



DOROTHY F. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

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February 1, 2018

Dear OURI Members of the Council of Scholarship and Inquiry,

I write this letter in strong recommendation of Dr. Ilaria Serra's nomination for the 2017 Distinguished Mentor of the Year (DMOY) award: Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Inquiry. Dr. Serra is dedicated, passionate and energetic about enhancing undergraduate research at Florida Atlantic University. I believe her efforts in this regard deserve high recognition.

Dr. Serra engages students in undergraduate research by incorporating research into her undergraduate classes as well as by directing independent and experiential undergraduate research projects. In class, Dr. Serra has involved students in research through developing a research question to be referenced throughout the class and encouraging students to further develop this research and present it at the Spring 2018 OURI Conference. During another class she facilitates students' writing of a collective research article, focusing on a different topic each time the course is taught, this article is published in an Italian newspaper of Venice.

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Serra is equally involved in undergraduate research and inquiry. Dr. Serra runs a study abroad program to Italy every summer, during which time she supervises directed independent research studies. One of these research projects was funded by OURI-SURF in 2016. In another project Dr. Serra collaborated with a team of undergraduate students to translate Venetian art works and interview their authors. She presented this project at the 10th Annual Florida Statewide Symposium on Best Practices in Undergraduate Research.

In sum, I highly recommend Dr. Serra as the OURI Distinguished Mentor of the Year. I believe her dedication and interest in undergraduate research is demonstrated by her taking on these mentorships in her own time, as well as by the varied and multiple successes of her undergraduate students. I appreciate you giving Dr. Serra's nomination the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Horswell', written in a cursive style.

Michael J. Horswell
Dean



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Boca Raton, January 25, 2018

To the Committee for the 2017 Distinguished Mentor of the Year Award (DMOY):

Thank you for considering my application for this Award. Beyond designing and teaching new undergraduate and graduate courses, I am involved with my students in multiple ways, and I would be happy to see them recognized. Please, pass by my office and take a look at my office door, and you will see many of the faces of the students I mentored. Their smiling pictures are a constant reward.

My mentoring philosophy is based on two main assumptions: the best way to involve students in research are, first, by tying my own research to their interest to expose them to a contagious curiosity; and, second, by *plunging* them in practical project-based work that can be measurable and visible for all. These two aspects are particularly important for undergraduate students who are still growing as scholars and need a stronger motivation to face the necessary work.

The variety of fields, types of project, and the creative thinking behind each of them are the points of strength of my mentorship. I do not have huge numbers of students to boast (Italian students are not many, even though I just added the students of a World Literature class), but I do have a very wide variety of projects that involve students in many ways, all individually tailored. I have a hard time myself keeping track of all of them, because they are not directly part of any formal "assignment", but they are all self-added tasks. I will reflect now on my undergraduate mentoring, but graduate mentoring is also a part of my assignment and extra-work.

All my classes go beyond simple teaching the subject matter. They all include a specific project. Last fall, the class of LIT2100 (Intro to World Literature) did not only read and comment world literature, but engaged students with a research question: "Can the labyrinth be an overarching metaphor to read multiple pieces of world literature?" The students not only tied all their written assignment to this topic, but also prepared five research posters to present at the next Spring OURI Conference in Spring 2018.

During this class, students were asked to exit the class environment and be exposed to the larger world: when reading *Bhagavad Gita* we had an Indian scholar come to class and we participated to the Diwali festival in Boynton Beach. For *Tao Te Ching* we had an American Taoist monk speak to the class; for *Don Quixote*, a Quixote scholar; for Matsuo Basho's *haiku*, the students were invited to write their own haiku while walking the Nursing building labyrinth, and were also invited to a Japanese tea ceremony. This kind of extra work to engage students with the subject matter is part of my mentorship effort.

Another example of the connection I strive to offer between teaching and outreach is my class "Reading the Italian Press." At the end of semester, students see their names printed on an Italian newspaper of Venice, where they publish their own collective article on the customs of churches in South Florida ("Messe trilingui, uscieri e tanta musica nelle liturgie delle chiese cattoliche in Florida," *Gente Veneta*). The last article is now hanging on my office door, and it attests to the learning outcome of this class: not only reading and discussing Italian articles, but also producing one, with all the stylistic tricks students had learned in the semester.

Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature

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I am teaching “Reading the Italian Press” again this semester, and we have our work cut out to produce another newspaper article, on climate change and Florida. Not only, but this year, the whole class will hone their translating abilities by working on a specific project: the subtitles for a movie on recent immigration to Venice, produced by the local Venetian government. The names of FAU students will be listed in the credits of “Un posto altrove” by Andrea Onori and Luca Sella. The movie will be projected and followed by Skype interview with the authors on April 9 at FAU.

My Italian Advanced classes have been involved in Academic Service Learning projects that takes them outside the classroom. Students have the opportunity to be useful to the community though their Italian language skills: at the FAU Tutoring Center; as leaders of an Italian club for elementary children at A.D. Henderson Elementary School; the Mae Volen Center, the Saint Joan of Arc Columbiettes, and the FAU Green Memory and Wellness Center.

I am particularly interested in connecting my students with the outside world. The best example is the Summer Program in Venice, Italy, that I designed from scratch and have been leading for 9 years, serving not only our students but also the students of the College of Science and the School of Urbanism and Architecture.

The class, “Venice and Its Reflections,” is designed for this program with a textbook that I created myself (a future publication project). The large part of my work in Venice is devoted to “teaching” Italian culture outside the classroom. This goes well beyond my responsibility as program leader and a teacher. It includes extra-activities such as meetings with local authors and personalities, help in joining the cathedral choir, auditing classes of the EU Erasmus project, and participating in socially meaningful activities (we participate in a local project to clean the walls of Venice from graffiti, mask-making in a center for youth with disabilities).

In Venice, some students take independent studies with me – one was funded by OURI-SURF in 2016. So far, I have worked in several projects: a radio program with Jillian Herman (2016); a OURI research with Colleen Nelson in 2016; and three undergraduate independent studies courses. Dominic Santoya and Alberto Gonzales, Stella Alves worked on translating Venetian art works and interviewing their authors. I presented this particular project at the last OURI conference in Orlando (“Broadening Participation in Undergraduate Research,” 10th Annual *Florida Statewide Symposium: Best Practices in Undergraduate Research*).

In Venice, I also find volunteering opportunities that will enrich the student’s CV. To mention just one: Brenda Theodore volunteered at a cat shelter in Venice, and now is in Veterinary school. This intense effort is one of the reasons why our program is always successful. I am now in the process of applying for a new SURF project with Hristo Joseph, Daniela Rozman and Angela Dalton for Summer 2018.

Involvement outside the classroom is crucial for my mentorship philosophy: I am the advisor of the Italian Club Insieme (every semester I organize a good number of events, I lead all movie presentations, and I am present to all conversation meetings). Last year, I set up the Italian Honor Society Gamma Kappa Alpha. I also helped set up two agreements to send our students to Italy as teacher of ESL after their graduation (SITE program and Piedmont Network).

I am also directly involved in raising money towards scholarships to help our students who often juggle between jobs and studying, both graduate and undergraduate. I added the following scholarships: TomDiSalvo (forthcoming), Thomas McCormick, Order of the Sons of Italy, Tony Colella, P.E.O., Sister Cities, and Papi Simonetti.

As you can see in my CV, I strive to include mentorship and bettering of undergraduate teaching strategies in my research through articles, book chapters and presentations.

Ilaria Serra
Associate Professor of Italian and Comparative Studies
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SHORTENED TO HIGHLIGHT UNDERGRADUATE MENTORSHIP INVOLVEMENT

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- Florida Atlantic University:
- **Associate Professor of Italian and Comparative Studies, Fall 2013-present**
 - **Assistant Professor of Italian and Comparative Studies, 2007-Spring 2013.**
 - **Acting Head of Italian Studies, Spring 2010.**
 - **FAU Summer Programs in Italy, Instructor, 2001, 2005.**
 - **Summer Program Faculty, Faculty Leader and Instructor: 2002, 2008-present**
 - **Co-coordinator of lower-division Italian, 2007-present.**
- Purdue University:
- Teaching Assistant of Italian Cinema and Italian Language, 1999-2000.

RESEARCH AND OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY

REFEREED WORKS

Journal Articles

Serra, Ilaria. "Geography of the Abandoned Country. Italian American Poems and the Poetry of Abandoned Towns". *Forum of Modern Language Studies*. Forthcoming.

Serra, Ilaria. "Andrea Segre's Cinema of Compassion." *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*. Forthcoming.

Serra, Ilaria. "Lives of the Saints, Sinners and Everyone in Between: 2017 in Italy." *Biography* (University of Hawaii Press). Forthcoming.

Invited Journal Article

Serra, Ilaria. "La letteratura gay italoamericana: le streghe son tornate." *Nuova Prosa* 50 (2009): 47-57. Published, print.

