA programs but wants to make sure she finds her voice as a writer first. “For now, I’m learning to have my writing be an expression of who I am at the moment. I feel like I’m at the beginning of a very awesome writing journey.”
The Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference is dedicated to the celebration and study of literary craft, culture, and community.

Desert Nights, Rising Stars is an opportunity for writers of all ages, interests, and levels of experience to gather in the spirit of continued learning. As a teaching conference, it covers both the craft of writing and the nuts and bolts of being a writer by offering practical advice for editing, creative and professional development, and navigating the literary marketplace. It is the Piper Center’s largest and most comprehensive event, bringing together over 350 writers for two days of connection, learning, and growth.

Learn more about the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference and meet our faculty for next year at piper.asu.edu/conference.

Teaching a class as a Desert Nights, Rising Stars Fellow was one of the most rewarding experiences of my writing career. I felt honored to be sharing my passion in this supportive community… an invaluable fellowship in the truest sense of the word.

Juhea Kim

Something for everyone
Alongside the main conference lineup, unique literary fair panels presented authors, publishers, and arts organizations in conversation with their communities. Readings showcased the talented voices of Arizona’s Poets Laureate, ASU’s graduate creative writing students, and our Veteran’s Writing Circle. Keynote author Ingrid Rojas Contreras spoke about memory and the power of story in recasting the world around us through the scope of her mother’s fight to create space for herself within a patriarchal curandero tradition. In addition, five advanced workshops were held to kick off the conference, providing deep instruction and author connections in poetry, literary fiction, and young adult fiction.

Nurturing the next generation
One of the most exciting features of the conference continues to be the Desert Nights fellowship program, which invites 20 emerging writers from around the world to teach alongside the core conference faculty. Additionally, graduate students in ASU’s Creative Writing program receive free access to the conference and are featured as moderators and presenters, gaining valuable professional experience and deeper engagement with visiting authors.

Access and inclusion
To reach as many writers as possible, the conference’s registration price has decreased over the last few years while the number of full scholarship opportunities for the conference has continued to increase. Scholarships support Arizona high school students, college students, and educators, and draw an array of national and international writers to the conference each year.

Sharing, Connecting, Learning:
Desert Nights, Rising Stars is more than a conference. It’s a community. Starting clockwise from left: faculty member Tracy Baptiste and a conference attendee keeping the enthusiasm up on day two; fellow Rogelio Juárez deconstructing the white gaze during his session, “Suspending Damage in Fiction”; and student scholar Camden Cook sharing her excitement at the conference’s opening ceremony. Photographs by Ryan Krebs (left) and Kevin S. Moul (right).
Communities are built from stories

Teaching artists, writing circles, and other outreach programs strengthen the tethers of local communities by connecting them with the tools and resources they need.

In recognition of the value of creative writing as a tool to build resiliency, the Piper Center has spent the last year revamping its outreach strategy. Aided by an online survey of participants, the center developed an array of new community connections and innovative programming, including key partnerships with the Office for Veteran and Military Academic Engagement, one-n-ten, and Creative Youth of Arizona. By creating a community-first approach, the Piper Center’s outreach programs have served and supported over 400 unique participants this past year. All community artists that teach for these programs are paid for their work, and are selected because they reflect the communities they serve.

Learn more about community outreach programs and explore possibilities for partnership and collaboration at piper.asu.edu/outreach.

Veterans Writing Circle

The veteran population of Arizona State University is approximately 7,200. With this in mind, the Piper Center teamed up with the university’s Office for Veteran and Military Academic Engagement to create a Veteran’s Writing Circle. The purpose of this space is to encourage veterans in sharing their stories, and build a community of support for veteran writers, no matter where they are in their creative journey. This program is veteran-led and veteran-focused. Headed by poet and ASU MFA alumnus Marco Piña, an Air Force veteran, each session is tailored around the participants to develop their skillsets and build supportive, long-lasting relationships.

Volunteers

Volunteers have always played a vital role in sustaining and supporting the Piper Center’s programs. This year, the center launched a large-scale volunteer program with 35 new participants. These volunteers serve as ambassadors for Piper programming and assist with events, tabling, and outreach throughout the year. With their help, the Piper Center has been able to host regular public “open hours”—designated drop-in times that allow for new connections to be made with the visiting community through tours, program outreach, and other forms of engagement.

