**And The Winner Is! One Book One Campus 2022-2023 Episode 163**

00:00:00 **Rita**

Shared reading experiences really bring people together because they say, "You can't judge a book by its cover." So, you really don't know what people have gone through or what they may have experienced unless you share stories.

00:00:18 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:19 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:23 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:40 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion-

00:00:44 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:00:49 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly, Pomona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:00:55 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:00:58 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

00:01:05 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:08 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:10 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

00:01:21 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy coordinator.

00:01:26 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:31 **Sun**

Welcome back to the Magic Mountie Podcast, I'm your host, Sun Ezzell. In this week's episode, I talk with Mt. SAC History Professor, Professional Learning Academy Coordinator, and One Book One Campus Coordinator, Rita Page.

00:01:45 **Sun**

Each year, the campus votes on the new One Book One Campus selection, and the winner is, Illegally Yours, a memoir by Rafael Agustin, Mt. SAC alumni and writer on the hit TV show, Jane the Virgin. Called an alternatingly, hilarious and touching exploration of belonging and identity, Illegally Yours revolves around one very simple question; what does it mean to be American? We hope you'll join us for this year's One Book One Campus great read, enjoy.

00:02:19 **Sun**

Welcome back to the Magic Mountie Podcast. This is your host, Sun Ezzell, and I'm so pleased to be here today with Rita Page, Professional Learning Academy Coordinator and Mt. SAC faculty. Welcome to the podcast.

00:02:32 **Rita**

Thank you so much for having me. I'm glad to be here.

00:02:36 **Sun**

I've really been looking forward to our conversation. But before we jump in and talk about One Book One Campus, I was wondering will you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your work at Mt. SAC and as an educator?

00:02:50 **Rita**

Well, as you know, my name is Rita Page, and I teach U.S. history here at Mt. SAC. I've been here for 10 years, and most recently, I've taken over the role of coordinating the One Book One Campus project.

00:03:04 **Rita**

What else I can tell you about my work is my area of research is African American dance in the U.S. I also teach on other campuses. I teach an ethnic studies course at Cal State Long Beach, and I enjoy being an educator.

00:03:22 **Sun**

Your classes sound really interesting. I'm ready to sign up for all of them right now.

00:03:27 **Rita**

Thank you.

00:03:28 **Sun**

So, I was wondering if we could talk a little bit about One Book One Campus. Maybe you could tell us a little bit about the book of the year, and how the book is selected.

00:03:38 **Rita**

Well, the book this year is called Illegally Yours, and the book is really interesting because the author attended Mt. SAC, and his parents also, had classes at Mt. SAC years ago. And so, we have an alumni for our author, and that's really rewarding that someone from our campus, that graduated from our campus actually wrote a book.

00:04:06 **Rita**

Illegally Yours, the story, is autobiography about his experience as an immigrant to the United States and his parents' experiences. The book was chosen in an open forum. So, everyone on campus had a chance to vote for the book. The book was among four other books. So, it was a total of five books that were under consideration.

00:04:37 **Rita**

And so, the campus community chose the book. So, this is the book that won. That's all I can say now. I started reading it, but I don't want to give anything away.

00:04:49 **Sun**

I understand it's so exciting this is the first time we've had an alumni as the author of our One Book One Campus. So, it's really wonderful to have a chance to read this book together in our community. And I know that the story will resonate for lots of folks with their experiences or the experiences of their students or their colleagues.

00:05:10 **Rita**

Yes, that's definitely true. Although the author is from the country of Ecuador, this book can resonate with many immigrants from all over the world. His experience is pretty universal; not being able to speak English, he came as a young child, so it's a really good book.

00:05:34 **Sun**

Wonderful. Thank you. I think that's such a powerful experience to see our own experiences represented and stories and also, to have an opportunity to learn about the experiences of those who have very different life paths than we ourselves have been on. So, if folks are interested in getting involved, how can they do that?

00:05:56 **Rita**

Well, actually, One Book One Campus, we have a Smartsheet that's in the pod so that a person can just go to the pod calendar and buy and sign up for the One Book One Campus. We call it our little group. When we read a book, we call our group The Great Read.

00:06:16 **Rita**

So, the Great Read members we meet once a month to talk about the book, and the book has been divided - I've divided the book into three different sections, and so, it's approximately a hundred pages of reading within three weeks. And so, hopefully, people can fit that into their calendar and read that 100 pages. Then we'll get together and talk about those pages, and by the end of the semester, we've completed the book.

00:06:48 **Sun**

That sounds wonderful.

