

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF  
**WALTER H. CAPPS**

Professor, Humanist, Public Servant

Nov. 10–11, 2023



**WALTER H. CAPPS CENTER**

FOR THE STUDY OF  
ETHICS, RELIGION, AND PUBLIC LIFE

**UC SANTA BARBARA**

## WALTER H. CAPPS (1934–1997)

Walter Holden Capps was born in 1934 in Omaha, Nebraska. He earned bachelor's degrees from Portland State University and Augustana Theological Seminary, and graduate degrees from Yale Divinity School and Yale University. From 1964 to 1996, Walter was a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Walter and his wife Lois had three children: Lisa, Todd, and Laura.

As a scholar, Walter helped define the field of Religious Studies. He was one of the first hires in the new Department of Religious Studies at UCSB, and his pathbreaking scholarship articulated the interdisciplinary range of the field. He wrote or edited fourteen books and numerous articles. His interests included the theology of hope, mysticism and monasticism, ethics and aesthetics, psychology of religion, the history of religious studies, the Vietnam War, and religion and politics.

Over the course of his career, his teaching and research moved toward the role of ethics in contemporary American public life. In 1978, Walter initiated his celebrated course "The Impact of the Vietnam War on American Religion and Culture," which regularly drew 850 undergraduate students and was featured on CBS's "60 Minutes." Later, Walter introduced a new course, "Voices of the Stranger," which also became very popular. He was a beloved professor, and tens of thousands of students took his courses. He also mentored many graduate students.

Walter's sustained contributions to the humanities earned him praise as one of our nation's most distinguished humanists. He was president of the National Federation of State Humanities Councils, chairman of the California Council for the Humanities, president of the Council for the Study of Religion, and director of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. He led summer institutes, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, for high school and college teachers on issues related to religion and society. Walter was the first non-Catholic person to join La Casa de Maria's Board of Directors.

In 1996, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served from January 1997 until his untimely death in October of that year.

Walter often said, "Democracy is born in conversation." He believed that dialogue is vital in a diverse society and that realizing our common humanity can help forge shared values. He built bridges between the academy and the community, and personified the highest ideals of public service.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## PANEL 1

### THE VALUE OF THE HUMANITIES

Friday, Nov. 10 | 10:00am–12:00pm

McCune Conference Room (HSSB 6020)

A panel on Walter Capps' contributions to the humanities and the value of the humanities today, featuring prominent leaders of humanities organizations

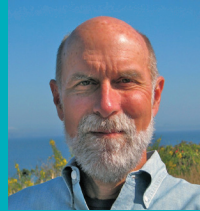
#### Welcome and Introductions

**Greg Johnson**, Director of the Walter H. Capps Center, UCSB  
**Daina Ramey Berry**, Michael Douglas Dean of Humanities & Fine Arts and Professor of History, UCSB

#### SPEAKERS



**David Marshall**  
Executive Vice  
Chancellor  
UCSB



**James Quay**  
Former Executive  
Director  
California Council  
for the Humanities



**Ralph Lewin**  
Executive Director  
Peter E. Haas Jr.  
Family Fund



**Phoebe Stein**  
President  
Federation of State  
Humanities Councils

#### LUNCH

Lunch provided for speakers and guests

Friday, Nov. 10 | 12:00pm–1:00pm

McCune Conference Room (HSSB 6020)

## PANEL 2

### WALTER CAPPS AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION

MARTIN E. MARTY SYMPOSIUM ON RELIGION

Friday, Nov. 10 | 1:00pm–3:45pm

McCune Conference Room (HSSB 6020)

A panel on Walter Capps' scholarly contributions and the study of religion today, featuring renowned scholars of religion who were Walter's graduate students

#### Introductions

**Juan Campo**, Professor and Chair of Religious Studies, UCSB

#### SPEAKERS



**Edward Linenthal**  
Professor Emeritus  
of History  
Indiana University  
Bloomington



**Wendy M. Wright**  
Professor Emerita  
of Theology  
Creighton University



**Tomoko Masuzawa**  
Professor Emerita of  
History and  
Comparative Literature  
University of Michigan



**Julie Ingersoll**  
Professor of  
Religious Studies  
University of  
North Florida



**Sarah McFarland  
Taylor**  
Associate Professor  
of Religious Studies  
Northwestern University

#### PUBLIC RECEPTION

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages served

Friday, Nov. 10

4:00pm–5:30pm

McCune Conference Room (HSSB 6020)