In July of 2019, the Piper Center began partnering with one-n-ten, a community organization serving and empowering LGBTQ+ youth throughout the Phoenix area. The Piper Center enlisted poets Jabari Jawan Allen and Sean Avery to organize monthly writing workshops at two locations with one-n-ten youth. This year, a “superheroes” theme provided unique learning opportunities for the students. Each lesson focused on creating personal myths, and students learned about graphic memoir, storytelling, archetypes, and much more. This dynamic collaboration culminated in a comic book featuring student stories paired with art from a local comic book illustrator.

Community Outreach Programs

In this year’s partnership with Dunbar Elementary School, comic strip artist Ryan Quackenbush worked with 7th and 8th graders to create a superhero for South Phoenix, which was used as the basis for writing exercises and prompts.

Army veteran and film and media studies senior Sterling Williams shares his experience with facilitator and Air Force vet Marco Piña at the monthly Veterans Writing Circle, which was developed in partnership with ASU’s Office for Veteran and Military Academic Engagement. Photograph by Charlie Leight / ASU Now.

A Superhero for South Phoenix

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Army veteran and film and media studies senior Sterling Williams shares his experience with facilitator and Air Force vet Marco Piña at the monthly Veterans Writing Circle, which was developed in partnership with ASU’s Office for Veteran and Military Academic Engagement. Photograph by Charlie Leight / ASU Now.

Dunbar Elementary School

The Piper Center has been working with Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School for the past four years. Originally supported by an NEA grant, the Piper Center has evolved this partnership into an annual educational program offering bi-monthly creative writing curriculum to 7th and 8th grade students. This year, a “superheroes” theme provided unique learning opportunities for the students. Each lesson focused on creating personal myths, and students learned about graphic memoir, storytelling, archetypes, and much more. This dynamic collaboration culminated in a comic book featuring student stories paired with art from a local comic book illustrator.
Last year’s Creative Writing Symposium celebrated all the talent and hard work of ASU’s undergraduate writing community (like Kali Canedo and Kimberly Terasaki) with a reception, broadside show, and reading. Photographs by Fe-licia Zamora.

Fellowships

Virginia G. Piper Fellowships are highly-competitive, merit-based awards that fuel teaching exchanges, research, participation in residencies, presentations at conferences, and other projects and opportunities with a creative writing focus. Over the past year, the Piper Center awarded 11 Virginia G. Piper Fellowships to students in ASU’s graduate creative writing program, investing a total of $45,564 in funding to support their teaching, research, and creative projects. In addition, two faculty projects were selected for fellowship awards: Sarah Viren received $8,500 to support research on the impact and legacy of James Baldwin, and Saretta Morgan received $15,000 to support a project exploring Black representation and stories in the Southwest.

Mentoring

The Piper Center continued its successful mentoring program with eight pairs of graduate creative writing mentors and undergradu-ate mentees who collaborated on an array of projects and goals, including applying for graduate programs, workshop and presenting, publishing, and investing in their literary communities.

After the MFA

In partnership with the Creative Writing program’s Stellar Alumni Reading Series, After the MFA events invited current graduate students to lead panels and Q&A sessions with recent ASU graduates including Renee Sims, Dustin Pearson, Ayaş Papayata Bucak, Lauren Albin, and Sue Hyon Bae. After the MFA provides an opportunity for alumni to share advice, strategies, and resources to help the next generation of emerg-ing writers in their careers.

Other Programs

Graduate creative writing students are further supported with opportunities to teach Piper Writers Studio courses to the public; present workshops and moderate panels at the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference; and share their creative work at readings and other community events. As they prepare to graduate, the Piper Center also mentors students through the steps of developing research projects and proposals to help hone their skills in pursuing grants, fellowships, residencies, workshops, and other opportunities and funding as professional working writers.
Partnerships, projects, and other special events complement the Piper Center’s foundational programs and provide unique, engaging touchstones within the larger community.

This year, the center celebrated the launch and growth of new community initiatives, including the Thousand Languages Project translation internship, as well as branding and website development to support the project’s growth. The Imagination and Climate Futures Initiative continued its Everything Change climate fiction contest, aiming to reach audiences all over the world with examples of what the future might look like through the lens of continued climate change and action.

On a more local level, the Piper Center organized PhxLit-Serv—a new program and suite of resources dedicated to serving, connecting, and mobilizing Phoenix-area arts and culture organizations, and to encouraging collaboration and conversation among organizers within the local field.

