



Youth Leadership and the Afro-Latino Experience: A Visit from Sonia Manzano

by Jasmine Wells, Kutsche Office intern

Sonia Manzano has inspired, educated, and delighted children and families as “Maria” on Sesame Street, breaking ground as one of the first Hispanic characters on national television, for over 30 years. Ms. Manzano gave two presentations in West Michigan on October 14 and 15, 2013 that focused on the Civil Rights Movement and how it has impacted the Hispanic Community. Her visit coincided with Hispanic Heritage Month. Both visits, complete with book signing, were sponsored by GVSU’s Kutsche Office of Local History, GVSU Liberal Studies Department, and Community Reading Project in partnership with the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities. Ms. Manzano’s most recent book, a young adult novel entitled, *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*, explores Latino Heritage and civil rights through the experience of one young woman growing up in Spanish Harlem in the 1960s and 1970s.

At her first presentation, held at GVSU’s Allendale campus, Ms. Manzano discussed the triumphs and challenges facing Afro-Latinos, emphasizing the ways that the Civil Rights Movement made Latinos aware of racial prejudices within their own groups, even in their own families. She offered concrete ways that young people can continue to advocate for social change and social justice today, emphasizing the value of education and literacy. At her second presentation, held at the Cook Library Center in Grand Rapids, she spoke with the Cook Library Scholars, K-7th graders who participate in the after school programs there, their families, as well as members of the Sol Peer Leaders Program from the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan. She again emphasized the importance of education, literacy, and personal experiences as a Latina writer, while discussing family, identity, and heritage. As an advocate for education, Manzano helps children succeed by sharing her extraordinary talent.

Grand Valley State University is Proud to Announce the Friends of the Kutsche Office Membership Campaign!

The Kutsche Office of Local History is home to the Local History Roundtable as well as different projects helping local groups and people preserve, protect and retain history that is important to them. This is accomplished through oral histories, supervised internships and fellowships, faculty directed projects and the work of experts in their specific fields. Together, these programs support the mission of the Kutsche Office in fostering an appreciation of the common challenges, common destiny, and common humanity of us all. This is accomplished in part by bringing members of the West Michigan community, students and faculty together to share knowledge and resources about topics of common interest, building an understanding of history that is both exciting and relevant in today’s challenging times.

You can be a part of this exciting initiative by becoming a Friend of the Kutsche Office of Local History by making a gift of \$45. Your gift will allow you discounts to future programs as well as free admission to this year’s Roundtable to be held at the Holland Armory, April 10-11, 2014.

To make your gift online, please go to www.gvsu.edu/giving/givenow and select the Kutsche Office of Local History fund. Or you may mail a check to:

Grand Valley State University
Kutsche Office of Local History
PO Box 2005
Grand Rapids MI 49501-2005

Want to explore local history first-hand while gaining valuable professional training? Enjoy working with diverse communities? Or do you need additional help in your organization?

