For The Record

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE
College of Letters & Science

Newsletter of the Department of History | Summer 2019

Chair's Greeting

Dear Friends of the UWM Department of History,

I am happy to send out our latest newsletter to update you on the department's activities.

The department continues to excel in undergraduate and graduate teaching, despite a sharp reduction of faculty overall. Our nationally recognized faculty are frequently asked to comment on current events and our students are also in the news regularly. The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee History has become a leading source for Milwaukee history around the world. To share all of these accomplishments, we have entered the digital age with our own Facebook (@UWMHistory) and LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8699283/) pages and an updated department website. Please "Like" and "Follow" our pages and watch for posts about Department events and news. Our first annual History student research conference this April featured both graduate and undergraduate student presenters and was a resounding success. The Phi Alpha Theta honor society continues to grow its membership. We awarded over $10,000 in undergraduate scholarships thanks to our generous donors and held our third annual McGaffey Lecture this spring.

The last few years have seen the department lose several prominent faculty to retirement including Profs. Margo Anderson, David Hoeveler, Marc Levine, Genevieve McBride, Helena Pycior, and Merry Wiesner-Hanks. However, the department has welcomed three new faculty members: Profs. Christopher Cantwell (American, Digital and Public History), Thomas Haigh (History of Information Technology, Business History), Nigel Rothfels (German history), and most recently, Rebecca Shumway (African History).

A special thank you to those who support us with their time and monetary donations. Your generous gifts have a significant impact on our entire department. We could not accomplish much of what we do, especially scholarships, fellowships, and educational enhancements, without your support. Please continue to think of us as you make gift decisions, both now and in the future. Contact our Development Office for more information on becoming a "Friend of History" (ladietz@uwm.edu).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Rodriguez, Professor and Chair

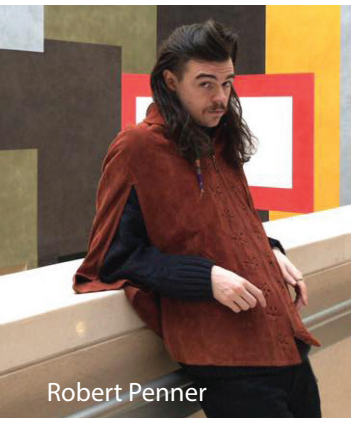
New McGaffey Lecture Created

Since 2017, a generous gift from Jere D. McGaffey, Esq., has allowed the Department to bring expert historians to campus to give a major public lecture.

The McGaffey lecture focuses on political, military, or biographical history from any place in the world from World War II and earlier. Professor Mary Sarah Bilder, of Boston College Law School, gave the series' inaugural lecture, about James Madison and the Constitutional Convention. In 2018, Alexis Peri of Boston University's Department of History spoke about diaries kept by residents of Leningrad during the siege in World War II. Elizabeth F. Thompson, Professor and Mohamed S. Farsi Chair of Islamic Peace, School of International Service, American University, gave the 2019 McGaffey Lecture, addressing how the League of Nations' indifference toward Arab interests in the peace settlements after WWI contributed to the rise of contemporary anti-Western Islamism.

Student Travels – Supported by Friends of History

Over winter break MA students Robert Penner and Jamee Pritchard traveled to conduct thesis research and attend the American Historical Association annual meeting in Chicago, respectively. Here they write about their very positive experiences, thanks to support from the Friends of History.


Robert Penner

Robert: I traveled to London to work with archival resources at the SOAS University Library (School of Oriental and African Studies). My thesis project is on agriculture and environmentalist policies in Burkina Faso during their revolutionary period in 1983-1987. The documents at SOAS detail the work several British NGOs and aid groups did in tandem with democratically elected revolutionary defense committees which formed in every village to plan and oversee the resource improvement work that was taking place. Being able to work with these documents was especially important because so much information on the revolutionary government, particularly at the grassroots level in rural areas, has been lost because of the 1987 coup d'etat which overthrew the revolutionary government. I want to thank Joe Austin, Marcus Filippello and the history department as a whole for their assistance in receiving a travel grant and putting me in touch with Burkinabe historians who assisted me in my search for primary source documents.

Jamee Pritchard

Jamee: I was pleasantly surprised with the amount of content that solely focused on African American women's history. From an intergenerational discussion about black feminism to African American women commemorated in public spaces in the American South to black women's activism during the Black Chicago Renaissance, black history was well represented. I especially appreciated the Pan-Africanism perspectives, as they identified the united struggle of black women in the diaspora and their mission to re-define black womanhood outside of its sexist and racist constraints - in both a historical and contemporary context.

My favorite session was, "Women of African Descent and the Body as a Performative Tool to Negotiate Loyalty to Individual and/or Collective Power." The papers presented discussed the black female body as a source of empowerment despite its history of violence, sexualization, and control. A major theme presented was aesthetic as power, as seen by the free women of color in antebellum Louisiana and their re-definition of the tignon into a badge of honor and freedom and the kanga cloth of African women as a tool of social commentary and declaration of loyalty or disloyalty towards community and family. My research centers on black women's empowerment in the 19th and 20th centuries through the culture created by and for the community, and I found this theme worthy of further research. I loved the passionate debates, the detailed explanations of research processes and findings, and the contemporary conversations sparked by historical happenings.