Refereed Translation

Serra, Ilaria. "Giovanni Corona. Poesie/Poems" Translation and Critical Introduction. *Mosaici: Learned Online Journal of Italian Poetry*, 2017. <http://www.mosaici.org.uk/?items=giovanni-corona-2>

Books

Serra Ilaria (ed.). Eugenia Bulat, *La pietra di Ca' Vendramin*. Tropea: Meligrana. Forthcoming.

Serra, Ilaria and Alan Gravano, eds. *Southern Exposures: Locations and Relocations of Italian Culture. Selected Proceedings of the 42th Annual AIHA Conference*. New York: Bordighera Press, 2013. Print.

Serra, Ilaria. *The Imagined Immigrant: Images of Italian Emigration to the United States between 1890 and 1924*. New York: Farleigh Dickinson UP, 2009. Published, print. Expanded translation of *Immagini di un immaginario*.

Serra, Ilaria. *The Value of Worthless Lives: Writing Italian-American Immigrant Autobiographies*. New York: Fordham UP, 2007. Published, print. (Paperback edition, 2010).

Serra, Ilaria. *Immagini di un immaginario. L'emigrazione italiana negli Stati Uniti fra i due secoli (1890-1924)*. Verona: Cierre, 1997. Published, print.

Book Chapters

Serra, Ilaria. "La gioventù di Mario Isnenghi tra libri e campielli." *La gioventu' degli storici e delle storiche*, edited by Marco Severini and Lidia Pupilli. Venice: Marsilio. Forthcoming.

Serra, Ilaria: "Italian American Femininities." *The Routledge History of the Italian Americans*, edited by William Connell and Stanislao Pugliese. New York: Routledge, 2017. 539-551.

Edited Conference Proceedings

Serra Ilaria, Andrea Dini and Daria Mizza (eds). *AATI (American Association Teachers of Italian) - Online Working Papers*, "Siena," issue 1, 2016.
<https://bancheri.utm.utoronto.ca/aati-online/wpapers/wpapers.php>

Serra Ilaria, Andrea Dini and Daria Mizza (eds). *AATI (American Association Teachers of Italian) - Online Working Papers*, "Napoli," issue 2, 2017.

Refereed Presentations

Serra, Ilaria, "Undergraduate Research and Study Abroad: Venice, Italy" (Poster Presentation) and Panel Discussion, "Broadening Participation in Undergraduate Research." 10th Annual Florida Statewide Symposium: Best Practices in Undergraduate Research, University of Central Florida, Orlando. October 27-28th, 2017.

Serra, Ilaria. "La gioventù di Mario Isnenghi tra libri e campielli." University of Macerata Symposium, "La gioventù degli storici e delle storiche." Senigallia, Italy. June 30, 2017.

Serra, Ilaria. "'Street' is Feminine in Italian. Feminist Bodies in Italian Streets" for the 2017 Somaesthetics Conference, "Bodies at the Streets: Somaesthetics of City Life," FAU, Boca Raton. January 27, 2017.

Invited Presentations

Serra, Ilaria. "Le canzoni della storia." IX Symposium Teaching Italian: EduMusica: Songs and Music in the Italian Curriculum. Montclair State University (NJ). November 4, 2016.

Serra, Ilaria. "Narration *in limina*. Autobiographies by Ordinary Italian immigrants." 7th Neil Euliano Lecture in Italian American Studies, University of Central Florida, February 29, 2016.

Serra, Ilaria. "*Come l'onda del mare. Like the Sea Wave. Traduzione inglese di alcune poesie di Giovanni Corona*" (with Zachary Scalzo). Santu Lussurgiu (Sardinia, Italy). July 4, 2014. The poems have been published in a pamphlet, read and recorded to serve in the creation of the *Giovanni Corona Literary Park* in Santu Lussurgiu.

GRANTS AND AWARDS RECEIVED

Italian Government funds for Italian program, via Miami Consulate: \$800 - for a course for AP Italian teachers in Florida, to be delivered in March 2018.

Groundwork for College Endowment titled to the memory of Tom DiSalvo. Fall 2017.

FAU Office Undergraduate Research, OURI Pre-proposal for new Research Intensive Course Proposal. Recommendation for continuation into full proposal. December 2017.

FAU Office Undergraduate Research, OURI Travel Grant for the 10th Annual *Florida Statewide Symposium: Best Practices in Undergraduate Research*, UCF, October 27-28th, 2017. \$500 travel reimbursement.

