



# Today & Yesterday

Newsletter of the Department of History

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## Students Engage in 1977 National Women's Conference Research Project

By Kyle E. Ciani, Ph.D.

In June 1977, the Illinois International Women's Year Conference convened at Illinois State University to evaluate the status of women in Illinois and elect 58 delegates to carry state resolutions to the National Women's Conference (NWC) in

and alternatives belonged to a wide array of advocate organizations, employment positions, and demographic groups who worked throughout the four-day conference to draft a National Plan of Action that addressed wage inequity, childcare and maternal health, reproductive justice, involvement in the Vietnam war, nuclear arms, LGBTQ rights, and the possibility of an Equal Rights Amendment.

Historians of U.S. women's history center the 1977 state, territorial, and national conferences as a unique moment in feminist action. As a result of the NWC 50th Anniversary, the Sharing Stories of 1977 project emerged in 2017 to document and preserve the stories of participants. A central component of the project is to teach students how to conduct research that leads to a succinct biography of a participant. As a member of the project's External Advisory Committee, I was eager for students in my HIS 262: U.S. Women since 1865 class to engage in this research, and when I learned that the state conference had been held at ISU, I realized they would relate more personally to it. The project assigned the class 16 women from the Illinois delegation and provided the group with information on research strategies and the NWC registration sheets of each woman. I organized the class into groups of five to six students and gave each group four names to research. Students are used to finding whatever they need on the internet, but historical research is not that simple, and I observed students reckoning with that reality. The most rewarding experience for me as an educator was to experience them working through notions of what makes someone a "historical figure" and to discover how a person's activ-

ism is acknowledged. They knew these women had participated in an important event, but few had recognized or remembered them for it. They were excited to be a part of bringing these women's stories to light.

English major and WGSS minor, Kate Fortner noted, "The Sharing Stories project showed me how labor-intensive research into women's history can be. There are limits to what can be found online, especially when it comes to working-class women and still-living women. However, online newspaper archives are still a great resource, and finding information can be very rewarding." History/social sciences major Julia Niemiec shared, "Prior to the Sharing Stories project, I did not realize how much of women's history is left untold. So many passionate and driven women made strides to attempt and change something that affected their community. This project allowed me to appreciate even the smallest bit of history during the research process." History/social sciences major Peder Sevig agreed, and added, "The women assigned to my group had very little public information despite them all being important delegates at one of the biggest women's conferences ever. This shows that important women's history and participants were not given the recognition they deserved and probably still don't to this day."

The biographies researched and written by these students will eventually appear in the Sharing Stories 1977 website: [sharing-stories1977.uh.edu](https://sharing-stories1977.uh.edu). If you were part of the 1977 state conference or know someone who participated, please contact me at [keciani@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:keciani@IllinoisState.edu) so we can get that story told.



Students from Dr. Kyle E. Ciani's class work in small groups on the Sharing Stories 1977 research.

Houston, Texas, the following November. The state convention was one of 56 state and territorial meetings mandated by the federal government to communicate the findings of the World Plan of Action initiated by the 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico. According to Donna Werner's *Final Report of the Illinois International Women's Year Conference*, a total of 2,143 people ages 16 to over 65 years old registered for the June three-day conference, exceeding coordinators' expectations. The NWC is recognized as a pivotal event in U.S. history. Not only did Congress pass in bipartisan fashion a \$5 million appropriation to fund the four-day conference, but its 2,000 elected delegates and alternates from every state and territory represented the most inclusive example of representational democracy the country had ever witnessed. Delegates

## New faculty profiles

### Dr. Nathan Kapoor

After serving as a visiting assistant and affiliate professor in the history of science, technology, and medicine at Grand Valley State University for three years, Kapoor joined us in the fall of 2022. At GVSU, he



Dr. Nathan Kapoor

developed courses in the history of science, technology, and medicine. He updated their history department's survey offerings in those areas and hopes to introduce similar courses here. For instance, HIS 210, a survey on the history of science, will be offered in the fall of 2023. Before GVSU, Kapoor taught and received his master's and Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. He received his bachelor's degree and secondary teaching certification from Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee.

Kapoor's research fits broadly within "energy history," a growing subfield that bridges environmental history and the history of technology. He's interested in dissecting how energy technologies reflect and shape the sociocultural systems in which they appear. For instance, he published about developing "alternative" energy technologies in Victorian Britain, such as wind turbines and batteries, that challenged the systems like coal-fired power stations or hydroelectric dams that came to dominate. During his doctoral work and in his upcoming book, *Empowering Colonialism: Electrification in*

*New Zealand*, he hopes to push this work further and explore how British settlers, colonial officials, and Māori navigated and designed electric power systems in response to colonial power structures from the 1880s to the present. In the future, he plans to begin writing a history of the global reach of the geothermal engineering firm Ormat Energy Technologies, Inc.

Even with moving around the country for family and school, Kapoor calls East Tennessee home. Still, he and his wife, Amber, daughter, Cora, and a small dog, Kelvin, have already happily begun building a new home here in Bloomington. Amber is a mechanical engineer specializing in offshore wind turbines and HVAC energy systems and currently works remotely for an architecture and engineering firm in Grand Rapids. Cora just turned two and attends Cadence Academy here in town and currently specializes in tormenting Kelvin.

Apart from writing classes, doing research, and being with his family, Kapoor enjoys woodworking, playing video games (perhaps too much), cooking for people, and weightlifting. He's found a great community at one of the local gyms. He has begun training to compete in the lightweight division of a regional strongman event, something he did to distract himself during graduate school, and he wants to pick it up (literally) again. He is thrilled to be a part of the department here at ISU, has been blown away by the excitement and interests of the students, and is excited to see this department continue to grow and thrive in the coming years.