## PANEL 3

## REMEMBERING THE VIETNAM WAR CLASS

Saturday, Nov. 11 | 9:00am–10:30am

Campbell Hall

A panel on Walter Capps' famous course on the Vietnam War and its impacts, featuring former instructors and guest speakers for the course

### Introductions

**Kathleen M. Moore**, Associate Dean of Humanities & Fine Arts and Professor of Religious Studies, UCSB

**Richard Hecht**, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, UCSB

### SPEAKERS



**Richard Hecht**  
Professor Emeritus of  
Religious Studies  
UCSB



**Shad Meshad**  
Founder and  
President  
National Veterans  
Foundation



**Bob Kerrey**  
Former U.S. Senator  
and Governor

## PANEL 4

## TEACHING ETHICS AND CIVIC VALUES

Saturday, Nov. 11 | 10:45am–12:00pm

Campbell Hall

A panel on Walter Capps' teaching of ethics and civic values in the classroom and beyond, featuring former students

### Introductions

**Katya Armistead**, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Student Life, UCSB

### SPEAKERS



**Katya Armistead**  
Assistant Vice  
Chancellor and Dean  
of Student Life  
UCSB



**Tim Kring**  
Screenwriter/  
Showrunner



**Shawn Landres**  
Civic Strategist  
and Municipal  
Commissioner

### PUBLIC REMARKS

An opportunity for members of the public to share memories of Walter Capps

**Saturday, Nov. 11**

**12:00pm–12:30pm**

Campbell Hall

### Moderator:

**Katya Armistead**, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Student Life, UCSB



**LUNCH**

Lunch available for purchase by **Chiltepin Mexican Grill**, a local food truck, outside Campbell Hall

**Saturday, Nov. 11**

**12:00pm–2:00pm**

Campbell Hall (outside)

**VIDEO****DEMOCRACY IS BORN  
IN CONVERSATION**

**Saturday, Nov. 11 | 2:00pm–2:30pm**

**Campbell Hall**

A video presentation on Walter Capps' 1996 congressional campaign, featuring archival footage

**Introduction**

**Greg Johnson**, Director of the Walter H. Capps Center, UCSB

**PRESENTER**

**Alessandro Duranti**  
Distinguished Research  
Professor of  
Anthropology  
UCLA

**PANEL 5****THE VALUE OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Saturday, Nov. 11 | 2:45pm–4:15pm**

**Campbell Hall**

A conversation about Walter Capps' political career and the ongoing value of public service

**Introductions**

**Greg Johnson**, Director of the Walter H. Capps Center, UCSB

**Henry T. Yang**, Chancellor, UCSB

**SPEAKERS**

**Bob Kerrey**  
Former U.S. Senator  
and Governor



**Lois Capps**  
Former U.S.  
Representative



**Laura Capps**  
Santa Barbara County  
Supervisor



**Todd Capps**



**Lou Cannon**  
Journalist, author,  
biographer

**PUBLIC RECEPTION**

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages served

**Saturday, Nov. 11**

**4:15pm–5:45pm**

Mosher Alumni House

## SPEAKER BIOS

**Katya Armistead** is the Assistant Vice Chancellor and Dean of Student Life at UCSB, overseeing organizational departments, programs, policies, and initiatives that promote growth and achievement. She has a doctorate in Educational Leadership from UCSB. Armistead has coached professionals and college students in the areas of leadership, diversity and inclusion, organizational development, crisis management, and advising. She co-directs the Civic Engagement Scholars Program, which is supported by the Capps Center.

**Lou Cannon** is a journalist, columnist, author, and biographer. He was a political reporter for the *San Jose Mercury News* and *Washington Post*, where he covered politics for 26 years as a senior White House correspondent, Los Angeles bureau chief, and columnist. He was also a contributing editor and CEO of *California Journal*, an editorial advisor and columnist for *State Net Capitol Journal*, and a columnist for RealClearPolitics. He is the author of eight books, including five about Ronald Reagan.