00:06:49 **Rita**

Yeah, yeah. And so, we complete the book this fall, and then our plan is to use the book in some way in the spring, either with a campus event or the individual Great Read members can use the book in their classrooms or share stories with their colleagues.

00:07:10 **Rita**

So, we plan to really use this book for the campus, is One Book One Campus, so that we're all as many as possible, people on campus will know about the book, can share the story, and really think about our students when we read this book because it's just amazing how this story can resonate with a lot of our students.

00:07:34 **Sun**

That sounds wonderful. And so, it sounds like there will be an opportunity to talk about the book and also, maybe to share ideas with colleagues about how we can share it with our students or with our colleagues in the spring. That's great, thank you. Well, we're going to include the link to the Smartsheet for folks to request a copy of the book and the show notes to the podcast episode and make that nice and convenient for folks

00:07:57 **Rita**

That would be really wonderful, yes.

00:07:59 **Sun**

So, I was wondering, you're a historian and I'm wondering if we might be able to talk a little bit about the power of story and the power of having a shared reading experience with folks in our community.

00:08:13 **Rita**

Well, shared reading experiences really bring people together because they say, "You can't judge a book by its cover." So, you really don't know what people have gone through or what they may have experienced unless you share stories, and it brings us closer together and it makes us like each other.

00:08:34 **Rita**

We maybe sort of unwilling to step outside of our normal circle and meet someone new, but a shared story such as Illegally Yours can bring someone together, someone in your circle that you never would've thought would be your friend or would be your confidant.

00:08:57 **Rita**

As a historian, I've seen this happen many, many times in the classroom where students kind of cluster next to people that are like them, that look like them, that talk like them, that speak the same language. But we may discuss something in class that will totally, totally make people understand the universality of history and how we have shared stories whether they be stories of struggle or triumph.

00:09:31 **Rita**

And so, I'm hoping that more and more people join the One Book One Campus great read group so that we can share stories, can share one story, and realize how alike we are.

00:09:47 **Sun**

That sounds so wonderful and thank you for just a welcoming way of thinking about the opportunity to join. And as you were talking, I was reflecting on how during the pandemic, so many folks felt isolated not being able to be in this physical space with others, and how stories are really part of what carried us through that part of the pandemic. And here's an opportunity to kind of reconnect with our colleagues, with our students, with our community at Mt. SAC.

00:10:19 **Rita**

I'd like to share something else - personally, I'm not recommending this for everyone, but personally, I collect books. I love reading and I love books. My library is probably over 700 volumes. And the variety of books that I have here in my home, they go from autobiographies of like Nelson Mandela and maybe Serena Williams to art books of Renaissance artists as well as Frida Kahlo artist and banned books such as the readings of Anne Rice and Interview with the Vampire, and African American Histories, Frederick Douglas and Booker T. Washington - W. E. B. Du Bois.

00:11:12 **Rita**

And so, these books, they're more than books to me, they're like friends to me. And I just really encourage people to get back to reading, get back to reading books. It's so personal. It's so relaxing and fun. And when we watch movies - I love movies and I love television shows and so forth; but in a way, we're letting someone else dictate to us the feeling of the text and the emotions and so forth.

00:11:43 **Rita**

But when you read text by yourself or with a group of people, you're able to envision your own images of what the author is saying. So, you're not being dictated to about what the room looks like and what color, I don't know, the water is, or what kind of clothes the people are wearing.

00:12:07 **Rita**

The author sometimes tells you that, but if he doesn't, you can imagine those things yourself. And so, I think reading is beginning to be a lost art we need to reestablish for ourselves because it creates imagination, and it creates creativity. And so, I hope that people will consider joining our little Great Read group and just read a book.

00:12:33 **Sun**

Sign me up, I'm ready,

00:12:35 **Rita**

Okay. Alright.

00:12:38 **Sun**

It's wonderful. Thank you so much for sharing about One Book One Campus and your work at our college and your other work in education as well. I'm really looking forward to this opportunity to read and talk together.

00:12:53 **Rita**

I'm really, really pleased to be here. Thank you for the opportunity to be on this podcast, and I hope that I'll be able to come back and talk more about Illegally Yours, and what our group has discovered about this wonderful book.

00:13:11 **Sun**

That would be wonderful.

00:13:12 **Rita**

By the way, I didn't say the author's name, but Illegal Yours is written by Rafael Agustin. So, Rafael Agustin, a wonderful man that wrote this book.

00:13:24 **Sun**

Wonderful. Thank you so much. It was such a pleasure to have you on the podcast, and I'm already looking forward to our next opportunity to chat.

00:13:32 **Rita**

Thank you, Sun.

00:13:34 **Sun**

Thank you, Rita.

00:13:37 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast, and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.