Friends of History:

Your contributions allow us to support student research and travel, bring in visiting speakers, and provide scholarships. We recognize and extend our "Thank You" to all who have contributed since the last edition of this newsletter.

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Dr. Walter & Mrs. Juanita Weare
Dr. Robert H. Wooley
Mr. Thai Xiong
Ms. Youa Xiong-Lee

Recognizing Excellence

New Scholarships

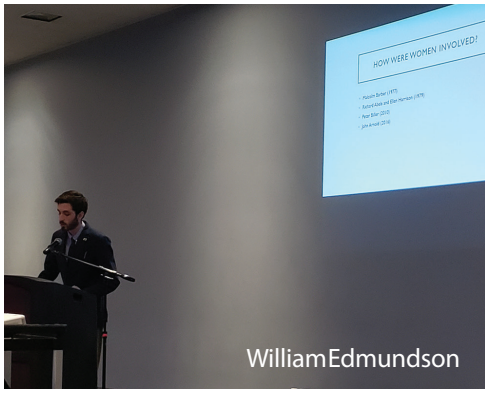
Undergraduate History majors at UWM are the beneficiaries of two new scholarship funds established by distinguished alumni of our department.

The Ahmad Family Scholarship Fund will provide scholarships to exceptional juniors or seniors with preference given to students who started at UWM as freshmen. The Ahmad Family Scholarship Fund was established by Diana Ahmad, Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor, specializing in the history of the American West, at Missouri University of Science & Technology. Dr. Ahmad is a Milwaukee native and earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at UWM.

The J. David Hoeveler Scholarship Fund will support scholarships for majors with a record of high academic achievement. Distinguished Professor Emeritus J. David Hoeveler, a renowned U.S. intellectual historian, joined the faculty of the UWM Department of History in 1971, serving UWM for 46 years.

First annual Student Research Colloquium held

DominiqueWilkerson



WilliamEdmundson

Morgan Bohnert

On April 10, 2019, the Department held its first annual student research colloquium in the Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts. Eight undergraduate and graduate students presented their original research. Pictured are Dominique Wilkerson presenting "Our Mother's Gardens and Tables: Transculturation, Food Culture and Migration in the Making of Black Milwaukee," William Edmundson presenting "Heresy in the Household: Rural Women and Catharism," and Morgan Bohnert presenting "(Un)Happy Housekeeping: Lucille Ball and Phyllis Diller Criticizing Societal Expectations of American White Middle-Class Housewives through Humor in the 1950s and 1960s."

Bruce Fetter fund created to support faculty research

Emeritus Professor Bruce Fetter, who passed away in 2017, has created a fund to support faculty research. Prof. Fetter was a historian of Africa, historical demography, and public health. He was member of the History faculty from 1967 until his retirement, and his support for the Departments of History and French, as well as the College are greatly appreciated. In just the past two years, Prof. Fetter's generous gift has supported research by professors Carolyn Eichner, Joe Austin, Marcus Filippello, Winson Chu, Martha Carlin, Aims McGuinness, Rachel Buff, David DiValerio, and Chia Vang.

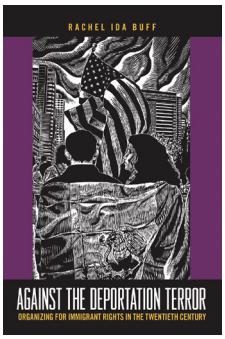
"The Orange Story" wins National Council on Public History award

Congratulations to Prof. Jasmine Alinder and History PhD student Patrick Hall, whose project, The Orange Story," received an honorable mention from the National Council on Public History's for its 2019 Outstanding Public History Project of the Year Award. Prof. Alinder helped lead the team that included Patrick and filmmakers and web developers in Chicago; together they built this digital project on the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Faculty Publications

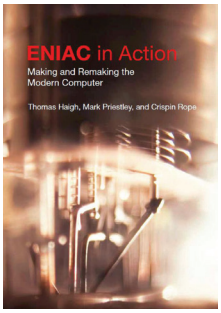
Chia Vang, Fly Until You Die: An Oral History of Hmong Pilots in the Vietnam War
During the Vietnam War, the US Air Force secretly trained pilots from Laos to bolster the Royal Lao Air Force, skirting Lao neutrality. Beginning in 1964, this covert project, "Water Pump," operated out of Udorn Airbase in Thailand with the support of the CIA. This Secret War required recruits from Vietnam-border region willing to take great risks – -a demand met by the marginalized Hmong ethnic minority. Short and problematic training that resulted in varied skill levels, ground fire, dangerous topography, basad weather conditions, and poor aircraft quality, however, led to a nearly 50 percent casualty rate, and those pilots who survived mostly sought refuge in the United States after the war. Fly Until You Die brings their stories to light for the first time. (Oxford, 2019)