**Laura Capps** is the Second District Supervisor for Santa Barbara County. She was a Member of the Santa Barbara Unified School District Board of Trustees from 2016–2022. She has served as a speechwriter for President Bill Clinton, the western communications director for Senator John Kerry's presidential campaign, a senior aide to Senator Edward Kennedy, and as UC Berkeley's Director of Government Affairs. Her career in public service includes serving as President of the Community Environmental Council, Chair of the Commission for Women, and on the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Board and UC Berkeley Foundation Board of Trustees. Her greatest job is being a mom to her son Oscar.

**Lois Capps** served as a U.S. Representative from 1998-2017 representing Santa Barbara and the Central Coast. Before succeeding her husband in Congress, Lois had successful careers in both nursing and education, with many years spent as a nurse in our local public schools. She is a proud alumna of UCSB, having earned her masters degree in early childhood education, as well as a masters degree in religion from Yale University. For eighteen years, Capps was a respected leader in Congress on issues of public health and protecting our environment. She retired in 2017 and is a happy grandmother of nine.

**Todd Capps** is an alumnus of UCSB (BA, Philosophy–Ethics & Public Policy). He lives in Santa Barbara with his wife Rebecca and young son Rowan. As the founding Executive Director of the Common Table Foundation, Todd led a series of events in Santa Barbara County aimed at building community and cultural awareness through authentic dialogue and engagement among people of diverse backgrounds. Todd is a professional musician, songwriter, and composer, having toured internationally and composed scores for critically-acclaimed feature films.

**Alessandro Duranti**, Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology, UCLA, is a linguistic anthropologist who studies the tension between conventionality and creativity in everyday encounters, political arenas, and music performances. He has carried out research in Samoa, the U.S., France, and Italy. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. He has published two articles about Walter Capps' 1995–1996 congressional campaign.

**Richard Hecht** is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Religious Studies at UCSB, where he taught from 1974 until his retirement in 2021. After Walter Capps ran for Congress in 1994, Hecht taught the Vietnam War course until it ended in 2018.

**Julie Ingersoll** is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Florida. She is the author of several articles and books on religion and politics, violence, and the religious right. As a former student of Walter Capps, Julie works to make scholarship available and accessible to the public. She has written for such outlets as *The Conversation*, *Religion Dispatches*, and *Huffington Post*. Her most recent book is *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction* (2015).

**Bob Kerrey** has decades of public service and health care experience serving vulnerable populations. He served as Governor of Nebraska from 1983 to 1987 and as a United States Senator from Nebraska from 1989 to 2001. He is also a veteran of the Vietnam War, where he served as a U.S. Navy SEAL officer and was awarded the Medal of Honor. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a commitment to supporting other veterans and their access to health care. He was also a co-instructor in Walter Capps' Vietnam War class.

**Tim Kring** has created and run numerous TV shows, including *Crossing Jordan*, *Touch*, and *Heroes*, and become an industry-leading creator in multi-platform storytelling over a 35-year career in Hollywood. His writing focuses on themes of interconnectivity and global consciousness with the goal of achieving what he calls "social benefit storytelling."

**Shawn Landres** has a distinguished record of research, leadership, and impact across the social good sectors. He has chaired Los Angeles County's Quality and Productivity Commission as well as Santa Monica's Planning and Social Services commissions. Co-founder of Jumpstart Labs and a Senior Fellow at UCLA Luskin, Shawn is a board member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and Santa Monica Bay Area Human Relations Council. He has a PhD in Religious Studies from UCSB.

**Ralph Lewin** is the Executive Director of the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund. He previously served as President and CEO of the California Council for the Humanities. He is also an alumnus of UCSB and attended Walter Capps' course on the Vietnam War.

**Edward T. Linenthal** is Professor Emeritus of History at Indiana University, Bloomington. He served as editor of the *Journal of American History* from 2005–2016. Linenthal has served as a Visiting Scholar for the National Park Service and for almost a decade was a member of the Flight 93 Memorial Commission. For several years he co-directed a Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History summer Teacher Seminar, "9/11 and American Memory," at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York. He is the author or editor of seven books.

**David Marshall** is Professor of English and Comparative Literature, and Executive Vice Chancellor (Provost), at UCSB. He has been Executive Vice Chancellor since 2014. He previously served for sixteen years as Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts and was the first Michael Douglas Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts. From 2005 to 2012, he also was Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science.

**Tomoko Masuzawa** is Professor Emerita of History and of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. Born and educated in Tokyo, she holds an MA (Yale) and a PhD (UCSB) in Religious Studies. She is a scholar of European intellectual history, with a special interest in modern discourses on religion and the history of human sciences. She is the author of two books and many articles. She has held a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship as well as a membership at the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ). She lives in New York City.