Private Grant from Patricia Badia Johnson for the research on family WWII letters, for students Vincenza Iadevaia, Viviana Pezzullo, Federico Tiberini. \$800 grant. Summer-Fall 2017.

South Florida Cultures Grant for the project "Orality & Microhistory: Italian-Americans in South Florida". Mentorship for researchers, Vincenza Iadevaia, Viviana Pezzullo, Federico Tiberini. \$1,000 grant. Spring 2017.

Curriculum Development Grant, Pre-Proposal, with Carla Calarge, Nuria Godon, Michael Horswell, Fred Conrod: two team-taught pilot courses for new track in Global Studies. Fall 2016.

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program, SURF, Summer 2016. \$3,500 in support of faculty mentored project. Student: Colleen Nelson. Title: "Living in a Dying City. Loss and Preservation of Venetian Culture in the Face of Disaster: Rising Sea Level and Mass Tourism".

College nominee for FAU Excellence and Innovation in Undergraduate Teaching Award, February 2014.

University Scholar of the Year Award, Assistant Professor level: Florida Atlantic University, 2012. Research grant: \$5,000.

COURSES DEVELOPED AND TAUGHT

Graduate Courses

Italian Culture through Cinema: History in Film
Italian America: Translating Identities
Venice in the Italian Literary Imagination

Scrivere se stessi: l'autobiografia italiana

Undergraduate Courses

Italian Film Classics

Venice and Its Reflections: Literature and Culture of Venice

The Italian City between History and Imagination

Italian Culture through Recent Italian Cinema

Italy in Lyrics

Italia Oggi

Dialectology

COURSES TAUGHT

Introduction to World Literature

Italian Literature from the Baroque to the Present

Italian-American Cinema

From Text to Screen: Italian Cinema and Literature

Masterpieces of Italian Cinema

Tessere la Lingua: Italian Linguistics

Italian Language, all levels.

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/DIRECTORSHIP

Ph.D. Dissertation Director: Vincenza Iadevaia, "New Hyphenated Film in Italy" (2017).

Ph.D. Dissertation Director: Marianna De Tollis, "Female Agency in the Letters by Veronica Franco and Sor Juana de la Cruz" (2016-17).

Ph.D. Dissertation Director: Edna Lubonja, "Carmine Abate and the Arberesh Culture in Southern Italy" (2016-17).

Ph.D. Dissertation external reader, University of North Carolina: Alessia Martini, "Spatial Practices in Italian Cinema" (2016-17).

MA Thesis Committee Member, FAU Department of History: Andrea Schwab (2016): "The Cinematic Portrayal of Ancient Women: Cleopatra VII, Livia Augusta, and Servilia Caepionis and the Three Waves of Feminism".

MA Exam Committee Member: Gizem Anil, Comparative Literature (Fall 2016).

MA Exam Committee Member: Austin Sanniota-Edwards, Comparative Literature: Italian (Spring 2016).

MA Thesis Committee Member, FAU College of Science: Andrew Capra (2015): "Digital Mapping of Venice."

MA Thesis/Exam Committee Member: Zachary Scalzo (2014): "And Yet: Studio sulla traduzione di alcuni 'Appunti' epigrammatici di Sandro Penna."

MA Thesis/Exam Committee Member: Jonathan O'Neill (2012): "Traduzione di una metafora: un ponte a Mostar come il proceso di traduzione tra lingue e culture in sei saggi di *Pianoterra* di Erri De Luca."

MA Thesis/Exam Committee Member: Erin Patel (2012): “Bar Splendor: Francesco Meriano e la (ri)illuminazione delle parole in libertà.”

MA Thesis Director: Edna Lubonja (2009-2010): “*They Were Seeking Happiness*. Translation of *Ata Kerkonin Lumturine* by Victor Canosinaj”

MA Thesis Committee Member: Luisanna Sardu (2007-2008): “Proto-feminism and Gender in Italian Renaissance and Spanish Baroque Age”

MA Exam Committee Member: Barbara Cornacchia (2006-2007); Marianna De Tollis (2009-2010); Lisa Meyer (2012); Alessia Martini and Teresa Chiappetta (2014).