Whether featuring the talent of local writers through an array of readings, literary salons, and mini workshops, or celebrating the work of community organizations through a vibrant street fair, or exploring social issues through the guiding lens of creative expression, the Piper Center is thrilled to present these new and continuing programs throughout the greater Phoenix area.

Learn more about our other programs and all the ways we’re serving the community at piper.asu.edu/about

When we speak, we speak to everyone

Over the last year, the Thousand Languages Project—an interactive database of creative writing drawn from the pages of Hayden’s Ferry Review and translated into many world languages—has grown from an idea to a reality. The Piper Center team oversaw design and web development in support of the project’s dynamic online translation database, and the internship grew to serve 4 interns dedicated to translating poems and stories from Hayden’s Ferry Review into Spanish over the course of the year. In the fall, Turkish will be added to the project’s included languages as well. Hayden’s Ferry Review interns digitized nearly 80% of the journal’s back issues in support of the project’s digital archive. The new website will launch this year with a coinciding Simultaneous Translation event, engaging community members in a conversational translation process stemming from a central text.

Hayden’s Ferry Review

Founded in 1986, Hayden’s Ferry Review (HFR) is the international, semi-annual literary journal curated by the MFA students in creative writing at Arizona State University. The journal publishes poetry, fiction, nonfiction, translation, art, and interviews by emerging and established authors, artists, and translators. Hayden’s Ferry Review published its 65th and 66th issues this year, receiving over 2,000 submissions in poetry and prose. Its presence has grown, as unique visitors to the website increased by 10.4% and page views by 17.3%. HFR offered student editors opportunities to interview accomplished authors like Danez Smith, Natalie Scenters-Zapico, and Hanif Abdurraqib while generating unique content for the journal’s blog. Next year, HFR aims to continue increasing its subscription base through institutional partnerships and an ethically-priced, subscription-included writing contest.

Changing literature for a changing world

Where science provides us with facts and figures, literature gives us empathy, heart, and vision. In partnership with ASU’s Center for Science and the Imagination, the Imagination and Climate Futures Initiative celebrated the second volume of our Everything Change climate fiction anthology, and opened applications to host a third contest and publication. Everything Change explores the future of our changing planet using the tools of speculative fiction and through the perspectives of writers from all over the world. This year’s contest is judged by Claire Vaye Watkins, author of Gold Fame Citrus, and seeks short stories that might help us imagine how humans can live within Earth’s planetary boundaries—both as individuals and as members of organizations, communities, societies, and civilization as a whole.

Hayden’s Ferry Review (HFR) has been publishing the best in poetry, short stories, essays, and more since 1986. “Woman Beneath Dogwoods” by E. Y. Smith served as the cover for issue 65. Read excerpts from the latest issue and HFR’s entire history at haydensferryreview.com

66 issues. 34 years.

The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing | 2020 Annual Report

Other Events and Programs

And so much more
You can’t have community without communication. Pronounced “Phoenix Lit Serve,” The PhxLitServ provides critical communications infrastructure and other spaces for the creative writing community to stay connected and develop relationships as they work toward common goals. In its inaugural year, the Piper Center launched a public Facebook group of over 650 members, a shared events calendar, semi-annual planning meetings, and an email listserv for 100 organizers and community members. This infrastructure provides a critical service to creative writing community organizers, allowing them to avoid scheduling conflicts, share resources, reach a wider audience, and find new opportunities to participate in and give back to their communities.

Meet Your Literary Community

Phoenix is the fifth largest city in the country, and home to a thriving literary scene. But for many writers and readers, the city’s sprawling geography can make it hard to find the events, connections, and opportunities they need to get plugged in. Continuing last year’s inaugural partnership with the Downtown Phoenix Farmer’s Market, Meet Your Literary Community connected over 60 local authors and organizations with over 1,000 community members through a miniatura literary festival featuring writing groups, book exchanges, pop-up poetry, and other interactive performances.

Write Here, Write Now

Presented in partnership with the Creative Writing Program at Phoenix College and Changing Hands Bookstore, Write Here, Write Now offers monthly pop-up workshops for writers to get inspired and develop their craft. In the program’s inaugural year, the center hosted six hour-long pop-up workshops for a total of 205 attendees. Highlights included radical memoirist Piper J. Daniels exploring the intersection of memory and history; Palestinian-American poet Fargo Tbakhi interrogating the revolutionary potential of poetry; and Nigerian godpunk author Suyi Davies Okungbowa presenting three different ways to think about plot.