Thomas Haigh, Exploring the Early Digital
Computing, media, and communications technology are inextricably intertwined today, in technologies such as the smartphone and internet, in convergent industries, and in social practices. Yet they remain three distinct historical subfields. Contributors to this volume reexamine an apparently familiar era in the history of computing through new lenses, exploring early digital computing and engineering practice as digital phenomena rather than as engines of mathematics and logic – betting odds calculators, card file systems, program and data storage, programmable calculators, and digital circuit design practices. Reconceptualizing the "history of computing" as study of the "early digital" decenters the stored program computer, repositioning it as one of many digital technologies. (Springer, 2019)

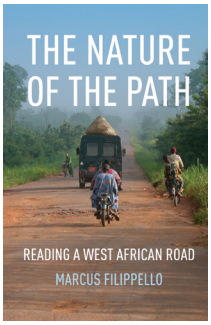


Rachel Buff, Against the Deportation Terror
Rachel Ida Buff, traces the history of the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign (ACPFB), uncovering the deep 20th century roots of contemporary movements for immigrant and refugee rights. Because of protracted repression, the very existence of the ACPFB has vanished from the historical record. Resurfacing at a bitter moment of renewed xenophobia, the story of the ACPFB provides examples of persistence and survival in face of what the organization called "the deportation terror." The book traces advocacy for refugees in the face of bans against various nationalities throughout the 20th century, detailing the repression and surveillance of foreign-born activists, the parallels between McCarthyism and contemporary xenophobia, and, finally, the power of multiracial alliances against xenophobia and white supremacy (Temple University Press, 2017)

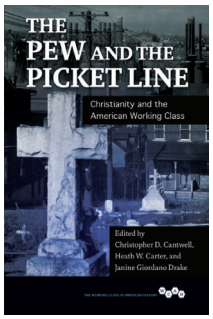
Amanda Seligman, Chicago's Block Clubs – How Neighbors Shape the City
What do you do if your alley is strewn with garbage after the sanitation truck comes through? Or if you're tired of the rowdy teenagers next door? Is there a vacant lot on your block accumulating weeds, needles, and litter? For a century, Chicagoans have joined block clubs to address problems like these. Uncover the history of Chicago block clubs – from origins in the Urban League in the early 1900s through to the Chicago Police Department's twenty-first-century community policing program. Block clubs are sometimes the major outlets for community organizing in the city – especially in neighborhoods otherwise lacking in political strength and clout. Drawing on the stories of hundreds of these groups from across the city, Seligman vividly illustrates what neighbors can – and cannot – accomplish when they work together. (University of Chicago Press, 2016)



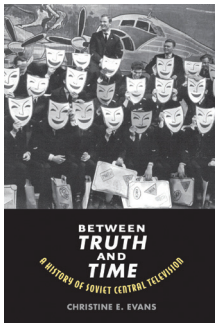
Thomas Haigh, ENIAC In Action: Making and Remaking the Modern Computer
Conceived in 1943, completed in 1945, and decommissioned in 1955, ENIAC (the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer) was the first general-purpose programmable electronic computer. But ENIAC was more than just a milestone on the road to the modern computer. During its decade of life, ENIAC calculated sines and cosines and tested for statistical outliers, plotted the trajectories of bombs and shells, and ran the first numerical weather simulations. ENIAC in Action tells the story of ENIAC's design, construction, testing, use, and afterlife as part of computing folklore. Within this broad sweep, the authors emphasize the crucial but previously neglected years of 1947 to 1948, when ENIAC was reconfigured to run what the authors claim was the first modern computer program to be executed: a simulation of atomic fission for Los Alamos researchers. (MIT Press, 2016)



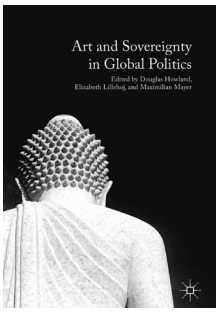
Marcus Filippello, The Nature of the Path – Reading a West African Road
Marcus Filippello shows how a road running through the Lama Valley in Southeastern Benin has become a mnemonic device allowing residents to counter prevailing histories. Built by the French colonial government, the road serves as a site where the Ọhọri people narrate their changing relationship to the environment and assert their independence in the political milieus of colonial and postcolonial Africa. (University of Minnesota Press, 2017)



