

Faculty Focus: Francisco Menendez

by Jack Poleski

Francisco Menendez, a writer and a director, is Assistant Professor of the Department of Film Studies at UNLV, an interdisciplinary liberal arts program. The courses that Menendez teaches are Film Production I, II and III, which focus on aspects of narrative film production in the traditional Hollywood style.

As a young and expanding program, UNLV Film Studies provides distinctive advantages over larger programs, such as those at the University of Southern California and University of California at Los Angeles, by offering more experience with equipment and greater faculty attention. In first year Film Production I for example, students work with 16mm film as opposed to most schools where they would wait until their junior year to work with it.

Menendez began teaching at UNLV last semester and has five years of teaching experience. He said that UNLV film studies encompasses production and film

theory as well as stressing the development of individual screenplays.

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novel. Now it's to write the great American screenplay," he said. "Some of the reasons behind this may be that recognition and money paid have significantly increased."

But those don't have to be only prerequisites to pursue a curriculum in film study.

"We welcome students from all disciplines. We don't have any requirements on technical efficiency or past experience, but a respect for film as an art form and a hope that everyone can get their

feet wet a little," Menendez said.

Before assuming his position here, Menendez finished the shooting of his first feature film, entitled "Backstage," which he wrote and directed. "Backstage" is a bittersweet comedy about falling in love and learning to uphold commitments. Cast members include Sean Doherty, Melissa Lechner and Lucy Boryer. The film should be released on video soon, pending the sound mix this summer. Menendez is also working on a documentary film about El Salvador, where he was born.

Apart from these projects, Menendez will serve as the on-site director of the Spanish language program in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, from June 29-July 27. He will also teach Politics and Film 409 during the day.

Menendez graduated from the University of Puget Sound with a bachelor's degree in communications. He earned his master's from the California Institute of the Arts, whose distinguished graduates include Michael Pressman and "Batman's" director, Tim Burton. Menendez's plans to concen-

trate on the writing aspect of film production and continuous expansion of film study at UNLV. Since August 1990, the Department of Film Studies has been housed in University Hall along with faculty senate, next to the Department of Public Safety.

Menendez said that the Las Vegas area is starved for a film production curriculum and students were waiting a long time for a program such as the one at UNLV. He added that there is still plenty of room for more interested students.



Francisco Menendez, Asst. Professor of the Department of Film

Leadership '91: Susan Taylor

by Tina Crinite

Susan Taylor, editor in chief of the monthly magazine *Essence*, was a guest speaker on Feb. 24 for Black Student Association's leadership conference.

Growing up in Harlem, Taylor was determined to make it in a society that did not look approvingly on women leaders, especially a young and enterprising black woman.

Taylor strived to become successful, and although lacking a college education, started her own she loves her job and career.

"When is stops 'working,' then

is will be time to move on," Taylor said.

Taylor expressed her concern that although February was Black History month, black history should not only be celebrated during that month but all year because it shows the strength and vision of what can be accomplished.

The dreams that were once for the children are alive today and according to Taylor, they (today's African-Americans) are the children, and the "flowers in bloom."

A topic covered was the negative statistics that pointed to the reality that half of all children are

poor in America, and one out of three African American children are poor. Taylor pointed out that the depiction is mostly stereotypical of black youth portrayed in the media, and was not accurately represented.

"We are the ones who need to look within ourselves because we are each other's keepers, and yet we are the ones stepping over those in the gutters," Taylor said. "The responsibility is up to us to organize and become serious about these problems and put out an agenda implementing plans to help heal others."

Recently Taylor decided to go

to college for her degree, something she felt necessary for her journalistic career. Self-motivation was one of her keys to success along with self-love and as Taylor said, "becoming your own cheerleader."

Taylor summed up by talking about the ancestry of the African American today and compared their hardships of slavery with those problems of the youth of to-

day who paved the way to their freedom.

"The power inside you is so awesome—stay in touch with it in order to become focused, organized, disciplined and serious about your life," Taylor said.

Taylor ended with advice from a quote by James Baldwin that said "your crowns have already been paid for, all you have to do is wear them, and wear them proudly!"

These Colors Don't Run



by Tina Crinite

The end of the war still brings many inquiries as to how long our troops will remain in Saudi Arabia. During Operation Desert Storm support for the men and women in the Middle East was shown by the wearing of T-shirts, American flags, yellow ribbons, and other symbols that showed backing of the armed forces and hope for their safe and speedy return.

The families of the troops also had to make drastic adjustments in their lifestyles to continue their lives while a spouse or parent served in the war. Many times they had trouble making ends meet as they looked for other ways to support themselves.

All over the United States there have been attempts to raise money for the families of those serving in the gulf. One plan initiated in Kansas involves the selling of T-shirts to collect money.

In the spirit of this fundraiser, the UNLV Hotel Association has taken the initiative by sponsoring the sale of T-shirts. These shirts feature the emblems of Desert Shield and Desert Storm on the front, and an American flag on the back with the saying, "These Colors Don't Run."

Currently this fund-raiser has been implemented in various places all over the United States and has collectively raised \$42,000.

In charge of the sale of shirts at UNLV are CSUN Senators Bob Cudlip and Ben Roth, and fund-raising chair Hugh Carter. They urge all students to "run over to the Hotel Association Office and pick up your 'colors' to support our troops' families.

The shirts cost \$10 and there are 200 for sale at the Hotel Association Office, Frank and Estella Beam Hall Room 126.

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accessible to me in Maryland." The monthly phone bill, because she's so far from home, was the only disadvantage to the program that she could cite.

Sandra Garcia, an electrical

engineering major from New Mexico and another participant in NSE said, "NSE enhances a person's perspective; UNLV has lot of foreign students as compared to New Mexico State. Las Vegas' atmosphere is more exciting and the city itself larger than where my school is located in New Mexico."

More information about NSE can be obtained from Phelps at her office in FDH 519 or at 739-3462.

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