Get Lit

Inspired by 18th-century salons, Get Lit is a night of spirited conversation and literary culture every first Thursday at Valley Bar. Among seven salons serving a total of 400 people, Phoenix Poet Laureate Rosemarie Dombrowski explored radical publishing in the age of digital media; Changing Hands buyer Michelle Malonzo examined the #ownvoices movement within the publishing industry; and Queer Poetry Salon organizer Tanner Menard shared how the arts can be used to mobilize community.

Film Screenings

Expanding our offerings, the Piper Center partnered with FilmBar, a local independent movie house, to screen four literary documentaries and films to nearly 400 people. Following the untimely death of legendary author Toni Morrison in September, the center featured seven screenings of Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am. Other films included the ninth season of Motionpoems, a series of short films commissioned in response to contemporary poems, as well as documentaries about renowned authors Ursula K. Le Guin and N. Scott Momaday from PBS’s American Masters Series.

Other Events

The Piper Center was also proud to present other events throughout greater Phoenix over the year:

• From Page to Stage: Fellow Travelers with the Arizona Opera and ASU’s School of Music and Center for Jewish Studies
• A reading and conversation around mass incarceration for the Iron City Magazine Issue 4 Launch
• The 3rd annual ASU Undergraduate Writers Showcase
• The Poetics of Borders, Race, and Capital featuring Wendy Trevino and Chris Neilson with Natalie Diaz
• The 3rd annual Piper Writers Studio Showcase
  • An open mic and reading featuring Phoenix Youth Poet Laureate Sareya Taylor (White Mountain Apache/Navajo), with Creative Youth of Arizona
  • a multi-genre Desert Nights, Rising Stars Fellows Reading
• City, State, Nation: Poets Laureate of the Southwest
Things we’re looking forward to

As the Phoenix metropolitan area continues to grow, we’re evaluating, reimagining, and changing right along with it.

We strive to fulfill our mission with integrity and heart, connecting more people than ever before with the power of creative writing and artistic expression.

With this aim in mind, the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing has big plans for the year ahead and is moving forward with a full event and program season, staying distanced and using online venues to keep our communities safe. New outreach and creative programs are on the way, new partnerships with celebrated writers will energize our communities, and new models for education and scholarship are poised to change the literary landscape. The Piper Center is committed to creating more opportunities and resources for the writers we serve, and we value your engagement and feedback as we grow.

Stay tuned across the center’s programs as an array of community initiatives take flight, and please let us know what we can do to adapt, and help you adapt, in these changing times. We think you’ll find inspiration and support in some of the programs we have planned, and we look forward to working with you to determine what’s next on our horizons. And how, together, we might find meaning and healing through the power of storytelling.

Learn more about everything we’ve got coming up for next year at piper.asu.edu/calendar.

The Distinguished Visiting Writers Series

As we continue finding new ways to come together amidst COVID-19, next year’s series features virtual visits from an exciting array of authors, including: Ilona Andrews, the pseudonym for the husband-and-wife team behind the #1 New York Times bestselling urban fantasy series Kate Daniels; Akwaeke Emezi, a finalist for the 2019 National Book Award and a rising star in young adult literature; and acclaimed science fiction author Nnedi Okorafor, whose screen rights were recently purchased by HBO for a series overseen by Game of Thrones writer George R.R. Martin.

The Piper Writers Studio

To keep meeting writers wherever they are, the Piper Writers Studio is developing a variety of innovative and adaptive online courses where community members will be able to connect with each other in real-time or work through readings and exercises at their own pace. More inclusive classes in the business of writing, science fiction, young adult and children’s writing, and experimental fiction will help writers find new audiences, stretch the limits of their imagination, and navigate the complex world of the publishing industry.

The Desert Nights, Rising Stars Conference

Continuing our larger transition to virtual events, the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Conference will be connecting with more people than ever before. Next year’s keynote is Beverly Jenkins, the recipient of a 2017 Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award from the Romance Writers of America, and Chickasaw poet Linda Hogan, whose honors include a Guggenheim fellowship, and an American Book Award. We’ll also be premiering a special sequence of sessions on the business of writing that will allow attendees to pitch their books directly to agents and editors.

Indigenous Literary Arts

The Piper Center is honored to be the recent recipient of a Big Read grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Through this generous $13,200 award, the center will partner with a network of community organizations and individuals to present a wide variety of talks, workshops, and other creative programs around the content and themes of Louise Erdrich’s The Round House, with a specific focus on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG).