SERVICE

Department

- Graduate Program Committee member: Fall 2014- present
- **Undergraduate Program Committee member: Spring 2018**
- **Chair, Student Support Fund Committee: Fall 2017- present**
- Annual Evaluation Revision Committee: 2016-17
- **Advisor for the FAU Italian Club, “Insieme,” winner of two scholarships by NIAF (National Italian American Foundation), 2007-2008. 2007-present.**
- **Advisor and founder of the Italian Honor Society “Gamma Kappa Alpha”, 2017-present.**
- **WEC Committee: Fall 2015-present**
- **McGraw-Hill Funds Committee: Fall 2014 - Spring 2017**
- **Language Co-Coordinator for Italian beginning levels, 2007-present.**
- **Scholarship Committee, 2009-present.**
- AD HOC P&T Criteria Committee: Fall 2017
- SPE (Sustained Performance Evaluation) Department Committee, 2016-2017
- MA Exam Coordination for Comparative Literature: Fall 2016, Spring 2017
- P&T Revision Committee: Fall 2015
- **Undergraduate Program Curriculum Committee (2008-Spring 2014).**
- Speakers Committee, 2007-2008.

College

- Ph.D. in Comparative Studies, Executive Committee Member, Fall 2016-present.
- Executive Committee of the Graduate Certificate in Film and Culture, Fall 2017-present.
- ROCA Committee, Fall 2015 – substitution in Spring 2017.
- **College Representative for Undergraduate Program Curriculum Committee, August 2010-Spring 2014.**
- **College Scholarship Committee, August 2012-2016.**
- **GRIP Grant evaluator, Spring 2015.**
- Member of the Editorial Board of *FACS, Florida Atlantic Comparative Studies Journal*. 2002-2005. Editor: 2003-2005.

University

- **Director and organizer of the FAU Study Abroad Program in Florence and Venice. Summer 2003; Summer 2008-present.**
- **Liaison for Student Teaching Internship in Italy with the program SITE and the Rete Scuole Superiori del Piemonte. Students participating: Dominic Santoya (2018), Alberto Gonzales (2018), Kevin Anderson (2017-18), Nicole Abbott (2015), Francesca Vespa (2015), Lea DeLosa (2015), Thomas Whatley (2014), Roberto Castellanos (2014).**
- **Coordinator for the SITE Program for paid teaching internships in Lombardy's high schools for our students: Kevin Merida Capote, Alberto Gonzales, Dominic Santoya.**
- **Honor Compound director for Kristina Beluskov, LIT2100. Fall 2017**
- **Organizer of the "New Italian Directors Series in Memory of Pat Valenti" (sponsored by Il Circolo Cultural Society of the Palm Beaches, and in collaboration with University of Miami and FIU):**
 - Sergio Colabona, Spring 2012
 - Andrea Segre, Spring 2014
 - Samuele Rossi, Spring 2014 (not named for Pat Valenti)
 - Gabriele Cecconi, Spring 2015
 - Giuseppe Battiston. Spring 2016
 - Mirko Pincelli, Spring 2017
- **Establishment of MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) Between FAU and University of Macerata. 2016.**
- **Establishing and coordinating the agreement FAU-Network of Piedmont Schools, for FAU graduates to teach English in Piedmont high schools. 2013.**
- **Co-organizer of lecture and screening by Hava Volterra at Life Long Learning Center, Spring 2010.**

Community

- **Presentation, moderation, leading of meetings with filmmakers and audience at the Film Festival "Opere Prime" in Gallio/Asiago, Italy, July 2010-present.**
- **Scholarship Committee Chair for P.E.O. International (Philanthropic Educational Organization), 2014-present. Scholarships received for Lisa Medina (\$1,000), Keisha Williams (\$1,700).**
- **Co-organizer of lectures and screenings with filmmakers Mirko Pincelli, Andrea Segre and Gabriele Cecconi, and actor Giuseppe Battiston, at University of Miami, Spring 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.**

Profession

- **Organization of International/National Symposiums at FAU:**
 - **II Symposium: *Italy in Transit*, Florida Atlantic University, 2-3 February 2018. 16 speakers.**
 - **I Symposium: *Italy in Transit*, Florida Atlantic University, 3-4 February 2017. 11 speakers (one from Italy).**

- **Co-coordinator of the Italian/Latin American Symposium, *Dagli Appennini alle Ande*. FAU. March 28-29, 2008.**
- **Co-coordinator of Symposium in Italian American Studies, *La Creazione sul Trattino*, FAU. April 20-21, 2007.**
- **Coordinator of Internship for Susanna Zotti, student of the University of Venice. Work for J-1 Visa application, and mentoring. Fall 2017.**
- **Co-editor of “AATI-ACTFL Online Working Papers” (with Andrea Dini, Montclair State University, and Daria Mizza, Johns Hopkins University). Three-year term: 2015-2018.**
 1. Volume 1: Siena, 2015
 2. Volume 2: Napoli, 2016
 3. Volume 3: Palermo 2017
- **Organization of course of AP Italian teachers, on behalf of the Italian Consulate in Miami. March 2018.**
- **Member of “Osservatorio della Lingua Italiana.” Italian Consulate General in Miami. 2017-present.**

