

**TO:** Dr. Taci Turel, Chair, Academic Events Committee  
Academic Events Committee Members

**FROM:** Dr. Phyllis M. Paul, Dean  
College of Creative Arts and Communication (CCAC)

**DATE:** March 16, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Commencement Speaker Nomination (Larry Davis, Walt Disney Imagineering Executive Producer and Creative Director, Retired)

Originally from Salem, Ohio, Sculptor Larry Davis began his academic career in 1970 as a biology major at Youngstown State University. During that same time, he also played drums in a rock band, The Sound Barrier, which achieved regional success. A series of life altering experiences led Larry to “pick up a paint brush” and eventually switch majors from Biology to Fine Arts. In 1976, he graduated from YSU with a BFA in Sculpture and a K-12 Teaching Certificate.

After graduation, Larry received a commission to create a “functional art” sculptural bed and continued to play with The Sound Barrier until 1979, when he began graduate studies at California State University in Long Beach (CSULB). In 1983, he earned an MFA in Sculpture with a minor in photography and upon graduation, continued at CSULB as a part-time instructor for several years.

In 1980, while still a graduate student, Larry began his decades-long career with the Walt Disney Company. His numerous positions with Disney included Production Artisan and Show Design, Entertainment and Art Department; Operations Manager of Store Development, Anaheim Disneyland Resort; Senior Manager of Fixture and Theme Development, Global Store Design and Construction, Worldwide Disney Store Imagination Park prototype; Senior Creative Producer, Walt Disney Imagineering Creative, Anaheim, CA; and Senior Creative Producer, Walt Disney Imagineering Creative, Shanghai Disneyland Main Entrance. In 2016, Larry retired from Walt Disney Imagineering as Executive Producer and Creative Director, Shanghai Disneyland Main Entrance.

From 1986-1991, Larry stepped away from Disney to pursue his own design firm, Larry A. Designs in Los Angeles. During that time, he had significant success, working in the entertainment industry as an Assistant Art Director for TV specials and commercials, fabricating models for architectural firms, and designing and building unique sculptural furniture pieces. He

was represented by two LA art galleries, Piezo Electric and The Brendan Walter Gallery, and was included in group shows in several other LA-based galleries as well as the Holly Solomon Gallery in New York City.

Upon returning to Disney, Larry was able to continue creating and exhibiting his own works for a number of years. Selected examples include a commission from the architectural firm Linane/Drews Architects for a 17-foot-tall outdoor sculpture in Burbank and shows at Cache Contemporary Gallery, Los Angeles, Stroke and Structure Gallery in Pasadena, and the MorYork Gallery in Highland Park. However, when he agreed to assume leadership of the Walt Disney Imagineering Creative Shanghai Disneyland project in 2010, creation of his own works was delayed indefinitely. The park opened on June 16, 2016, and on October 1, 2016, Larry officially retired from Walt Disney Imagineering.

Larry currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Maureen, and maintains a studio in their home, where he continues to work on new sculptural ideas. He frequently returns to Salem and the Youngstown area to visit his mother and sister and in April will return to the YSU campus for a week of lectures, seminars, and meetings with faculty and students in the College of Creative Arts and Communication.

Larry's exceptional career has spanned more than three decades of both professional and personal creative work at the highest levels internationally. During that time, his art form has been transformed by technology, and his designs for the Shanghai project were far removed from the initial 50 bronze Mickey Mouse statues that he casted for the Walt Disney Company in 1980. Larry Davis is a visionary entrepreneur whose life and career continue to exhibit all of the stated criteria for Commencement Speaker candidates. Thank you very much for your strong consideration of his nomination.

Larry A. Davis

Selected Commissions/Acquisitions

Kevin Smith & Dr. Kim Dickerson, Attorney at Law & Pathologist, 2008 – 2010  
Ken Albright, Owner/CEO Seven Continents, 2010  
Linane/Drews, Architects (Exterior Sculpture, Burbank, CA), 2003  
The late, Holly Solomon, Owner Holly Solomon Gallery, NYC  
Tom Patchet, Writer/Producer/Owner Track 16 Gallery, Bergamont Station  
David Sackeroff, T.V. Production Designer  
David McFadden, Wind Dancer Productions, T.V. Producer  
Gail Maffeo, T. V. Producer  
Martin Brinferhoff, Owner/CEO, Martin Brinkerhoff Associates, Multimedia Production Company  
Larry Cuppon, Writer/Producer Feature Films  
Ed and Sandy Martin, Cinematographer/Artist/T.V. Producer

Selected Solo Exhibitions

L.A. Davis, New Work from the “Jawless Series,” *MorYork Gallery, Los Angeles, CA*, 2010  
L.A. Davis, “Divergent Paths through Pasadena,” *Stroke & Structure Gallery, Pasadena, CA*, 2007  
L.A. Davis, “Contrasts in Los Angeles,” *MorYork Gallery, Los Angeles, CA*, 2006  
“L.A. Davis” *Joslyn Center for the Arts, Torrance, CA*  
L.A. Davis, “Wood Plus” Exhibition and Performance, Ganahl Lumber, Anaheim, CA  
L.A. Davis, “Quondam Corpulence” Gallery C, CSULB, Long Beach CA  
L.A. Davis, “Directed Energy” Kilcawley Art Gallery, Youngstown, OH

Two-Person Exhibition

“Larry A. Davis, Glass & Metal Sculpture,” with Stephen Maslek, *Brendan Walter Gallery, Santa Monica, CA*

Selected Group Exhibitions

“REUNION an Alumni Invitational,” *McDonough Museum of Art, Youngstown, OH*, 2011  
“L.A. Based Artists,” *Cache Contemporary Gallery, Los Angeles, CA*, 2006  
“Breaking Through the Looking Glass – West” *Fahey/Klein Gallery, Los Angeles, CA*  
“Breaking Through the Looking Glass – East” *Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, NY*  
“Hang 12 – Emerging Artists From L.A.,” *Piezo Electric Gallery, Venice, CA*  
“Radices,” *Mills House Gallery, Garden Grove, CA*  
“California Crafts XIII,” *Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA*  
“Excellence in Woodworking,” Los Angeles Convention Center  
Group Exhibition, CSULB, Long Beach, CA  
“Ceremonial Masks of Long Beach” CSULB, Long Beach, CA