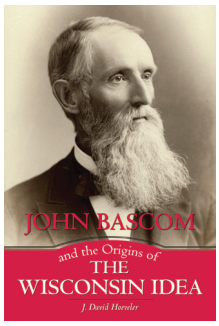
Christopher Cantwell, ed., The Pew and the Picket Line – Christianity and the American Working Class
Focusing on Christianity and its unique purchase in America, the contributors use local histories to illustrate how Americans male and female, rural and urban, and from a range of ethnic backgrounds dwelt in a space between the church and the shop floor. Their vivid essays show Pentecostal miners preaching prosperity while seeking miracles in the depths of the earth, while above ground black sharecroppers and white Protestants established credit unions to pursue a joint vision of cooperative capitalism. The Pew and the Picket Line maps the dynamic contours of a landscape sculpted by the forces of Christianity and capitalism. (University of Illinois Press, 2016)



Christine Evans, Between Truth and Time – A History of Soviet Central Television
In the first full-length study of Soviet Central Television to draw extensively on archival sources, interviews, and television recordings, Christine E. Evans challenges the idea that Soviet mass culture in the Brezhnev era was dull and formulaic. Tracing the emergence of play, conflict, and competition on Soviet news programs, serial films, and variety and game shows, Evans shows that Soviet Central Television's most popular shows were experimental and creative, laying the groundwork for Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms and the post-Soviet media system. (Yale University Press, 2016)



Douglas Howland, ed., Art and Sovereignty in Global Politics
Art and Sovereignty in Global Politics aims to question, challenge, supplement, and revise current understandings of the relationship between aesthetic and political operations. The authors transcend disciplinary boundaries and nurture a wide-ranging sensibility about art and sovereignty, two highly complex and interwoven dimensions of human experience that have rarely been explored by scholars in one conceptual space. By interfering with established dichotomies and unsettling stable debates related to art and sovereignty, all contributors frame new perspectives on the co-constitution of artworks and practices of sovereignty. (Palgrave Macmillian, 2017)



David Hoeveler, John Bascom and the Origins of the Wisconsin Idea
In the Progressive Era, Wisconsin gained national attention for its innovative economic and political reforms. Amidst this, the "Wisconsin Idea" was popularized – the idea that a public university should improve the lives of people beyond the borders of its campus. Although the Wisconsin Idea is often attributed to Charles Van Hise, president of the University of Wisconsin, David Hoeveler argues that it originated decades earlier, in the mind of John Bascom. A philosopher, theologian, and sociologist, Bascom influenced a generation of students. Hoeveler documents how Bascom drew from German idealism, liberal Protestantism, and evolutionary theory, transforming them into advocacy for social and political reform. He was a champion of temperance, women's rights, and labor, which brought him controversy as president of the university from 1874 to 1887. (University of Wisconsin Press, 2016)

Douglas Howland, International Law and Japanese Sovereignty: The Emerging Global Order in the 19th Century
How does a nation become a great power? A global order was emerging in the nineteenth century, and this book explores the multiple legal grounds of Meiji Japan's assertion of sovereign statehood. Contrary to arguments that Japan was victimized by 'unequal' treaties, or that Japan was required to meet a 'standard of civilization' before it could participate in international society, Howland argues that the Westernizing Japanese state was a player from the start. In the midst of contradictions between law and imperialism, Japan expressed state will and legal acumen as an equal of the Western powers. By 1907, Japan was the first non-western state to join the ranks of the great powers. (Palgrave Macmillian, 2016)

New and Noteworthy

Media mentions

Emeritus Prof. Marc Levine published a report on Milwaukee's 53206 zip code. Professor Levine's seventeen-year report on the "ecosystem of disadvantage" in Milwaukee's 53206 zip code received extensive local media coverage, underscoring the contribution historical scholarship can make to local issues of equity.

Carolyn Eichner

In December, Prof. Martha Carlin and MA student William Edmundson appeared on WDJT's "Sunday Morning" program to tell viewers about the history of medieval Christmas Dinners.

An interview with Carolyn Eichner, focusing on her research on 19th-century anti-imperial activism in the French colony New Caledonia, was the August 23, 2018 front-page feature article in the widely-read Parisian news publication, Mediapart. Prof. Eichner was also interviewed on the Milwaukee Public Television program "10thirtysix" segment on the "Women's March on Washington," and she also spoke on women's suffrage for a segment on WUWM.

Professors Anderson, Buff author amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court

The brief, authored by a group of historians and social scientists with expertise in the history of the U.S. Census and U.S. immigration, aims to assist the court in deciding the legal case over whether a new citizenship question should appear in the 2020 Census. The brief, filed in the case of Department of Commerce v. State of New York adds important context to the history of Census questions and debunks the myth that the Census has asked similar questions about citizenship in the past.

Honors

Carolyn Eichner was a Member in the School of Historical Studies, at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, during the 2015-16 academic year.