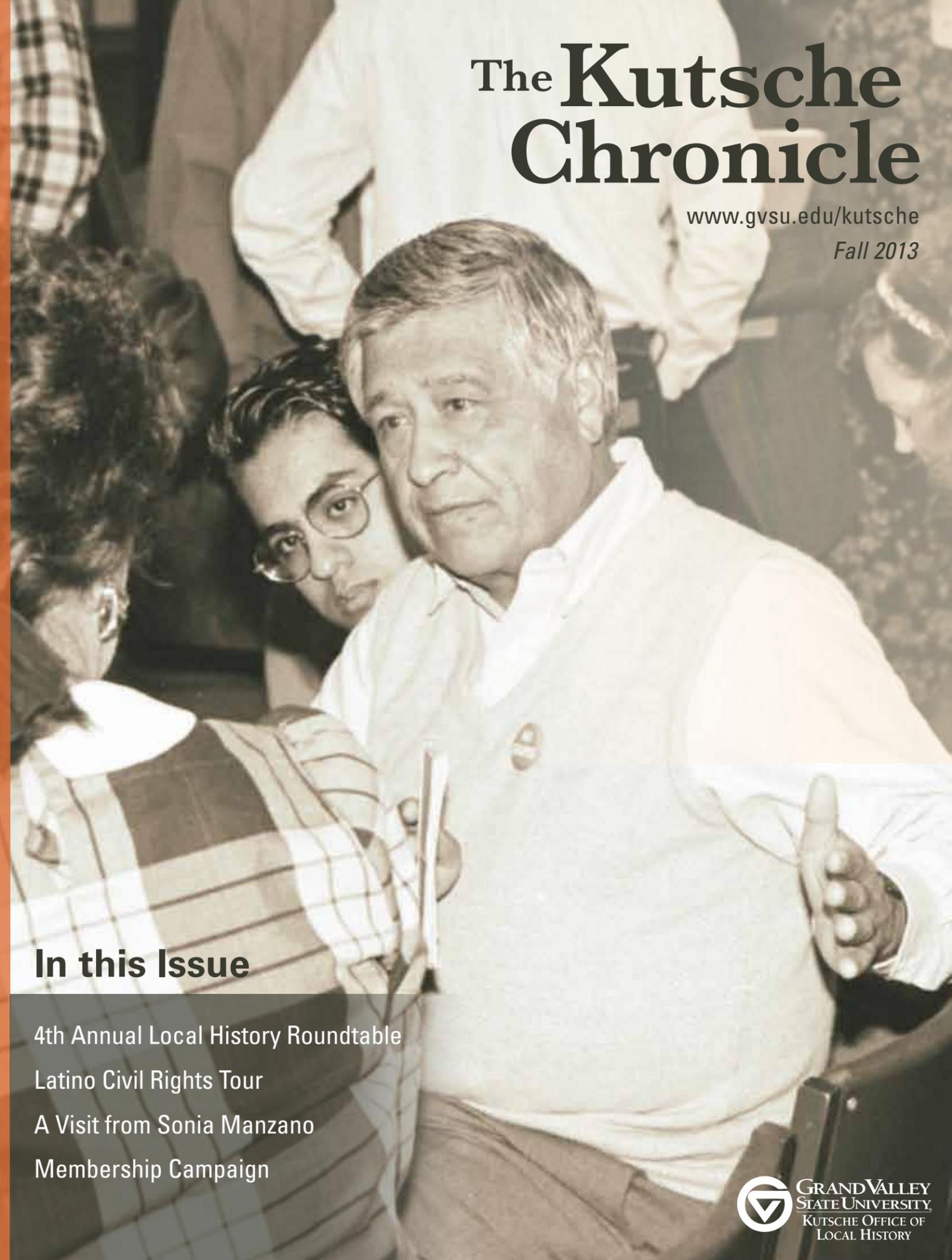
The Kutsche Office of Local History is looking for GVSU undergraduate students who are interested in internships. We also work with local history and cultural organizations to recruit and place interns. For more information, please contact us at kutsche@gvsu.edu or (616)331-8099.



The Kutsche Chronicle

www.gvsu.edu/kutsche

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From the Director...

This is an exciting year in the Kutsche Office of Local History! We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Civil Rights Act by focusing our programming on local civil rights movements, past and present. GVSU has a proud history of supporting civil rights struggles. The image of César Chavez featured on the cover shows him meeting with GVSU students in 1993 after giving his last public address before his death in April of that year. It seemed an appropriate image to feature here, given our recent projects with the communities along César Chavez Boulevard (Grandville Avenue SW) in downtown Grand Rapids.

Our programming for 2013-2014 kicked off in September with a walking tour and exhibition in Southwest Grand Rapid's Roosevelt Park Neighborhood, Latino Civil Rights Bus Tour and Memorial Service in Chicago, and launch of a year-long Youth Leadership Initiative with Grandville Avenue Arts and Humanities that uses local history as a way to teach civil engagement and empower local K-8th graders. In early October, more than 30 African-American artists gathered for a photo and video documentary, "A Grand Day in Grand Rapids," organized by George Bayard, III. A signing party will be held in 2014 to celebrate the release of that DVD.

Our interns, Jasmine Wells and Chardé Johnson, both from the GVSU Liberal Studies Department, have been hard at work. Chardé will continue her work with the Youth Leadership Initiative through Winter Semester, providing training and support to the young people of Roosevelt Park as they document their neighborhood history and envision the future they want to see in their community.

Some highlights of our upcoming programming include public workshops on oral history and preservation, and the forthcoming Fifth Annual Local History Roundtable, focused on "Immigration and Civil Rights." Your gift will allow you discounts to future programs as well as free admission to this year's Roundtable to be held at the Holland Armory on Thursday evening, April 10 and Friday, April 11. We hope that you will join us!