### Dr. Taylor Soja

Hello! I'm Dr. Taylor Soja, one of ISU History's newest faculty members. I started here at ISU as an assistant professor of History in the fall of 2022 after finishing my M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Washington in Seattle, where I studied European, British, and colonial history. Before that, I lived and studied in Washington, D.C., and received my B.A. from George Washington University.

I'm thrilled to be living and teaching in Illinois—this job is something of a home-coming! I grew up in Oak Park and fell in love with history during teenage visits to institutions like the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago History Museum, and the Ernest Hemingway Birthplace and Museum.

Today I'm a historian of modern Britain and specialize in the histories of war, gender, and empire with a focus on the 19th century. My research explores the relationship between violence, war experience, and empire using methods including the study of material culture, family history, and group biography. I'm currently working on my first book, which brings together the stories of a diverse group of people who served in Britain's late 19th



Dr. Taylor Soja

century colonial wars before going on to serve in and experience the First World War. To do my research, I have consulted archives in major national collections in the UK and Canada, visited small local history and regimental museums, and trudded down two-lane highways

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to visit archives held on British military bases. Expect to see my book on shelves sometime in the next few years. In the meantime, you can read [my article](#) about a British woman who used her service in colonial war as a way to advocate for women's rights and [my reflections](#) on teaching and researching European history in the digital age.

At ISU I teach classes in 19th century European history, the history of Britain

and the British empire, the history of war and society, the history of women and gender, and historical methods including digital history. I believe that college is a time to practice becoming a better learner, and I love working with my students to develop their skills as researchers, writers, thinkers, and future teachers. In my first year here I've been so impressed with the enthusiasm and passion that ISU students have for the past, and the urgency they feel

about history's place in our world today.

In my spare time you can find me reading fun novels that have nothing to do with 19th century history, experimenting with cooking, bingeing British TV on Netflix, and plotting my next trip to Europe. I live in a 1926 bungalow with my partner Devin, who is a renewable energy engineer that loves McLean County's windiness, and our one-eared cat named Van Gogh.

## Graduate student spotlight: Tahsina Nasir



Tahsina Nasir

Graduate student Tahsina Nasir completed her master's degree in spring 2023 and will be moving into a fully-funded Ph.D. program at Georgia State University in the fall. Dr. Keith Pluymer was able to interview her. This interview has been edited for length.

### ***Tell us a bit about yourself. Where did you grow up? Where did you attend university before coming to ISU?***

Growing up in a family of government officials, I spent my childhood moving around different parts of Bangladesh. My family eventually settled in the bustling capital city of Dhaka, where I began my university studies at the University of Dhaka. It was there that I earned my undergraduate and initial master's degrees in Islamic history and culture. Throughout my life, I have always had a fascination with history, and I believe that my child-

hood experiences of living in various locations ignited my curiosity about different communities and socioeconomic classes. This interest is particularly strong because of Bangladesh's colonial past—a period of 200 years under British rule. Living in such a culturally rich and diverse country has exposed me to different perspectives and ways of life, fueling my desire to learn more about the role that communities play in shaping history.

### ***What brought you to ISU?***

After my first graduate degree in 2020, I realized that I had a real passion for research and teaching in history and applied for a position as a lecturer in a public university in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh's academic system, obtaining a master's degree from one of the country's esteemed public universities (like the University of Dhaka) is a requirement to become a lecturer. Despite performing well in the screening process, I was ultimately not hired due to the deep-seated politics and lobbying that pervades both public and private institutions in the country. However, I did not let this setback discourage me. Instead, I saw it as an opportunity for personal and academic development. I decided to apply to graduate schools in North America to pursue a second master's degree in history, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of historical research and teaching methods. My passion for history and research is ingrained in me because of my mother, who is a retired history professor in Bangladesh. Due to my father's government job, we moved around from one city to

another, which made my mother's career particularly difficult. In a patriarchal society like ours, even talented women with much potential are expected to focus more on the household than on career. But my mother never gave up. She used to travel five long hours from our home to her college in another city, using bus, ferry, and three-wheelers along the way. Still, she dedicatedly performed research and prepared notes for classes daily. I was fortunate enough to see her teach her classes passionately. What a dedication she had for history as a discipline! As an adult, I understand how she must have faced extreme challenges but never gave up because of her love for history. My mother is a role model for me, not only for graduate studies but also for setting life milestones. I learned from her to never give up on your passion even if it is challenging, even if you have to change five different vehicles to reach your destination, even if you have to commute for 10 hours on workdays. So, this has been the biggest inspiration for me to pursue my higher studies with utmost effort.

### ***What were some of your most memorable experiences at ISU?***

Describing my experiences at ISU brings back a flood of emotions as I reflect on my time here. When I first arrived, I was filled with trepidation, wondering if I would be able to keep up with the rigorous academic standards of North America compared to South Asia. However, from the very beginning, I was blown away by the immense support and encouragement that I received from everyone at the Uni-

versity. My professors, in particular, went above and beyond to inspire and challenge me, pushing me to strive for excellence in my coursework, research, and writing. Even though I was a foreign international student, they took the time to mentor me individually, helping me to develop my skills and pursue my academic interests. My teaching assistantship was also a transformative experience, allowing me to gain invaluable experience in teaching, grading, and navigating American academic and popular culture.

But it wasn't only my professors who made my time at ISU so memorable. I was incredibly lucky to have made some amazing graduate student friends who supported me both inside and outside of the classroom. Together, we formed a tight-knit community, sharing ideas, collaborating on projects, and pushing each

other to excel.

Looking back, I feel incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have studied at ISU. Despite my initial fears, I was welcomed with open arms and treated with respect and kindness by everyone I encountered. I have learned so much from my time here, not just about my chosen field of study, but also about life in academia and beyond. I feel privileged to have been a part of this community, and I know that the lessons I've learned and the friendships I've made will stay with me for a lifetime.