FUNDRAISING

Scholarship for students of the Venice Study Abroad Program:

- **Thomas McCormick Scholarship (\$1,000-2,000 per year): 2011-present.**
- **Order of the Sons of Italy, Boca Raton Lodge (\$500-1000 per year), 2015 to the present.**
- **Margaret Broch (with Myriam Ruthenberg) (\$1,000 per year).**
- **Il Circolo-Italian Cultural Society of the Palm Beaches (with Myriam Ruthenberg) (\$5,000 per year).**
- **Tony Colella Scholarship (\$150 per year): 2014.**
- **Sister Cities International (\$500-\$1,000 per year): 2011-2012.**
- **Tom Di Salvo painting donation and possible scholarship (Fall 2017).**

Research Fund “Patricia Badia-Johnson” for the archival and study project of Italian American World War II letters. Primary researchers: Vincenza Iadevaia, Viviana Pezzullo, Federico Tiberini (\$800), 2017.

Lecture/screening series: Pat Valenti New Italian Director Series (with Myriam Ruthenberg) (\$1500 annually) 2014-present

January 25, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

I write this letter to show my full support for Dr. Ilaria Serra for the 2017 Distinguished Mentor of the Year Award. Dr. Serra has been, without a doubt, my most influential professor and having the opportunity to work with her on an undergraduate research project was the highlight of my undergraduate education.

Dr. Serra was truly an incredible source of support during the DIS I took part in while studying abroad in Venice, her passion, drive, and knowledge were always an inspiration while working on our topic of the affects of Tourism on Venice and its locals. With every step, from organizing interviews of local Venetians to the actual interviews and then to the post interview write up, Dr. Serra was able to provide clarity when I felt muddled, constructive criticism to shore up any weaknesses, and encouragement for the stronger aspects of my work. I wholeheartedly believe that without Dr. Serra I would have floundered through the research project, she understood my goals and intentions and strived to nurture them, allowing them to flourish. Her empathy is second to none, and thus she has been able to provide both support professionally and emotionally to ensure my success as her mentee.

To be able to call Dr. Ilaria Serra my mentor is an honor, having been able to work with her has been a privilege, and her lessons throughout my educational career have been a blessing. There can be no one more deserving than her for the Mentor of the Year Award, and I strongly endorse her for consideration.

Sincerely,

Alberto Gonzalez

COLLEEN NELSON

18390 SE Lakeside Drive, Tequesta, Florida 33469 | 561-308-6688 | colleen.nelson@gmail.com

January 25, 2018

2017 Distinguished Mentor of the Year Award (DMOY) Committee

Florida Atlantic University

Dear Esteemed Committee Members:

It was my privilege and honor to work with Dr. Iaria Serra on my undergraduate research project "Living in a Dying City: Loss and Preservation of Venetian Culture in the Face of Disaster: Rising Sea Level and Mass Tourism" during the summer of 2016. Dr. Serra has a true passion for her work and she did everything in her power to facilitate my research activities, providing me with support and supervision as needed, but also freedom and independence in pursuit of my academic goals.

Based upon my experience, I cannot stress enough how important it is to have the assistance of someone such as Dr. Serra, to help navigate the lengthy and often confusing requirements in connection with approval of a Undergraduate Research project, which can be daunting for a first time researcher such as myself. In my case, the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship was awarded to me without a clear understanding of the various stages of the approval process, especially concerning the IRB and the critical deadlines. The rigorous prerequisites and complex documentation requirements were confusing and sometimes tedious; this is where Dr. Serra's expertise was so vital and reassuring. Once those hurdles were overcome, Dr. Serra facilitated my work on the ground in Venice, giving me access to many of her connections there which enabled me to conduct the necessary interviews, library research, attendance to public events, etc. This was especially important to my project as I was only abroad for a limited time.

2017 Distinguished Mentor of the Year Award (DMOY) Committee

Florida Atlantic University

January 25, 2018

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I am very lucky to have had this experience and recommend Dr. Serra highly. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colleen Nelson". The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

COLLEEN NELSON