**Exhibit Curators Statement**

"Black Spartans (1907-1948)" represents ongoing research in SJSU Special Collections & Archives identifying documentation of Black experiences throughout SJSU history. This exhibit is the first of several installments. Much of the information we have comes from the Spartan Daily student newspaper and the L’Ami yearbooks, with too few exceptions, Black Spartans’ stories are not told in their own words but from the perspectives of their majority white classmates. This is reflected in the language and focus of the articles: we invite you to read critically.

The Black Spartans featured in this exhibit pursued their educational goals while contending with institutionalized racism and other major crises of the 20th century: two World Wars, the influenza pandemic of 1918, and polio. Locally, "the deed to virtually every home in San Jose" included restrictions against Black and Asian residents known as "restrictive covenants" (Spartan Daily, February 16, 1948, page 2). On campus, blackface and minstrel shows were a regular part of student events.

"Black Spartans (1907-1948)" is an invitation to the community to join us in surfacing these stories, ensuring these histories are preserved and presented in a way that honors these students’ lives. Contact us at special.collections@sjsu.edu to participate.

Carli V. Lowe - University Archivist
Kate Steffens - Special Collections Librarian

**Artist Statement**

The "Black Spartans (1907-1948)" exhibition is a homage to Black culture and history at San José State University and the Bay Area at large. Until recently, the significance of Black bodies in Bay Area history (as well as U.S. history) was overlooked. Unless it was associated with the struggles of civil rights leaders, athletes, or celebrity personas, the story of a graduate from a state school wasn’t valued because we weren’t part of the mainstream culture. As a Black Spartan myself, I was deeply connected to these individuals that started out just like me. I saw a reflection of myself and my community throughout the process of making these mixed media portraits and came to realize how important it is to know your history because it becomes a catalyst for knowing who you are.

My work explores the intricacy of identity and the role culture, tradition, and history play. These portraits are embodiments of our Black Spartans, they are visual representations of the colorful and captivating lives they led. Through this work, I hope to influence other artists and individuals to take part in researching and finding out the infinite layers of what it means to be Black. Our history is beyond our struggle. We are the blueprint.

Yeab Kebede
'22 Digital Media Arts
Faricita Hall (Wyatt) attended San Jose State College from 1932-1935. She graduated in 1935 with an A.B. degree in Speech. Wyatt was also a member of many clubs, groups, and teams, including the San Jose Players acting club, the Debate Team, the Negro Verse Speaking Choir, the Asilomar Conference Planning Committee, as well as serving as secretary of the Cosmopolitan Club. During World War II Wyatt enlisted in the Women's Army Corps as a lieutenant. In 1958, she accepted a position as chief secretary to Democratic congressman Jeffrey Cohelan, and also worked with the NAACP, YWCA, and YMCA. Wyatt received her teaching certificate from U.C. Berkeley in 1962 and went on to teach at Skyline High School in Oakland. She was a painter and author, with two of her books of poetry being published in 1965 and 1974. Wyatt passed away in 1993. Her personal papers are available to view at the African American Museum & Library of Oakland.
La Torre Yearbook

1932

Faricita Hall is pictured as the secretary of the San Jose State College Cosmopolitan Club.
MAN, WOMAN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF ASILOMAR CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Winifred Butler and Larry Eagleson were appointed co-chairman of the Asilomar Conference planning committee at a meeting Friday noon in the “Y” room.

Loren Wann, president of the college Y.M.C.A., presided, and the following were appointed: Frances Gould and George Wightman, finance; Jean French and Lee Whittman, dinner; and Betty Foster and Lela O’Connell, publicity. Herbert Deble and Faricita Hall will also serve on the committee.
La Torre Yearbook

Faricita Hall is pictured as a member of the San Jose State Players Club.
Faricita Hall is named among the speakers reporting on the Asilomar conference at a tea given for faculty members.
State-Stanford Co-eds In Radio Debate Tonight

Future Of Civilization Will Be Topic For Discussion

Stanford University and San Jose State women will meet tonight at 9 o'clock over station KQW when they will debate the question: "Resolved, That we are justified in despairing over the future of civilization."

The debate will consist primarily of an examination of the forces existing today which are tending toward a destruction of civilization, such as wars and depression. These forces will be weighed against the constructive forces being made today with the end in view of seeing just whether or not the net result is a tendency toward destruction of civilization.

Faricita Hall and Elizabeth Allampress will uphold the negative side of the question for San Jose. Miss Hall has had a great deal of experience in speaking and has debated many times here although this is her first inter-collegiate contest. Miss Allampress prominent in San Jose State dramatics, is also a veteran speaker and is noted for her clear, convincing arguments.

Miss Mae Wilburn, manager of the San Jose State women's team, has arranged the debate and will act as chairman.

March 7, 1935

Faricita Hall competes with San Jose State College against Stanford in a debate on the "Future of Civilization."
San Jose Lions Club To Hear Negro Verse Choir Today

Selections from Negro poets will be given by the Negro verse speaking choir today before the San Jose Lions Club.

The poetry will present a wide variety of attitudes and thought, and will include such poets as Lawrence Dunbar, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes.

Great promise is shown by the Negro choir, according to Miss Elizabeth Jenks, director. It has been practicing every noon and once a week in the evening, and since its organization last quarter has shown a great deal of improvement.

Members of the choir are: Delores Rivers, Lavina Nichols, Delree Washington, Faricita Hall, and William Moulden.
Faricita Hall is pictured among the 1935 graduates, having earned a degree in Speech.
Faricita Hall is listed among “46 former Spartan women who have enlisted” in the Women’s Army Corps (WACS).
Faricita Hall Wyatt accepts a job to “serve in Washington D.C. as chief secretary” to Democratic congressman Jeffery Cohelan.
The River Must Flow

Faricita Hall, now Wyatt, publishes the first of two books of poetry.