***Tell us a bit about what you hope to work on in your Ph.D. What will you be researching?***

My passion lies in exploring the history of South Asia, with a particular focus on the experiences of women and gender during

the British colonial rule. Additionally, I am deeply interested in the migration of the Indian subcontinent and its ongoing impact on the social and economic landscape of South Asia, particularly in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. As I progress through my coursework and qualifying exams, my goal is to expand my research in these areas and bring greater awareness to these crucial issues that continue to shape the political and socio-economic fabric of the region. I am excited to embark on this journey of discovery and contribute to the expanding field of South Asian history.

***What are you most excited to do and see in Atlanta?***

As I prepare to move to Atlanta, I feel a mixture of excitement and apprehension. The prospect of experiencing the cultural

## 2022–23 Student Awards

### **HELEN M. CAVANAGH AWARD FOR BEST MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENT**

Tahsina Nasir

### **HELEN M. CAVANAGH AWARD FOR BEST MASTER'S THESIS**

John Fleming (U.S. History)  
Andrew Thomas (U.S. History)

### **LUCY LUCILE TASHER SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP**

#### **Fall 2022**

Kiera Holton  
Martin Kretz  
Shannon Thommes

#### **Spring 2023**

Abby Bartle  
Morgan Bueza  
Samuel Dunn  
Caroline Slowik

### **GLEYNFA T. RAY AWARD**

#### **Fall 2022**

Corey Curtis  
Ryan McCue

#### **Spring 2023**

Kortney Klockenga  
Kathryn Larson  
Cole Merkin

### **MARK WYMAN-STEPHANE BOOTH SCHOLARSHIP**

Arlysha Bovan-Morrow  
David Meyer

### **JAMES TODD WILBORN SCHOLARSHIP**

Julianna Cullotta  
Katherine O'Brien

### **SESSIONS HONORS SCHOLARSHIP**

Julia Baker  
Gary Gomez

### **WILLIAM AND JEANNE HOWARD SCHOLARSHIP**

Mason Orr

### **HARMON RECRUITMENT SCHOLARSHIP**

Gary Gomez  
Sophia Zoltek

### **DARREL A. SUTTER SCHOLARSHIP**

Jessica Ruske  
Caleb Sauder

### **DARREL A. SUTTER TEXTBOOK AWARD**

Gary Gomez

### **DARREL A. SUTTER WRITING AWARDS**

Emily Zajac  
Jacob Hermes  
Olivia Knight  
Alexis Michael  
Erin Wilcox

### **DARREL A. SUTTER STUDENT TEACHER AWARD**

#### **Fall 2022**

Adam Thomas

#### **Spring 2023**

Nate Borders  
Jessica Whisenand

### **LAWRENCE W. MCBRIDE AWARD**

#### **Fall 2022**

Mahreen Baig

#### **Spring 2023**

Caitlin Hecker  
Isabella Lethbridge

### **HOWARD ROMANEK HISTORY SCHOLARSHIP**

#### **Fall 2022**

Alexa Damerell

#### **Spring 2023**

Valerie Fresh  
Kyanna Thompson

diversity of this big city is both thrilling and a little intimidating. My primary focus, of course, will be my graduate program at Georgia State University's History Department. I'm looking forward to meeting my fellow students, my professors, and my advisors, and immersing myself in the academic environment there. With some of the largest archives, museums, and libraries in the country, I can't wait to

explore all the unique and fascinating collections they have to offer.

As a practicing Muslim, I am also grateful for the numerous religious facilities in Atlanta. I look forward to visiting the Islamic Center and mosques in the downtown area, as practicing my faith is important to me.

Of course, it's not all work and no play! I'm excited to try the delicious food

and cuisines that Atlanta has to offer. I can't wait to explore the city's dining scene, sampling everything from traditional Southern cooking to international fare. With so much to offer, I am eager to dive into all that this vibrant city has in store for me.

## Alumni spotlight: Jack Kunst (B.A. 2022)



Jack Kunst

Jack Kunst has been admitted to a Ph.D. program in classics at the University of Cincinnati beginning in fall 2023. He conducted an interview with Dr. Keith Pluymers. The interview has been edited for length.

### ***Tell us a bit about yourself. Where did you grow up? Why did you decide to come to ISU?***

I grew up in the relatively small town of Lockport, Illinois, which is just across the Des Plaines River from the city of Joliet. I graduated from Lockport Township High School in May of 2018. I was a very poor student in high school. I had not yet developed strategies to deal with my ADHD, and I almost never turned in my homework. It was rare for me to pass a class with a grade higher than a "D." After completing a year of community college at Joliet Junior College, I transferred to Illinois State. ISU was one of the only schools willing to take a chance on a student like me, and I also had lots of friends who were already attending the University.

### ***What were some of your favorite classes at ISU? Which professors had the biggest influence on you?***

I enjoyed most of my classes at Illinois State. Some courses that stick out as my favorites are the History of Early Modern Europe, History of Europe in the 19th Century, History of Modern Africa, History of Ancient Rome, History 300, and the independent studies I completed in Greek and Latin with Dr. Jasper and Dr. Tsouvala. The independent study I completed with Dr. Jasper, where we read book seven of Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* in Latin, was definitely my most fun class; however, I think I learned the most in History of Modern Africa.

There were many professors who had a large influence on me; however, none was greater than that of Dr. Richard Soderlund. Before taking his classes, I had no idea what I was going to pursue with my degree in history. If all went well at ISU, I was considering applying to law school after the completion of my degree. It was Dr. Soderlund who brought me to the realization that history was the passion that I wanted to pursue in life. When I met with him at the end of his HIS 200 class, he spoke very highly of the work I had done for the class. He told me that I had done "real history" and that he expected big things from me in the future. I had never received such kind words from an instructor before, and they have stuck with me and inspired me ever since.