Nan Kim recently became a board member of the U.S.-based international peace organization, Women Cross DMZ, which she represented in January 2018 at the Vancouver Women's Forum organized by the Nobel Women's Initiative. Over the past year, she also joined the editorial boards of two publications: the academic quarterly Critical Asian Studies (formerly known as the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars), and Public History and Museum, a semi-annual publication of the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

Neal Pease

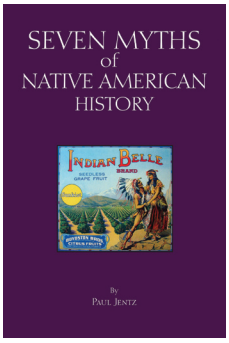
Neal Pease was awarded the Joseph Swastek Award by the Polish American Historical Association for his article, "Mighty Son of Poland: Stanislaus Zbyszko, Polish Americans, and Sport in the 20th Century." The Joseph Swastek Award is given annually for the best article published during the previous year in a given volume of their journal, Polish American Studies.. The awards committee noted that Prof. Pease's "well-written and well-organized study of professional wrestler Stanislaus Zbyszko (Jan Stanislaw Cyganiewicz) makes a persuasive argument based on extensive use of primary resources."

Lisa Silverman was awarded a six-month research fellowship from the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies for 2019-20.

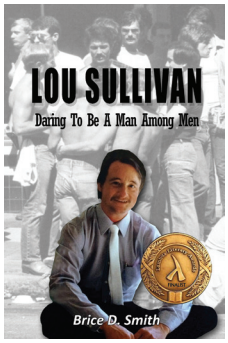
Lisa Silverman

Chris Cantwell was admitted to the Young Scholars in American Religion Program at the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis. Since arriving at UWM in 2017, Prof. Cantwell has launched a new collaborative public history program entitled "Gathering Places," in which UWM history students work with local religious communities to document the history of Milwaukee's places of worship. The project has already attracted wide community engagement and local media coverage. You can see their work at http://uwm.edu/gatheringplaces.

Student and Alumni Publications and Awards



Current PhD student Paul Jentz's book Seven Myths of Native American History (Hackett Publishing Co., 2018) has been chosen as one of Choice magazine's "Outstanding Academic Titles" for 2018. As one reviewer put it, Jentz's book "is a wonderfully nuanced examination of the most common misconceptions that North Americans have held, and often continue to hold, about the original inhabitants of this continent. Jentz's book does an especially good job of weaving in the cultural productions – fiction, poetry, movies, and television shows – that created and sustained these myths."



Brice Smith's (PhD, '10) book, Lou Sullivan: Daring to be a Man Among Men (Trangress Press, 2017) met with immediate acclaim, including interest from filmmakers interested in producing a film. The book was a finalist for a 2018 Lambda Literary Award for Transgender Nonfiction. As Smith writes of Sullivan, "[They] said I couldn't live as a gay man, but it looks like I'm going to die like one." In this heart-wrenching inspirational biography, Brice D. Smith reclaims one of the most tragically overlooked people in LGBT history. Sullivan marched for Civil Rights, embraced the 1960s counterculture, came of age in the gay liberation movement, transformed medical treatment of trans people, institutionalized trans history, forged an international female-to-male (FTM) transgender community and died from AIDS at the epicenter of the crisis. An activist to the end, Sullivan inspired a generation to rethink gender identity, sexual orientation and what it means to be human.

Dr. Dawson Barrett (PhD, '13), professor of history at Del Mar College, published an article in Teen Vogue (February 13, 2019) entitled "How Youth Activism has Changed the Country in the Year since Parkland." Dr. Barrett's article puts the current resurgence in youth activism around gun violence and other issues in historical context.

Current MA student Amy Fels published an article based on her undergraduate senior thesis research into the social history of forestry in Northern Wisconsin. "Beyond the Pines: The Socioeconomic Development of Oconto 1850-1950." Voyageur Magazine 34, no. 2 (2018): 12-21.

PhD student Will Tchakarides published an opinion piece in the Washington Post that helped readers contextualize the violent arrest of Milwaukee Bucks player Sterling Brown in the long history of discriminatory policing in Milwaukee. "Long before Sterling Brown's arrest, Milwaukee struggled with a policing problem" appeared on the Post's website on June 3, 2018. It was part of the Post's "Made by History" opinion series of historically informed takes on current events.

Congratulations!

A.T. Brown Award for Best Graduate Paper:
Fall 2018—Stephen Baldwin, Fall 2017—Martin Kozon,
Fall 2016—Jenna Himsl

A.T. Brown Award for Best MA Thesis:
Fall 2017—Andrea Buhler and Jenna Himsl
Fall 2016—Catherine Abbot

Bud Weare Scholarship:
2019-20—Colette M. Brown, 2018-19—Dominique Wilkerson,
2017-18—Johnathan Powell

J. David Hoeveler Scholarship:
2019-20 – Lucy Harper and Dominique Wilkerson
2018-19 – Morgan Bohnert

(from left to right after Prof. Rodriguez) Colette M. Brown, Margarita Garcia Rojas, Dominique Wilkerson, and Lucy Harper. Congratulations as well to Peter West (far right), the newest member of Phi Alpha Theta!

Featured Alumnus: Dr. Joe Walzer

By Samuel Cocar, History graduate student

Let's start with the easy stuff! Favorite beer and restaurant?

