

UNM-Taos Faculty Forum Presentation  
November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005-Western Sky Café

Faculty Development Funds: Giovanna Paponetti  
Invitation to visit Stanford – January 25<sup>th</sup> – 29, 2004  
American Indian Organization/Native American Cultural Center & Cantor Art Center

**Presentation Summary:**

One of the first things I learned from this experience is how Native Americans in an institution of higher learning, experience, and respond to a non Native presenting and interpreting their culture pictorially. I developed more of an awareness and sensitivity to people of different cultures in my classroom as well as on the outside. I learned that the entire American Indian Organization at Stanford discussed and agreed upon my possible visit before the invitation was extended. In addition to giving two informal lectures, showing my 11- minute documentary, power point presentation and art exhibit to the Native American students and Provost, I was invited to give a lecture at the Cantor Art Center. It took me five months to prepare for this event. Three months were spent on putting together my 11-minute documentary which included a storyboard with script, photos, inclusion of numerous video footage that included meeting my relatives in Italy, a dedication of historical murals that I was commissioned to paint for the Town of Taos, footage of me at work in my studio, wildlife footage, discussions about the Native American and Hispanic cultures with accompanying paintings and more. The experience of making a documentary got me in touch with who I am and why it is important for me to paint the subjects that I do. My invitation to Stanford prompted me to do a presentation of the highest caliber including producing high quality prints of my paintings, graphic handouts. At my own expense I painted a large Native American drum and presented it to the Native American Organization. A large print of one of my murals, Taos Pueblo Before the Spanish – 1300 A.D., was donated to Stanford by the Town of Taos. I have shown this documentary to all of my classes. My students are excited and inspired by it. I have discussions with my students about finding their passions and painting it, and also to do their very best in their work. I have encouraged many Native American and Hispanic students in my classes to further their goals. I feel that my trip to Stanford was a cultural exchange. An attached copy of a thank you note from the Stanford Native American Cultural Center: Students found my visit “insightful”.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Giovanna Paponetti is an instructor of Drawing and Painting at UNM Taos. Her paintings reflect her deep spiritual connections to wildlife and the Native American culture. In 2004 her portrait of a NM State Legislator was unveiled in Santa Fe; Giovanna was chosen by the Taos News to paint four portraits of prominent citizens for the annual Tradiciones section. Her *Taos Timeline Murals*, a 1998 commission from the Town of Taos have been published in a NM social studies textbook, *Our World*, published by Macmillan McGraw-Hill, 2005; a children’s book for Compass Point Publishers, *The Pueblo and Their History*, 2005; and a soon-to-be published *World History Program: Ancient Civilization/Medieval to Early Modern Times*, by Holt Rinehart and Winston. Giovanna is a volunteer at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Espanola.