Two other professors who had a major influence on me were Dr. Kathryn Jasper and Dr. Georgia Tsouvala, both as historians as well as instructors of Greek and Latin. It was with Dr. Jasper that I com-

pleted the most courses in Latin and my most substantial historical research thus far. Dr. Jasper was also the first instructor I had who spoke at length about the skills that were needed to become an ancient or medieval historian, which helped me narrow my historical focus and plan what I needed to do to accomplish my goals. Dr. Tsouvala, on the other hand, was willing to do independent studies in ancient Greek with me, even though Greek is not a language that is traditionally taught at ISU. These independent studies not only allowed me to learn and practice ancient Greek, but also gave me access to the absolute wealth of knowledge that Dr. Tsouvala has of the ancient world. Both Dr. Tsouvala and Dr. Jasper were essential in helping me locate a graduate program that would be a good fit for me.

### ***What will you be doing next? Tell us a bit about your program, what you hope to study, and the work you will be doing over the course of your degree.***

In the fall of 2023, I will begin a Ph.D. program in classics at the University of Cincinnati. I will be specializing in ancient history, but because Cincinnati has a very holistic and interdisciplinary classics program, I will also have the opportunity to take courses in archaeology, philology, epigraphy, papyrology, and numismatics in addition to history. My current research interests relate to Roman siege technology, Julius Caesar, and the Gallic Wars, but I'm sure that I will discover plenty of new things to study in Cincinnati. Once I have completed my Ph.D. in classics, I hope to find work as a professor of ancient history.

## Conflict and harmony: History Teaching Symposium with a global focus

By Dr. Sara Piotrowski

When teachers hear “professional development,” they often groan about not learning something applicable and having to make sub plans. The opposite is true when our alumni hear about our annual history teacher symposium. On February 10, over 250 people attended our symposium on campus. Working again with the McLean County Museum of History, ROE 17, and the School of Teaching and Learning, we continue providing free professional development to our current students, alumni, and teachers across the state.

This year’s theme was “Conflict and Harmony: Toward a Global Future.” We were honored to welcome Dr. Li-Ching Ho from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She co-authored the book *Curriculum for Justice and Harmony: Deliberation, Knowledge, and Action in Social and Civic Education* with Keith Barton from Indiana University. Drs. Ho and Barton also presented a session about teaching civility and incivility in public life. In her keynote lecture, Dr. Ho, an expert on East and Southeast Asia, spoke at length about global civic education, issues of diversity in civic education, and environmental citizenship education. Attendees left the talk with strategies for applying a global lens to their lessons.

A bonus this year was the addition of a Thursday night Zoom presentation. Daniel Moak from Connecticut College discussed his book *From the New Deal to the War on Schools: Race, Inequality, and the Rise of the Punitive Education State*. Moak argues that the punitive, high-stakes model of education that so many educators now decry originated in Great Society liberal-

ism. It was a provocative and well-attended lecture that Dr. Andrew Hartman moderated over Zoom.

Our symposium offered 24 unique sessions, including a two-hour session by the Asian Americans Advancing Justice organization. The passage of the Teaching Equitable Asian American History Act, or TEAACH Act (HB 376), now requires that a unit of Asian American history be taught in K-12 public schools in Illinois ([advancingjustice-chicago.org/teach](http://advancingjustice-chicago.org/teach)). This workshop prepared educators to include Asian American history, stories, and voices into their curriculum.

We are grateful to all the presenters who prepared such thoughtful presentations. This year, over half of our sessions were led by alumni. Annie Vogel (2020) says she “always enjoys returning to Normal for the ISU History Teaching Symposium and learning new strategies to use in (her) classroom while connecting with old friends.” Throughout the day, we offered sessions that catered to middle-level, high school, and pre-service teachers across various topics. Sessions included using collective memory to teach history, integrating simulations into the classroom, punk rock pedagogy, and using inquiry-based lessons to reframe the Vietnam War. History department faculty members Andrew Hartman, Stewart Winger, and Taylor Soja presented content-driven sessions that allowed former students to feel like they were back in Schroeder Hall.

While alumni love returning to campus to reconnect and learn new ideas, our students also benefit from on-site professional development. Current senior

Ashley Medlin states, “I loved learning from professionals outside of ISU faculty, stepping out of my comfort zone, and going to sessions with which I did not have prior experience. This was a great way to broaden my knowledge and hear from other practicing high school teachers.” As they plan for student teaching, many of our students leave with tangible resources to use in their future classroom. Current student teachers also attended the event. Caitlin Hecker, spring 2023 graduate said, “I absolutely love the History Symposium! It fully encapsulates the ideal that all good teachers hold—knowledge is meant to be shared. The future of social studies education in our current political climate can seem bleak. Still, each year I am left inspired by the expertly dedicated teachers fighting to create better, more thoughtful, more inclusive classrooms. I can’t wait to come back each year, meet new colleagues, and catch up with old ones!”

We are pleased to announce the date for next year’s History Symposium will be held at ISU on Friday, February 2, 2024. Look for information via our alumni email listserv and social media platforms. If you haven’t attended before, or if it’s been a few years, please consider attending in 2024. To our “regulars,” thank you for your continued support. Even if you cannot participate, please help us spread the word. If you have any questions or ideas, please email Program Director, Dr. Richard Hughes ([rhughes@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:rhughes@IllinoisState.edu)) or Coordinator of Student Teaching, Dr. Sara Piotrowski ([scpiotr@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:scpiotr@IllinoisState.edu)).



Dr. Li-Ching Ho, keynote speaker at the 2023 History-Social Science Teacher Symposium



Two history education alumni attended the symposium and stand next to event coordinator, Dr. Sara Piotrowski, left, Ricky King (2020), 2023 Bilingual Teacher of the Year in Illinois from Normal Community High School, and Jen Wrzala (2020), teacher at Fremd High School in Palatine. Dr. Monica Norian and Dr. Richard Hughes also attended and helped to organize this special annual event.