Definitely Riverwest Stein. And, Cafe Corazon in Riverwest.

Tell us something that's not generally known about you.

I love to cook, I love trying out new recipes. I'm a huge fan of Jacques Pépin.

What historical personage, living or dead, would you most like to meet?

Frederick Douglass, for sure.

Can you tell us about your background?

I grew up in Fond du Lac, just north of here. Small town, Catholic school. Both of my parents were born in Milwaukee, so I had a family connection to Milwaukee and Milwaukee history. Through my mom I'm actually related to Solomon Juneau.

What was your path to the study of history and to UW-Milwaukee?

I started out as an art major at UWM. In the process of studying art, I took more history classes and eventually found a home in the department. Going to grad school, I thought I would be an Irish historian. Irish history really interested me, with the intersection of sectarianism and religion with social justice and labor issues. James Connolly was a key figure in the Easter Rising and also a founder of the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World]. That gradually turned into an interest in labor history in Milwaukee. I also always had an interest in ethnic history – my own family being a point of inquiry.

Do you think your historical scholarship has a political edge?

I think it does, because my own interpretations tend to lean rather humanist! Historical interpretation can be a valuable tool for working toward a more just society. It's a matter of understanding our responsibility as historians to bring voice to those who are rendered voiceless, and taking that responsibility seriously. The powerful will always have their voices heard.

A lot of history is understanding why things are the way that they are. It starts with understanding that Milwaukee is a very segregated place, one of the most in the U.S. by nearly every measure. It's our responsibility to deploy our resources for understanding the nuances of this. Then we ask what was successful, what wasn't and why? What have been our resources for combating these problems in the past, and what else do we still need?

Did you have significant mentors who guided you towards and within academe?

Jeff Merrick, who is no longer with the department. He really encouraged me as a historian, to think deeply. He got me excited about historiography, which might be the one thing grad students hate most! Rachel Buff is and always will be a treasured mentor and friend, and the same goes for Joe Austin. My wife Rosemary – I would not have done [the PhD] without her encouragement.

Describe some of your experiences on the Encyclopedia of Milwaukee. What new stories have you either learned about or gotten a chance to tell?

Rethinking the history of brewing in the city is one. There is a lot of attention paid to the beer barons – Pabst, Schlitz, etc. We know them. I was surprised that this is more of a story about failure. There were actually around 30 breweries in a tight space in the city at one time. Ultimately, the success of one company is the failure of others – many others. This compels us toward rethinking things that are so key to the identity of the city – some of those are myths.

Does your knowledge of Milwaukee history in particular furnish you with any optimism about the future of the city?

I think [among some people] there's a fear of the city, and a lot of it comes from the news, x number of shootings and the like. I think that the media in Milwaukee are looking, at best, for sensation, for scandal. That's going to sell. 'Dirty dining' is going to sell. If that's the gateway for people looking at the city, you're not going to see the other side.

My work focuses on larger frameworks of injustice. I wrote my dissertation in part as a love letter to the city. There are great things happening – the people, the institutions – but we can also be better.

What do you think are the main challenges facing educators in the humanities – in Wisconsin and more broadly?

I go back and forth on the alt-ac stuff. On one hand, it's necessary, thinking of history not just as an academic profession

but as a practical life skill. We need to make graduate education more accessible to more people. It's in studying these topics and thinking deeply that we learn about ourselves, tell stories that matter and mean something to us and others. Those are all necessary pieces and skills; the academy is not the center of the world.

On the other hand, I am upset with how quickly the AHA and others were willing to jump on the bandwagon of "Well, we need to find other places for historians", instead of lobbying for increased funding to humanities and education.

The turn has been away from the humanities, because [the sentiment is] we can't sell it, we can't privatize it. [History] is a field under attack right now. There's no unified sense of what we should do about it. Our main organizations are acting with the best of intentions. But it's a much deeper conflict than just finding jobs. I think there's a real fear in the humanities about our survival, and so far the answer has been, 'let's not make waves.'

How would you characterize your disciplinary approach to history?

I feel like I have become a more creative historian because of [my background in art]. It has given me a window to approaching issues differently, being creative in imagining what the next step is going to be. I've also been drawn to works in anthropology and sociology more readily than some historians, I think there is interesting work being done.

Your work seems to focus a lot on the immigrant experience and culture of Milwaukee. What are we still learning on that front?

My dissertation is about how Germanness as an identity became a civic identity. It wasn't exactly when you might think it was. It was really in the Meier administration that they doubled down in it, in the 1960s through the 1980s. Some of the lessons I'm learning relate to how we think about the city. And its identity matters for how we think about its problems!

I'm thinking about Meier claiming Germanness – that ends up foreclosing the possibility of seeing the city as a diverse place. It marginalizes the ability for people of color to claim their own place. That is still very much present.

