UCSB Reads 2019  
The Best We Could Do by Thi Bui

The UCSB Library is excited to announce the selection of a book for UCSB Reads 2019: The Best We Could Do, an illustrated memoir by Thi Bui. For over twelve years, since the program’s start in 2007, UCSB Reads has brought the campus and Santa Barbara communities together to read a common book that explores important issues of our time. “The Best We Could Do” is a memoir written in the form of a comic book, in the tradition of Art Spiegelman’s “Maus” and Marjane Satrapi’s “Persepolis.” Thi Bui chronicles generations of her family history in Vietnam, including her birth during the final months of the Vietnam War and her parents’ escape to, and early years in, the United States. The story is rendered in flashbacks from Bui’s current life as a new mother in California. Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen has described The Best We Could Do as a “compelling memoir” that will “break your heart and heal it.”

An advisory committee made up of faculty, staff, students, and community representatives selected The Best We Could Do as this year’s book, citing its creative and intimate portrayal of struggles of identity, family relations, immigration, and displacement.

A Caldecott Honor-winning illustrator, Bui teaches in the MFA in Comics Program at the California College of the Arts. “The Best We Could Do” was a finalist for both the National Book Critics Circle and Eisner awards, and was selected for many “Best of 2017” book lists. Bui is currently researching and drawing a work of graphic nonfiction about how Asian American Pacific Islanders are impacted by detention and deportation.

During the winter and spring quarters, free copies of the book will be distributed to UCSB students and the UCSB Library will present panel discussions, film screenings, exhibitions, and other events on campus and in the community. Bui will deliver a free public lecture in Campbell Hall on April 25, 2019.

The Associated Students' financial contributions have helped the Library in the past to sustain this award-winning program, which costs approximately $40-50,000 annually. This year, we are asking for $5,000, which will allow us to put free copies of the selected title into the hands of 588 students.

With your $5,000 contribution, the Library will:

- List Associated Students in sponsorship materials at the author event;
- Invite an AS representative to distribute free books with Chancellor Yang, Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall, and University Librarian Kristin Antelman at the kick-off book giveaway;
- Reserve ten premium seats at the author event in Campbell Hall for AS board members;
- Host two AS board members at a special reception with the author.

Thank you in advance for your support. We truly appreciate your partnership and collaboration.

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