Recent graduates returned to campus for the annual History Teacher Symposium and are pictured here with Dr. Bob Fitzgerald, far left, and Dr. Andrew Hartman, far right, after attending their session titled “Make America Hate Again: Reagan, Trump, and Punk Rock Pedagogy.”

## Undergraduate Research Spotlight: Jessica Ruske

Jessica Ruske presented her research poster, “Gender, Race, and ‘Empty Space’: Depictions of the British Empire in the Golden Age of British Children’s Literature” at the University Research Symposium in April 2023.

Ruske started her research during HIS 300 (Senior Research Seminar). “When I found out over the summer that the topic of the class would be the British Empire in the 19th century, I thought it would be interesting to look into how the empire was portrayed in books,” she recalled.

After beginning with an exploration of *The Jungle Book*, she ultimately settled on a project focused on well-known books like *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, *Peter and Wendy*, and lesser-known works like Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies*. Ruske wanted to explore how works of children’s literature created a vision of empire. She traced racist depictions of colonial subjects in the texts as well as the ways in which gender structured the different “adventures” British children could undertake. Ultimately, she argued: “The books

portrayed the empire as ‘empty space,’ designed for British children to go to and have fun adventures when they grow up.”

History and other humanities undergraduates are often under-represented at this event, but Ruske embraced the challenge. “Many people who I talked to were in a STEM field,” she recalled, “so I enjoyed answering their questions about history, discussing the research process in history, and comparing our research process to their research process.”

Dr. Taylor Soja, who taught Ruske in HIS 300 and mentored her research, expressed her immense pride in Ruske’s research, work ethic, and composure taking on an activity that few history students do. “Jessica’s poster was a hit with audience members from across the University,” Soja said, “and she was the only historian represented. Her initiative and drive is a model for our students. Congrats, Jessica!”

In addition to excelling as an undergraduate researcher, Ruske was involved in the rigorous PDS (Professional Development Schools) program, a year-long



Jessica Ruske

internship for aspiring teachers, that had her spend the year at Bloomington High School. With her achievements in and out of the classroom, Ruske is an example of the teacher-scholar approach that is reshaping K-12 education.

## Alumni Spotlight: Jimmy Chism (2009)



Jimmy Chism

In 2023, ISU alumnus Jimmy Chism was selected as the Secondary School Assistant Principal of the Year by the Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals. After only two years as assistant principal at Hidden Lake High School, an alternative high school, this award recognizes Chism’s hard work to build an inclusive community and his commitment

to working on behalf of all students, particularly those who have encountered the toughest struggles. Dr. Keith Pluymers was able to interview Chism about his time at ISU and his pathway to this award.

Chism knew that he wanted to be a history teacher since high school and was certain ISU was the place to learn how to be one. After researching history education programs across the state, he decided to only apply to ISU “because that was my first choice, and I wanted to be a student there,” he explains. Chism attended ISU as the education program was in transition from social studies to history/social science education, and he remembers his time fondly, particularly his senior seminar with Professor Andrew Hartman, where he wrote a research essay on the conservative reaction to the environmental movement in the United States. That class, he reflected, was tough, but it pushed him to become a good historian and researcher.

After completing his student teaching at Gibson City High School, where he taught U.S. History, Chism graduated from ISU in 2009. Like many students finishing a degree in the midst of the Great Recession, he faced significant struggles finding a job. “I applied to every teaching position in the state,” he remembers, “and didn’t get one interview in Illinois.” Instead, he worked as a paraprofessional for Unit 5 (the district serving Normal and parts of Bloomington) in a classroom for cognitively impaired students before moving to Arizona for Army National Guard training. It was in Arizona where he first got the opportunity to teach U.S. and World History at Baboquivari High School on the Tahono O’odham Nation Reservation.

Finding his first teaching position had not been easy. “I wish I would have kept all my denials to be able to look through how many rejections I got,” Chism

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# Faculty accomplishments

Dr. [Kyle Ciani](#) presented “Abortion Rights in the U.S. prior to *Roe v. Wade*” as part of the Post-Roe Reproductive Justice Speaker Series at ISU and “Looking Good: A Very Brief History of Professional Women and Societal Expectations” to the Professional Women of McLean County. She served as a moderator for “Mapping Care and Tumultuous 2020: Two Oral History Projects” at the 24th Conference on Illinois History in Springfield and was a panel member for Women’s Leadership 2023 at ISU.

Dr. [Andrew Hartman](#) delivered the keynote address for the Purdue History Graduate Student Association’s Ninth Biannual Graduate Student Conference titled “Karl Marx and the American Academy in the Age of the Culture Wars.”

Dr. [Richard Hughes](#) presented “Reorienting the Past: The Impact of a Survey Course on Teaching and Learning History” at the SoTL Commons Annual Conference in Savannah, Georgia, 2023. In addition, he traveled to History Teachers’ Epistemic Considerations: A Symposium on How Teachers Make Sense of History at the University of Umea, Sweden to give a talk titled “What Does a History Teacher Do?: Knowing, Understanding, and Enacting the Work of Teaching History.” In addition, he reviewed *Dangerous Ideas on Campus: Sex, Conspiracy, and Academic Freedom in the Age of JFK* by Matthew C. Ehrlich for the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, *Going to College in the Sixties* by John Thelin for *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*, and *The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I* by William C. Meadows for *Great Plains Quarterly*. In addition, he reviewed the documentary film *Marching Forward* for *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*.

Dr. [Nathan Kapoor](#) presented at the History of Science Society and the American Society for Environmental History. He received the Fell Grant to bring the Midwest Junto for the History of Science to ISU in 2024. In August 2022, his book *Empowering Colonialism: Electrification in New Zealand* received a contract with the University of Pittsburgh Press. In addition, he created a new history of science course (HIS 210) for fall 2023.

