

EDI FRIDAYS

LEARNING ABOUT EACH OTHER — ONE FRIDAY AT A TIME



EQUITY / DIVERSITY / INCLUSION

Friday, Dec 8, 2023

Learning about each other...one Friday at a time

KNOWLEDGE

DEFINITIONS

DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS

St. Nicholas Day - December 6



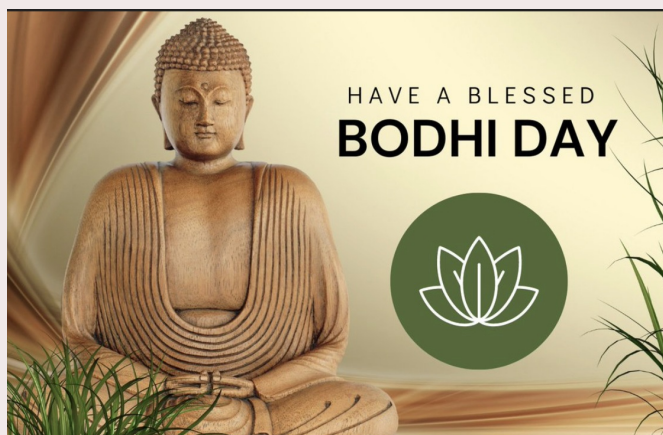
Also known as the Feast of Saint Nicholas, Christians honor the birthday of Saint Nicholas—the inspiration behind Santa Claus, given his proclivity towards gift-giving.

Immaculate Conception Day -- December 9



Catholics celebrate the day of Immaculate Conception to honor the Virgin Mary, who is believed to have been born without original sin. The day is often celebrated by going to church and feasting.

Bodhi Day -- December 8



Also known as Rohatsu, this Buddhist tradition honors the day in which the Buddha—Siddartha Gautama—is said to have achieved enlightenment. Many Buddhists celebrate it through meditation.

Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe - December 12



Mexicans and Mexican-Americans often celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico who symbolizes patriotism and devotion. Millions of pilgrims typically visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December to celebrate the festival, which marks one of several apparitions of the Virgin Mary that some Catholic believers say was witnessed by an Indigenous Mexican man in 1531.

Hanukkah - December 18-26



The eight-day Jewish holiday of Hanukkah begins Dec. 18. A central part of the Jewish Festival of Lights entails the lighting of a nine-branched menorah each night. The ritual symbolizes how one day's worth of oil miraculously lasted for eight days during a battle between a small group of Jewish people and the powerful Greek-Syrian army in 165 B.C.

Christmas - December 25



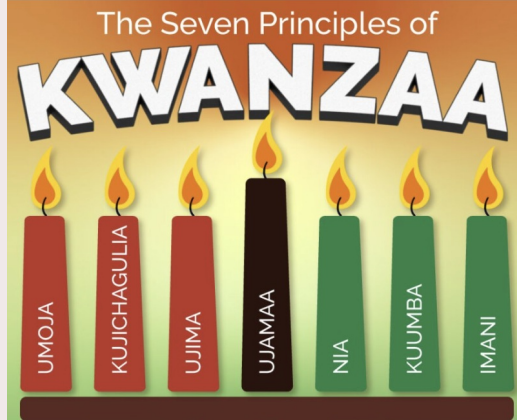
Christians celebrate Christmas largely to commemorate the birth of Jesus. But it has also been adopted as a secular family holiday by people of all faiths. It's marked by an exchange of gifts as well as excitement for the arrival of Santa Claus.

Boxing Day - December 26



A British tradition that occurs the day after Christmas and dates back to the 1800s when Queen Victoria ruled the throne. At the time, it was a day to ensure that upper class Britons gave servants and workers a day off, in addition to giving them presents.

Kwanzaa - December 26 – January 1



The week-long holiday of Kwanzaa honors African American heritage as a cultural holiday, not a religious one. Created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga as a way to unite the African-American community following the Watts Rebellion. The name comes from the Swahili phrase “matunda ya kwanza,” which translates to “first fruits.” Dr. Karenga formulated seven key principles for Kwanzaa: unity; self-determination; collective responsibility; cooperative economics; purpose; creativity; and faith.

Zarathosht Diso - December 26



Founded by the Prophet Zoroaster more than 3,000 years ago, Zoroastrianism is one of the world’s oldest monotheistic religions. Zoroastrians honor the death of their prophet on this day, typically by visiting a fire temple and offering prayers.

New Year's Eve - December 31



The day before every new year is met with anticipation around the world, as revelers party, set off fireworks, set resolutions and countdown to midnight to welcome in new beginnings.