Alumni Updates

Emily Rock

Erik Johnson, (MA/MLIS, '18) is the Digital Library Coordinator and Archivist for the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University. "This has been a great position so far," he writes, "as it has allowed me to use both my library science knowledge, as well as my historical knowledge while working with documents related to Theodore Roosevelt" and finding new areas of research and collections for the Center to incorporate.

Katie Steffan (MA, '15) works as the Registrar at Guardian Fine Art Services in Milwaukee.

Emily Rock (MA, '12) worked as Curator at the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, Wisconsin, from 2012 to 2019. Starting this year she will be the registrar at the Oshkosh Public Museum (Wisconsin).

Adam Smith (MA, '12) reports that he is "working as an archives technician at the Memorial Library at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and couldn't be happier."

Morgan Sawicki (MA/MLIS, '13) is starting a new job as Senior Librarian of Creative Services for the Pikes Peak Library District in Colorado Springs. Morgan writes that "this district is doing incredible things to foster creativity: 3D printers, laser cutters, A/V equipped spaces, sewing machines, embroidery machines, and all kinds of fun software. I'll be working with all of these and more, and I couldn't be happier!"

Rebecca Owen

Continuing her impressive record of supporting the arts as a development professional, Rebecca Owen (BA, '96), is returning to Milwaukee as the new Vice President of Development for the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Prof. Roshanna Sylvester (BA, '86), formerly Associate Professor of History at DePaul University, has accepted a new position as Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in their College of Media, Communication, and Information.

Retirements - We Wish them Well!

Marc Levine joined the UWM faculty in 1984, taught in the departments of Urban Affairs and History, served as chair of Urban Affairs and Director of Urban Studies, and founded UWM's Center for Economic Development, Consortium for Economic Opportunity, and Center for Canadian-American Studies. His scholarship on Montréal, Baltimore, and Milwaukee is internationally recognized, including invited Professorships in France and Canada. Prof. Levine has been a frequent participant in public policy debates about Milwaukee's racial and economic disparities, appearing in local and national media, serving as an expert witness, writing dozens of reports, and serving in community organizations. These contributions to the understanding of our city did not, however, prevent him from being a beloved and creative teacher and mentor to many undergraduate and graduate students, including those who took his pioneering urban history course based on TV's "The Wire."

Since 1988, Genni McBride served as a scholar and teacher of journalism and media studies, women's history, and the history of American Midwest. She served as Chair of the Department of History, Director of Women's Studies, and on the University Committee. Her scholarship on the history of the women's movement in Wisconsin, including women's suffrage, temperance and reform, serve as the definitive studies of these subjects and has introduced students and the broader public to the rich record of the lives of all Wisconsin women. A popular and engaging public speaker at community history events, her book, with Stephen Byers, about Milwaukee Journal advice columnist Ione Quimby Griggs broke new interpretive and methodological ground in the study of local media and the cultural and family life of everyday mid-century Midwesterners.

David Hoeveler joined the faculty in 1971, serving UWM for 46 years, including as Chair of the Department of History. A distinguished scholar in the field of American intellectual history, he has a distinguished record of publications and awards for both teaching and research. Distinguished Professor Hoeveler's most recent book, John Bascom and the Origins of the Wisconsin Idea, explains the history of the approach that underlies all of our work for the University of Wisconsin System and made an essential contribute at a moment when the Wisconsin Idea was under direct political attack.

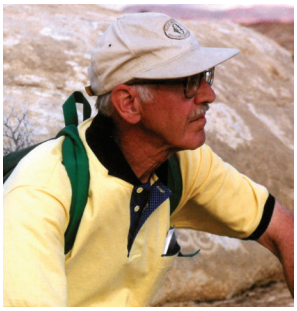
Helena Pycior devoted her scholarship and creative pedagogy to reminding us that the concerns of historians should not be limited to the human world, but extend beyond to animals. The author of two books and scores of articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, as well as the editor of Historia Mathematica, she presented her impeccable and ambitious research to audiences in eight countries. She contributed to every aspect of the History Department's activities, and devoted her expertise in the history of science and medicine and her profound commitment to professional ethics, fairness, and justice to a variety of University committees and task forces. Her innovative teaching and mentorship shaped a generation of undergraduate and graduate students, as reflected in awards for teaching and commitment to accessibility.