Dr. [Katrin Paehler](#) was on sabbatical during the last academic year, working on her current book project on Hildegard Beetz, a Nazi spy who then worked for American intelligence and later became a famous journalist in West Germany. She won a University Research Grant to support some of her research in German newspapers from the 1950s to the 1980s. Finally, she presented “Similar in Content, Different in Form: Cape Town’s District Six Museum, Yizkor Books, and Communities after Catastrophes” at Lessons & Legacies 2022 in Ottawa, Canada.

Dr. [Keith Pluymers](#)’s book *No Wood, No Kingdom: The Political Ecology of the English Atlantic World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021) won the John Ben Snow Prize from the North American Conference on British Studies for the best book on British history prior to 1800. He gave two public lectures on the book for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and The Greenhouse: Center for the Environmental Humanities at the University of Stavenger. He published reviews of David Graeber and David Wengrow’s *The Dawn of Everything in Commonplace: The Journal of Early American Life*, Kate Mulry’s *An Empire Transformed in the Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* and Ian Miller’s *Fir and Empire* in an H-Environment Roundtable Review. He presented a paper at the North American Conference on British Studies and participated in a roundtable at the American Society for Environmental History. He delivered an invited talk titled “Green Imperialism Revisited” at the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at The Ohio State University and a virtual talk, “Imperial Visions and Colonial Omission in John Evelyn’s *Sylva* (1664),” at the Sorbonne. He was awarded a short-term William T. Golden fellowship at the American Philosophical Society and a long-term fellowship at the Shelby Cullom Davis Center at Princeton University.

Dr. [Touré Reed](#) published “Why Juneteenth Celebrations Should Acknowledge the 13th Amendment” in *Common Dreams* based on his invited Juneteenth talk to the Legal Department at State Farm. He gave two invited lectures to St. Xavier University’s Office of Inclusive Excellence on his book *Toward Freedom* (2020) and on race and inequality in the United States and was invited to present on his book to Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas. He gave a talk titled “The Problem with Race Reductionism,” to the Ministry Collaborative Cohort on Race and Economics. In addition, he participated in roundtable discussions on “The Unfinished Business of the New Deal” for The Living New Deal and on “A City by and for the Working Class: Adolph Reed on American Urban Politics” for the American Political Science Association. He has been actively engaged with public-facing work this year, meeting for a brown bag session with the editorial staff and journalists of *Education Week Magazine* and making nine appearances on *This is Revolution*, *Give Them an Argument*, *F\*cking Cancelled*, *For the Record*, and *Class Matters*.

Dr. [Taylor Soja](#) presented “When the Post-War Isn’t Permanent: Coming Home in the Age of Britain’s ‘Small Wars,’” at the Homecoming After War: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Perspectives Conference at Warwick



University (UK) and “Shooting Guns and Shooting Cameras: Reading British Photographs in Contexts of Colonial War” at the North American Conference on British Studies (NACBS). She gave a talk at the ISU History-Social Sciences Teachers Symposium titled, “What Comes After ‘What’s Your Favorite Battle?’: Rethinking War and Society in the History Classroom.” In addition, she was an invited panelist for the Digital Humanities Panel for the Association of College and Research Libraries, History Librarian’s Interest Group and for the online NACBS panel “British Studies in the Digital World: NACBS Grad & Early Career Caucus Panel on Digital Humanities.”

Dr. [Georgia Tsouvala](#) presented several invited and peer-reviewed papers this year, ranging from Roman elite women in military camps to Hellenistic queens to Greek and other women of the fourth century BCE. A paper on “The Palaiopolis Hoard and Circulation of Drachmas in Late Hellenistic Corcyra,” was presented in the fall and will be published in the Proceedings of the International Numismatic Congress in Warsaw, Poland. Last year, she received a URG Faculty Research Award (2022-23) to work on a new collaborative project, “Lenses from Ialysos, Rhodes,” preliminary results of which were presented at the Annual Meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America and the Society for Classical Studies in early January 2023. Professor Tsouvala and her team are studying the oldest rock crystal lenses from the ancient Mediterranean world. The project, which furthers our knowledge of ancient technology and craftsmanship, has received external funding by the Loeb Foundation and the American Philosophical Association. Finally, she was elected president of the Association of Ancient Historians for a second term in early May.

Dr. [Christine Varga-Harris](#) was promoted to professor of History. She published “Socialist Internationalism Writ Small: Friendship and Sisterhood in Correspondence between Women in the Soviet Union and the Decolonizing World, 1950s-1960s,” in *Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular: Second-Third World Spaces in the Cold War* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023). She was awarded a Visegrad Fellowship at the Blinken Open Society Archives in Budapest, Hungary, and began research there in spring 2023 on a book project titled *Materializing Ghost Towns: Soviet Military Barracks and Hungarian Daily Life during the Cold War*.

Dr. [Amy Wood](#) was awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Center for the Humanities to support the writing of her book, *Sympathy for the Devil: The Criminal in the American Imagination, 1870-1930*, which is under contract with Oxford University Press. She presented “The Criminal and the Social Self: The Importance of Emotions in Early Criminology” at the North American Consortium for the History of Emotion Conference in Washington, D.C. She was an invited participant in a colloquium on unfree labor in the post-Civil War South, 1865-present at Sewanee, The University of the South, in Tennessee. She serves on the Board of Editors for the *Journal of Southern History* and on the editorial board for the digital journal, *Study the South*, and is executive secretary for the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. She delivered the ISU College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Lecture for fall 2022.

*Continued from page 7*

laughed. But his passion for teaching kept him going: “I love working with kids, and I love the subject matter. I was fortunate to get a mid-year hire.”

Once he got on at Baboquivari, he embraced all the position had to offer. After getting a special education certification, Chism taught reading intervention and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), an in-school academic support program, in addition to social studies courses. He also coached wrestling. Eventually, he became dean and then assistant principal.