SPOTLIGHT

Faculty/Staff Spotlight



Risa Barisch

she/her

Manager of Arts Marketing –
Mason Gross School of the Arts

Biography

Hobbies: Jewelry making, hiking, flea market fan, and (over)enthusiastic cat mom

I center EDI principles in my work because everyone deserves a chance to create the life they want. It's important that my work helps create access to opportunities in the arts and higher education, and I strive to highlight the participation of people of all backgrounds in our programs and initiatives.

“We're stronger as an organization when we create space for people from all walks of life to learn and thrive in a welcoming and inclusive environment.”

“Equity work is valuable to me because I learn so much about myself and the world through others' perspectives and experiences. Life is richer with a multitude of voices, and everyone has a story—what can we discover when we approach each other from a place of empathy and connection and the desire to create a better, fairer world.”

Student Spotlight



Talli Basile

She/They

Year: Senior – BFA Acting

Hometown: Washington, DC

Hobbies: singing, dancing, thrifting, writing, songwriting, cartwheels

Talli, I've known you since high school and you've blossomed to a woman! How did that happen?

“I don't know. I do know I'm ready to go and make my mark on the world.”

That's so exciting. Yes! And it's clear that you are ready.

“I am! As a queer, differently abled, biracial black actor. Thus, I am frequently confronted by the lack of representation of the intersections of my identities.”

Wow. That's deep.

“Yes, for a while, I believed my identity was a liability. It took three years of college for me to believe I could act professionally, as I have never seen my experience portrayed. I've had to learn to value the worlds inside me.”

Explain further – put that under the microscope.

“Well, my focus as a theatre artist is shifting the social paradigm, giving voice to underrepresented communities, and disrupting the culture to spark long needed for societal change.”

Preach!

“I want to expand the conversation, to tell stories that haven't been told before, therefore diversity and inclusion are essential. And yet, just diversifying the bodies in space cannot make an impact without equity.”

“It is only until we make institutions accountable to address the imbalances of the systems. Then, everyone can sit comfortably around the table to be heard.”



Well said. So how do you fit in this?

“I realized that the fluidity of my identity lends to the fluidity of character. The reality is stereotypes exist for a reason. There will always be pressure to conform but the potency of who I am allows me to break through any barrier set before me.”

Like with your performance as Lady Macbeth. What was the experience like?

“Lady Macbeth was a dream come true. That role is about the fervor of survival. I really put myself in the circumstances of being a woman with status in 11th century Scotland. Lady M. is ruthless because she has to be. Working from that place, being given permission to turn up the volume on the parts of myself that regularly don't see the light of day was the ultimate acting exercise.”



“Lady M. showed me what I’m capable of.”

You and your mom are so close. Can you discuss how she impacts your artistry?

“My mom is my everything - my ride or die since day one. She’s the source of my ambition. One of the smartest and most passionate people I know.”



“As an emerging young artist, I wanna get my hands dirty. I’ve made a commitment to myself to be an innovative artist along with being an interpretive one. I will not wait for that validation. I will take the reins - write, direct, and take control of my artistry in ways that will terrify me.

“Ultimately, I will reap more from following the impulse to create than waiting for someone to call.”

Artist Spotlight



FREDERICK CURRY

He/him

- Associate Professor of Professional Practice
- Director, EdM Program in Dance Education
- Director, Polestar Pilates Teacher Training Program
- Dance Department, Mason Gross School of the Arts

Biography

“I see my role as facilitating students constructing conscious understanding of, and personal agency in, how and why movement has transformational potential in their lives and the world in which they live.”



Can you discuss how your art focuses on EDI principles.

“Sure. I believe arts education is inherently pluralistic in celebrating a spectrum of cultural and identity-situated ways of knowing, being, seeing and doing.”

“I embrace that EDI-aligned perspective in my teaching and practice.”

Can you discuss some of your work that you're particularly proud of.

"I'm most proud of my work mentoring Dance Education candidates over the years and seeing the transformative work they're doing in New Jersey PreK-12 schools as teachers and supervisors."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

MFA Visual Arts – first-year exhibition

November 27 to December 14, 2023 – Mason Gross Galleries

[More info](#)



EVENTS

FOR THE NEXT 30 DAYS

Christmas in Carol and Song Kirkpatrick Chapel

Saturday December 9 | 6:00pm & 9:00pm
Sunday December 10, 2023 | 5:00pm & 7:30pm

[More info](#)

BFA Sophomore Filmmaking Showcase New Brunswick Performing Arts Center

Sunday December 12, 2023 7:00pm

[More info](#)