**Sarah McFarland Taylor** is Associate Professor of Religious Studies, American Studies, and Environmental Policy and Culture at Northwestern University. She is the author of *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology* (2007) and *Ecopiety: Green Media and the Dilemma of Environmental Virtue* (2019). After earning her doctorate from UCSB, Sarah went on to earn an additional advanced degree in Media Studies from The New School in New York City.

**Shad Meshad** is Founder and President of the National Veterans Foundation. Meshad served as a psych officer in Vietnam. On his return in 1971, he began advocating for veterans. Prior to founding the NVF, he co-authored the Vet Center Outreach Program and opened the first Vet Centers, now numbering over 300 nationwide. He met Walter Capps in 1977 at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. Their conversation about the war led to the Vietnam War class, which Shad continued to help teach for the next 20 years.

**James Quay** grew up in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He earned a BA in English from Lafayette College and then performed two years of alternative service in central Harlem as a conscientious objector. He and his wife moved to California where he earned an MA and PhD in English Literature from UC Berkeley. He served as executive director of the California Council for the Humanities from 1983 to 2008. Since his retirement, he has been a facilitator for the Center for Courage and Renewal. He was a guest lecturer in Walter's Vietnam War course.

**Phoebe Stein** is president of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Stein served as the executive director for Maryland Humanities from 2008 to 2020 and has been an advocate for the humanities at local, state, and federal levels for nearly 25 years. Stein serves on the board of the National Humanities Alliance and on the advisory councils of Humanities Indicators, a project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and National History Day.

**Wendy M. Wright** is Professor Emerita of Theology at Creighton University and presently Affiliate Faculty at Oblate School of Theology's Institute for the Study of Contemporary Spirituality. She earned her PhD in Religious Studies at UCSB in 1983. Her areas of expertise include the history of Christian spiritualities and the Catholic devotional traditions. Wright is the author of seventeen books and over sixty academic articles. She is a long-time spiritual director, working presently with the novitiate team of the Franciscans in California's central coast.

**Henry T. Yang** was named UCSB's fifth chancellor in 1994. He was formerly the Neil A. Armstrong Distinguished Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University, where he also served as the Dean of Engineering for ten years. He and his wife, Dilling, live on campus.

## About the Walter H. Capps Center

The Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at the University of California, Santa Barbara, promotes discussion of how ethical teachings and values relate to civic life—at the local, national, and global levels. We are committed to the fundamental belief that public dialogue and an informed and engaged citizenry are vital to democratic society. Non-partisan and non-sectarian, the Center seeks to strengthen and extend the principles on which such diverse, modern society rests, namely, tolerance and respect for the views of others, the practice of civility, and efforts to achieve the common good.

The Capps Center was established in 2002 and funded by the U.S. Congress, National Endowment for the Humanities, UC Office of the President, Capps Memorial Fund, and the generous support of our donors.

## Capps Center Directors



**Wade Clark Roof** (1939–2019) was Founding Director of the Capps Center, serving until 2017, and J. F. Rowny Professor of Religion and Society in the Department of Religious Studies at UCSB from 1989–2013. He was previously a professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, from 1970–1989. From 2002–2016, Roof directed the Fulbright / US State Department annual summer institute on religion in the US. In 2018, he won the Association for the Sociology of Religion's Lifetime Achievement Award, and he won the Martin E. Marty Award for the Public Understanding of Religion from the American Academy of Religion in 2019.



**Greg Johnson** is Director of the Capps Center and Professor of Religious Studies at UCSB. His research focuses on how contemporary Indigenous communities navigate intersections of religion and law, with particular attention to sacred lands, burial protections, and repatriation.



## WALTER H. CAPPS CENTER

FOR THE STUDY OF  
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<https://www.cappscenter.ucsb.edu/>

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We apologize for any errors or omissions.

## Give to the Capps Center

A wide range of giving opportunities is available through the Capps Center for those friends, parents, community members, and UCSB alumni who wish to be a vital part of the Center's future. The Capps Center benefits from annual unrestricted support and major gifts designated for special purposes. Your generosity plays a critical role in our ability to fulfill our mission and is truly appreciated. Every gift counts.



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