

# Professional storyteller educates students about the oral tradition

On Tuesday, Lafayette students got a unique glimpse into the art of Storytelling. Lisa Facciponti, 'professional storyteller,' visited campus to give a presentation on the history of the genre, entitled "Oral Traditions in World Cultures: journeys Through Storytelling."

Facciponti has been storytelling on a professional level since 1997 and on an amateur level Since 1990. Her interest in the art began as a child ' when she read short stories and folk tales.

Using slides, video clips, and live performance, Facciponti communicated the history and importance of storytelling to her audience.

Storytelling, which began as early 2000 BC, was once the key to preserving history and tradition in cultures, she said. "They were the guardians of the word, Facciponti said. As more of the world became literate, storytelling was less emphasized in culture. However, Facciponti stresses its enduring importance in society. "To me, the stories are very important. I try to keep the torch lit," she said.

In order to stress the various styles from around the world, Facciponti drew from stories from Inuit, Native American, Mexican and various African tribal cultures. Commenting on the culture of Storytelling, she said, "You can certainly tell a lot about the people [of a culture] by listening to their stories."

Her enthusiasm for her art became apparent as soon as she performed these stories. Using body language, song, and, in some cases, a tribal drum, Facciponti brought the stories to life. In "Little Brown Circle," a Native American tale, she

told the story of the origin of the bat using song and the beat of a drum to accentuate the piece. Later in the presentation, she told a Mexican tale in both Spanish and English to capture the cultural essence.

Currently, Facciponti teaches storytelling mainly to school children, focusing on troubled adolescents.

In her presentation, Facciponti

showed that the art is not only historically significant, but is a wonderful and creative way of preserving stories through the culture today. "I often say [storytelling is] the voices of the ancestor whispering in our ears," Facciponti said. In her show, she proved that these whispers are not only worth telling, but are worth listening to as well.



*From the Lafayette, February 14, 2003. Article by Tiffany Dyer, photo by Allison Carrier.*