Eventually, Chism moved to Colorado

because his now-wife was living there.

Going forward, Chism wants to continue working in alternative education and hopes to become a principal at an alternative campus. Some new teachers or administrators feel nervous about working with students who have struggled in school previously, but Chism believes that alternative students are special. “They need help removing some barriers,” he noted, but they are highly motivated to “get it done” and finish school. Teachers need to build relationships before they do content. “As a young teacher, you love your content,” he reflected, and it takes time to learn how

to put relationship-building first. But the rewards are priceless: “At graduation,” he said, “there’s not a dry eye in that place.”

When he came to ISU, “it never crossed my mind once to be in Colorado and alternative education, but it’s where I want to stay.”

## Student teaching in San Antonio, Texas

By Dr. Sara Piotrowski

The majority of our history education students complete the traditional semester-long, immersive experience in local schools. Since 2013, we have offered the option to student teach in Eastbourne, England, through the University of Brighton. To date, 25 teachers have completed this overseas program. Alyssa Anselmini and Anna Kraemer went to the UK during fall of 2022. Members of the spring 2023 cohort have written their own article that follows. Here we explain a new experience that we piloted last spring, student teaching the entire semester in San Antonio, Texas.

The Cecilia J. Lauby Teacher Education Center on campus helped to facilitate this new student teaching experience through their partnership with Northside Independent School District in San Antonio. Isabella Lethbridge was one of just two secondary education majors who jumped at the challenge to student teach at John Marshal High School during the 2023 spring semester. She was simultaneously excited and terrified during her first day at the school as students recited the pledge of allegiance. Imagine her surprise when the pledge was *not*, in fact, over. The students quickly removed their right hands from their chests and rotated them outward, palms facing out and fingers facing upwards. “Honor the Texas flag,” they began. “I pledge allegiance to thee Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.” With that, they sat, and Lethbridge was left stunned—her first moment of Texan



Isabella Lethbridge, left, with student teacher coordinator, Dr. Sara Piotrowski

culture shock. At the end of her time in San Antonio, Lethbridge says, with complete honesty, “there is nothing more quintessentially Texan than the existence of a separate state pledge. Runner-up goes to the fact that all seventh-grade students take ‘Texas History’ as their history credit for the year.”

Lethbridge chose San Antonio out of a desire to experience a place and a student population entirely different from anywhere else she had previously explored. Though she loves to travel, Texas was a place that remained unchecked on her bucket list. She moved to Texas sight unseen, an experience she can’t recommend enough. When asked to share some of her experiences, here is what Lethbridge wrote:

“My students were obsessed with “Big Red,” a soda that can only be described as “bubbly red 40,” and trips to the nearby fruteria during their lunch hours. I was obsessed with the taquerias at every turn—I’m not sure how I’ll cope when I return to the Midwest and am left deprived of the unbelievable gift to Earth that is the breakfast taco. And every adult who found out I was from out-of-state excitedly asked me, “Have you been to H-E-B?,” Texas’s grocery chain that, to be frank, is just as good as people say it is.

Moving somewhere new was, of course, not all sunshine and roses. I was lonely at times and frequently missed familiar faces and places. But pushing myself out of my comfort zone and taking this opportunity to explore something new—regardless of the inevitable discomfort that accompanied that push—was worthwhile beyond words. Working with the student population here at Marshall was one of the most rewarding experiences I could’ve ever asked for, and meeting students who recently immigrated from North Africa, the Middle East, and beyond was an incredible experience. One of my sweetest students came to the U.S. from Afghanistan one year ago. I don’t have the words to express how amazing it was to introduce him to the American experience while learning from him about a broader world to which I was



Lethbridge in her San Antonio classroom

a complete stranger.

Student teaching is an arduous and exciting experience regardless of where you go. Sometimes I resented being alone, unpaid, and yearning for my old familiar college courses and campus. But despite all this, as I write with henna on my hand drawn by one of my kind students from the ESL club, I can say with complete honesty that this has been one of the most transformative and gratifying experiences of my life—and given a chance, I would never change my choice to travel to San Antonio.

True to legend, Texas is a truly unique place. Outsiders might have an image of white supremacist cowboys bucking “The Man” and shooting out into the sunset on their stallions, one hand on their cap and the other gripping their pistol. This is, of course, a complete misconception—the real Texas is much more welcoming, much more diverse, and leagues more beautiful than those who would rely on stereotypes would ever believe it to be.”

The Department of History is incredibly proud of Lethbridge for stepping outside her comfort zone. The chair of the department, Dr. Ross Kennedy, and the Coordinator of Student Teaching, Dr. Sara Piotrowski, were able to visit Lethbridge in March of 2023. They enjoyed a school tour and spent time in Lethbridge’s classroom. The program will continue to offer student teaching placements throughout the state, but we hope to build upon Lethbridge’s success in San Antonio.

## Student teaching in the United Kingdom

By Lindsey Knapp, Cole Merkin, and Jayda Lochner

After a few months of teaching in local schools, three of our history-social sciences education students flew to Eastbourne, England, last year to experience teaching in an English school at the Eastbourne Academy (TEA). Here is a first-person recount of their experiences.

### Lindsey Knapp: Building Relationships in Ten Weeks

As my plane landed at London Heathrow Airport, the reality of my situation fully sunk in. Here I was, in a foreign country, knowing next to nothing about what lay ahead of me. Thanks to the two weeks of orientation, I began to acclimate to the English education system before entering the classroom. I was primed on the national curriculum, the background of the school, and their daily procedures, during which time I learned that I would be teaching history to all grade levels.

In the United Kingdom, students have different class schedules every day. Because history is not a core subject, I would only see my students a few times a week. Initially, this was frightening. I was going to be at the school for 10 weeks. Accounting for strike days and Easter holidays, I would only have some students in class six times, leaving me unsure if I could build relationships with students in such a short amount of time.