Natives, Settlers, Founders: Our Shared Story of Community Growth The Kutsche Office of Local History Annual Local History Roundtable (2013)

The Fourth Annual Local History Roundtable, "Natives, Settlers, Founders: Our Shared Story of Community Growth," held at the Grand Haven Community Center on April 18, 2013, was the largest meeting to date, attracting nearly 200 people. Attendees included representatives from museums, libraries, historical societies, local schools and universities, interested community members, as well as GVSU faculty, staff, and students.

The goal of the Roundtable is to support the Kutsche Office's mission by bringing a broad range of content specialists, teachers, students, cultural heritage workers, historians, librarians, curators, and interested community members together to share knowledge and resources about topics of common interest. Featured speakers included Marjorie Viveen (educator and historian, Grand Haven), Paul Trap (educator and historian, Grand Haven), and Eric Hemenway (director of archives and repatriation, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians).

Attendees attended "peer-to-peer networking sessions" focused on topics that included oral history, genealogy, researching and publishing local history, grant writing, collections and archiving, promoting and marketing for events, and two topical tables focused on Native American history. Attendees were able to network as they took a guided bus tour of Grand Haven's historic sites. The location, schedule, theme, and program for each year's Roundtable is determined by a community-based planning committee, which members are recruited at each year's Roundtable to serve through the following year. The 2013 committee included Elizabeth Potter and Jeanette Weiden (both of Loutit Library), Marjorie Viveen, Dan Yakes (Muskegon Community College), Tom Mejeur (community member), and Christine Byron (Grand Rapids Public Library).

Kutsche Office Welcomes New Director

In January 2013, the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies appointed Melanie Shell-Weiss, Ph.D. to serve as the new director of the Kutsche Office of Local History. The mission of the Kutsche Office is using history to give voice to diverse communities. With her deep and broad experience in public and local history, prolific scholarship, energy and vision, Melanie strives to build on the work of founding Director Veta Tucker.

Melanie received her M.A. in American Studies and her Ph.D. in History from Michigan State University. As a postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins University from 2003-2006 and visiting assistant professor from 2006-2011, in the Department of History and Center for Africana Studies, Melanie produced two books in local and public history, *Coming to Miami: A Social History* and *Florida's Working Class Past: Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender*. During her time in Baltimore, Melanie became deeply involved with Baltimore's local history community launching the East Baltimore Oral History Project and working closely with the Baltimore Immigration History Memorial. Since coming to GVSU in 2011, Melanie, an assistant professor of Liberal Studies, developed two collaborative, public history projects: "Speaking Out: Western Michigan's Civil Rights Histories" and "The Young Lords in Lincoln Park".



Latino Civil Rights Tour

by Jasmine Wells, Kutsche Office intern

On September 23, 2013, a Latino Civil Rights Tour honored current and past Latino civil rights leaders in both cities, on a one-day bus tour from Grand Rapids to Chicago. The event began at the Cook Library Center, officially launching the photographic exhibition, "Tengo El Pueblo En Mi Corazón: Latino Civil Rights and Community," documenting Grand Rapids area Latino leaders. Current and past Latino civil rights leaders were honored at events in both cities. Opening remarks by Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell and Dean Anne Hiskes, GVSU Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies, set the tone for the day. More than 300 people participated in the day-long event.

Grand Valley State University's Kutsche Office of Local History partnered with Grandville Avenue Arts and Humanities and the Grand Rapids Public Library, among other organizations, to showcase the rich culture of Latinos in the Grand Rapids and Chicago areas. The event included a photographic exhibition, educational program, and walking tour of Latino neighborhoods. Additional GVSU sponsors included the Community Reading Project, Liberal Studies Department, Latin American Studies Program, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Community Service Learning Center, and GVSU Special Collections and Archives.

From Grand Rapids, a chartered bus took participants to Chicago for an evening memorial service and march through Lincoln Park. The memorial service honored the late United Methodist Rev. Bruce W. Johnson, Jr. and his wife, Eugneia Johnson, who were murdered in 1969 for their work supporting Lincoln Park residents that were displaced from their homes during that time. Their murders remain unsolved.