Faculty Support

Presented with The College’s Humanities division and the Department of English, the Virginia G. Piper Fellow-in-Residence combines the artistic space of a traditional residency with the teaching and professionalization of an academic fellowship. In addition to teaching special topics workshops for undergraduate students, the Fellow-in-Residence will also lead socially embedded projects in the community.

Outreach and Other Programs

Earlier this summer, the Creative Justice Youth Symposium helped high school and college students develop creative writing skills in service to their communities. New educational partnerships with elementary and middle schools will bring creative writing curriculum and engagement to South Phoenix. Additionally, a growing community partnership with Equality Arizona will bring prominent LGBTQ+ poets to Arizona for quarterly open mics and workshops.

In partnership with the Phoenix Chorale, the inaugural Phoenix Commissions project will pair Phoenix Poet Laureate Rosemarie Dombrowski and Kira Zeeman Rugen, an ASU alum and the director of choral activities and musical theatre at Arizona Christian University, to create an original composition about the history of Phoenix.

Finally, the Thousand Languages Project website will celebrate its launch with a Simultaneous Translation Day where anyone can contribute their own literary translation to appear on the project’s website.
All for you

Thank you for inspiring our work and sharing your voices as part of this vibrant artistic community.

We hope you’ve enjoyed reflecting back on all of our work over the last year, and that you’ll continue to join us as we look ahead to the years to come. There are so many new initiatives and programs we’re leading in the community, and much more on the way. Your support has made this work possible.

Thanks to you, new scholarships, free workshops, and other forms of access are reaching more students, educators, and other members of the community. Together, we are changing the Valley’s culture and creating deep and lasting connections—one story at a time.

To learn more about our work in the community, please reach out to a Piper Center staff member or visit our website at piper.asu.edu.

Thank you so much for being a part of what we do. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Please consider making your gift today at piper.asu.edu/giving
Acknowledgments

Photographs for the cover and table of contents were taken by Mimi Snow Photography and feature, in order: Desert Nights, Rising Stars Faculty member Y. Shun Lai teaching about monetizing your writing at her session “Rip-ple Effect”; a vase of fake flowers, a rotary telephone, and other decorations and props from the Piper Center’s table; conference attendees browsing the book fair and talking in between sessions. Photographs for the Thank You page, “All for You,” were taken by Ryan Krebs and feature, starting clockwise from far left: long-time attendee Joseph Salazar; scholarship recipient Amy London; Tucson Poet Laureate TC Tolbert, poet Felicia Zamora, and faculty member Kay Ulanday Barrett catching up; local poet Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow joking around with Education Programs Manager Malik Toms; conference attendees taking breaks in between sessions; Supervisors Zamora, and faculty member Rosemarie Dombrowski showing off her water bottle; Tucson Poet Laureate TC Tolbert, poet Felicia Zamora, and faculty member Kay Ulanday Barrett catching up; local poet Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow joking around faculty member Rosemarie Dombrowski showing off her water bottle; Tucson Poet Laureate TC Tolbert, poet Felicia

The Piper Writers House is open to the public every first and third Friday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Make sure to check our website for temporary closures due to COVID-19. This sketch was created independently by architect-turned-artist Rachel Siegel and used here with permission. Purchase prints and find more work from Rachel at https://www.etsy.com/shop/RachelSiegelArt.

Tom Leveen was a frank, honest reality check for all writers at the conference. The Desert Nights Rising Stars Writing Conference far

Suyi Davies was engaging and articulate.

I loved the space and the hosts are great. They are great leaders and have the potential to be even stronger leaders.

I felt like I stepped into a 1960’s beatnik cafe. Great topic & expert perspective. I love the coziness of the space and the lack of any judgments about what anyone wanted to say. Meet Your Community: I love how it brought together the writing community and the Phoenix community. I really enjoyed meeting other authors. I made some new connections and linked up with some people for future projects. I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to support them by going. I also loved the readings and activities. The folks were very friendly and welcoming. I really

I only wish we could have had more time to learn from him! I’ve been putting into practice some of what he taught already. Get Lit: I like knowing there are events where people can have these kinds of conversations. It’s a great community building event. Tanner spoke with wisdom and provided wonderful context to participant questions. Excellent conversation and we loved the space and the hosts are great. They are great leaders and have the potential to be even stronger leaders.

Come see us