

The Katherine O’Sullivan See Endowment for James Madison College Field Experience in Social Activism and Philanthropic Work

This endowment is named in honor of Katherine O’Sullivan See, whose passion for teaching, devotion to her students and exemplary scholarship have had a profound impact on her students, James Madison College and Michigan State University. When Katie See began her job search, Madison alumna, Teresa Sullivan (1970), then on the faculty at the University of Chicago, suggested to her that she consider JMC as a home for her academic career. What began as a one year position evolved into a career of more than three decades, where she led students and colleagues in understanding the genesis and resolution of social problems. With Ken Waltzer, Katie framed a field of study that would go through many iterations: from Ethnic and Religious Intergroup Relations to what has come to be called Social Relations and Policy. She helped to shepherd the field through changing times and sought both to hold to and expand the core vision to include gender, sexuality, family and age as key dimensions of politics and policy.

Katie See has been loved and admired by many generations of students, whom she has championed in their achievements as community development leaders, mayors, judges, civil rights activists, scholars, teachers and other movers and shakers. Her commitment to push her students to fulfill their utmost potential in the service of civic engagement and social change is unequalled. She has always had exacting standards of what she expected from students, but more often than not they rose to her expectations and grew from the challenge. Her teaching was recognized in a variety of awards, most notably the MSU Teacher-Scholar and Distinguished Faculty Awards, the MSU Mid-Michigan Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the State of Michigan Teaching Award, and, most recently, the award for Distinguished Contributions to Honors Students.

Trained as a sociologist, Katie See has been at the cutting-edge of scholarship in her field, where she has published on both domestic U.S. issues of race and gender and on comparative ethnic conflict. More recently, her writings have focused on issues related to gender politics in societies in transition and on the gendered dynamics of nationalism. Her collaborative work in these areas with her colleague Linda Racioppi has resulted in several books and numerous articles in leading scholarly journals. Building on each other’s strengths as a sociologist and a political scientist, they have developed pioneering scholarship on how interdisciplinary writing and teaching can be done. Katie See also promoted and helped to develop the Madison field of Comparative Cultures and Politics, which embodied her commitment to interdisciplinarity and the urgency of learning about other cultures in order to understand one’s own.

In the spirit of Katie See’s appreciation for her students and her zest for civic engagement, this scholarship will support student internships in the JMC Field Experience Program that focus on social activism and/or socially oriented philanthropic work. The students can work at a broad range of internship sites, including non-profit and social movement organizations and international non-governmental organizations. A preference will be given to students who, because of financial need, could not otherwise undertake such a field experience.

We invite you to join us in establishing this legacy for Professor Katie See at James Madison College. Please consider making your most generous gift in support of the Katherine O’Sullivan See Field Experience Scholarship. We encourage you to make a multi-year pledge to help us build for the future. For further information please contact Rocky Beckett at the JMC Development Office.

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