Margo Anderson has been a valued member of the faculty in History and Urban Affairs (and its successor, Urban Studies) since 1977, serving as Chair of the History Department, Director of the Urban Studies Programs, as Director of the Center for Women's Studies, as a member of the Faculty Senate, and chair of the University Committee. As the world's leading scholar on U.S. census history, she wrote a now-classic monograph and two additional books, co-edited two editions of the Encyclopedia of the U.S. Census, and scores of other scholarly articles. Her work on the history of Milwaukee, as co-author of Perspectives on Milwaukee's Past and the Bibliography of Metropolitan Milwaukee and as a lead editor and the guiding spirit of the Encyclopedia of Milwaukee, has laid the foundation for coming generations of scholars. Distinguished Prof. Anderson received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Russell Sage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Center, and she served as the vice president and president of the Social Science History Association. She shared her expertise throughout her career, including recently in an Amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court on proposed changes to the 2020 census. She shared her boundless expertise and energy with countless graduate and undergraduate students, in her courses on quantitative historical analysis, American history, women's history, urban history, social science methods, and gender and the family.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks is one of the world's leading scholars of the history of women, the Reformation, and Early Modern Europe. She has been a beloved colleague since 1985, serving as Chair of the History Department thrice, as Coordinator of the program in the Comparative Study of Religion, twice as Director of Women's Studies, and twice as Interim Director of the Center for 21st Century Studies. A prolific scholar whose list of sole-authored and co-authored monographs, edited collections, reference books, textbooks, articles, and book chapters is too voluminous to count, she was, notably, the editor-in-chief of the seven-volume 2015 Cambridge World History, and has served as editor or advisory board member of ten different scholarly journals. She has been recognized around the world for her intellectual accomplishments, including (but not limited to!) a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Early Modern Women, an honorary doctorate from her undergraduate college, and the quinquennially-awarded Sixteenth Century Society and Conference Medal. Renowned for her good humor and generosity with her wisdom and research funds, she has taught legions of undergraduates, supervised master's and doctoral students writing in many areas of world history, and contributed to high school teaching around the United States through her service as the Chief Reader for the Advanced Placement World History exam.

Remembering Bruce Fetter, David Healy, Glen Jeansonne, Nathan Miller

Prof. Emeritus Bruce Fetter passed away on April 20, 2017. He held a PhD in African History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His books included Colonial Rule and Regional Imbalance in Central Africa, The Creation of Elisabethville, 1910-1940, and Demography from Scanty Evidence: Central Africa in the Colonial Era. His service to the university included a term as History Department chair, from 1995 to 1998. He was editor of the social science journal Urbanism Past and Present, a publication that reinforced UWM's reputation as a center of urban scholarship. In his later years, Professor Fetter's research interests turned toward matters of public health and historical demography. In addition to teaching African History, Professor Fetter developed and passionately taught a course on the use of maps as historical sources, sharing the treasures of UWM's American Geographical Society Library with generations of students.



Dr. David Healy, a revered professor from 1966-1993, died on April 28th, 2019 after a short illness. He was 92 years old. He specialized in U.S. Diplomatic and Foreign Policy history. He earned a BA, MA, and PhD in History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was the author of five monographs: The United States in Cuba, 1898-1902: Generals, Politicians and Search for Policy (1963); U.S. Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s (1970); Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era: The US Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916 (1976); Drive to Hegemony: the United States in the Caribbean, 1898-1917 (1988); James G. Blaine and Latin America (2002). Before attending graduate school, he served in the U.S. Merchant Marine and in the U.S. Navy. He received much praise for his research and elegant writing, and students raved about his gripping lectures. He had numerous successful MA students. He founded a program that brought several students from Nottingham University in the UK to earn masters degrees at UWM. He and his wife, Ann, who also taught in the UWM History Department for many years, retired to live in Colorado where they were avid skiers.

Dr. Glen Jeansonne, longtime member of the UWM Department of History, passed away on August 25, 2018. Dr. Jeansonne was raised in Louisiana and received his PhD in American History at Florida State University. During his long career at UWM, he published fourteen books and dozens of articles in numerous fields. He was an expert in the fields of American right wing movements and presidential history. He wrote his dissertation on the southern racist leader, Leander H. Perez, and he followed up with a biography of Gerald L. K. Smith and then wrote a biography of Huey Long. His book on rightwing women during WWII (Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II) forged a new field in women's history. Recently, he published two biographies of Herbert Hoover, and co-authored a book on history in the movies and biographies of Elvis Presley and Barack Obama. He was a superb teacher who directed legions of MA theses. He won the UWM Undergraduate Teaching Award, the Alumni Association Teaching Award, and the Career Research Award. He will be deeply missed by faculty, staff, and students in the History Department.

Nathan Miller, a professor of American Economic History from 1960-1987, died on January 5th, 2019, at the age of 101. Born December 21st, 1917, in New York City, Miller earned a BA from Johns Hopkins University and a Masters and PhD from Columbia University, where he also met his future wife, Lillian (Beresnack) Miller. Before earning his PhD, Miller was awarded a Bronze Star for his service in the U.S. Army Intelligence (1941-1945). His dissertation, The Enterprise of a Free People: Canals and the Canal Fund in the New York Economy, 1792-1838 won the 1960 Albert J. Beveridge Award from the American Historical Association and was published by Cornell University Press (1963).

Contact Us

Do you have news to share? We welcome your stories, updates and feedback on your UWM experiences. We also welcome alumni involvement – current students can benefit from your time and expertise in so many ways. Re-engagement with UWM and the Department of History is just a phone call or email away: Joe Rodriguez, Department Chair, history@uwm.edu or 414-229-4361. You can also update your employment and contact information at https://uwm.edu/alumni/update-your-information/.

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