In retrospect, this proved not to be an issue. I quickly bonded with my students by capitalizing on my American novelty and continuing interactions outside of the classroom. As soon as it clicked that I was an American, students displayed an almost overwhelming sense of curiosity. They wanted to know how Chick-Fil-A tasted, if I had ever visited Ohio, and, of course, if I owned any firearms. The questions never stopped—even up to my last week, students still wanted to know tidbits about my life at home. Although sometimes it was clear that students were trying to avoid doing their work by conversing with me, I always provided them with some sort of response. When I eventually moved from observation to instruction, I wanted to ensure that students were comfortable

with my presence. Entertaining students' inquiries enabled them to see me as a real teacher, not just a visitor.

Discussion of topics like Chicago-style pizza broke the ice so that students could later ask tough questions about the slave trade or the Holocaust. Students were curious about life in America; taking advantage of this interest, students quickly adapted to my roles both in and outside the classroom. In one instance, I went to the dance team's performance. The dancers were lined up in the hallway as I entered the seating area. I fondly remember hearing excited voices exclaiming, "Ms. Knapp is here!" and receiving waves from dozens of students. After this performance, I noticed that the students who were a part of this team were raising their hands more in class and generally more engaged in the lesson.

My student teaching experience was admittedly non-traditional. But, by teaching in an Illinoisan and an English classroom, I understood the universality of certain teaching truths. I had to immediately dive into forming relationships with the students at both placements. No matter who your students are, they must know you care about them. After my time in England, I can confidently say that even six class meetings across 10 weeks are enough to develop a strong rapport with students.

### Cole Merkin: Dressing the Part

When I got to TEA, I had the exciting opportunity to start teaching within my first week. This allowed me to become a staple in the classroom quickly—students were expecting to see me when they came into class every day.

As I was allowed to teach most of the lessons each week, I became known (at least to some of my students) as "that funny American man." This was in part due to my intentionally humorous teaching style, and in part due to my choice of ties. In England, the dress code for stu-

dents and teachers is more strict than in the U.S. I was expected to wear a suit coat and a tie to school daily. Conveniently, I'd been preparing for this for years. I have around 17 ties that I've collected and I used them to lighten up my wardrobe a bit. Students seemed to favor my gummy bear tie and my Kermit the Frog tie.

Regardless, I learned a lot about the differences between the two-school systems. I gained lesson and curriculum planning experience as well as classroom management, and I managed to build great relationships with my students and coworkers in the process.

### Jayda Lochner: A Truly Unique Experience

My experience at TEA was a little different than my peers.' I was originally placed in a Philosophy, Religion, and Ethics classroom. However, with multiple things not lining up well, I switched to an area of the school better suited for me to grow and learn. For most of my time at TEA, I worked in the Teaching and Learning Center, an inclusive room for students of special education needs and disabilities and social emotional mental health to complete their schoolwork outside the traditional classroom. In this room, I worked one-on-one with students on whatever subject they had during class. This experience taught me much more about behavior management and diversity than I would have experienced in a traditional classroom. For that, I am incredibly grateful.

My time in Eastbourne was highly enjoyable. Although I did not get traditional classroom experience, I will take all the lessons I have learned from my time there into my future endeavors. As a history person, taking fun field trips around southern England was especially amazing. Thanks to all who made this trip possible and memorable.

## Special Guest Speakers

During this past year, History sponsored two major talks on campus. In February, **Dr. Kenneth Warren**, professor of English at the University of Chicago, presented “Rethinking Race and Social Construction: A View from the Humanities.” This



Dr. Kenneth Warren

celebration of Black History Month was co-sponsored with African American Studies.

In April, the Department of History invited **Dr. Amy Stanley** to be this year’s Robert G. Bone Distinguished lecturer. Pulitzer Prize-nominated author and scholar from Northwestern University, Stanley presented *Stranger in the Shogun’s City: Modern History from the Archive to the Page*. The talk focused on Stanley’s research for her award-winning book *Stranger in the Shogun’s City: A Japanese Woman and Her World*, a biographical sketch about an 18th-century woman named Tsuneno, who ran away from her

Japanese home for a new life in the city of Edo (now Tokyo).



Dr. Amy Stanley

## Faculty and Staff Retirements

The academic year 2022-23 has seen the retirement of three members of the Department of History: John Reda, Sharon Foiles, and Faith Ten Haken, after decades of service to ISU. We would like to congratulate all three on their highly successful careers, thank them for their dedication and friendship, and wish them all the best as they embark on a new chapter in their lives. The *Newsletter* was able to speak with each of them on their time at ISU and what comes next.



Sharon Foiles and Faith Ten Haken, retiring together after 66 years of combined service.

### Sharon Foiles

**When did you start working at ISU? What was your job? What brought you here?**

I started working at ISU in September 1987 as a secretary II in the History

Department. I thought I wanted to be a math teacher and knew I could take additional classes while working. However, it turned out I liked my job so much that I decided to stay at ISU.

### What brought you to the Department of History?

I interviewed for three different departments on campus and chose to work in the History Department. Thanks to Julie Ruby for an interview that made my decision an easy one, which ended up being one of the best choices I’ve ever made.

### What are you most proud of during your career at ISU?

I am most proud of my involvement with the clerical union (AFSCME Local 3236), from when we started organizing until I was promoted into my final position as an administrative aide and out of the union. I’m also proud of the friendships I made while at ISU.

### What is your favorite memory while working in History?

One of my favorite memories from ISU is when I moved from a small area in the back of the office to an “actual” office with a door and a window after Schroeder Hall was renovated. There are so many more memories of times spent with my friends

at ISU, lunches, wedding and baby showers, parties, promotions, and so many great students! I am very grateful for my time at ISU.

### Any retirement plans you’d like to share?

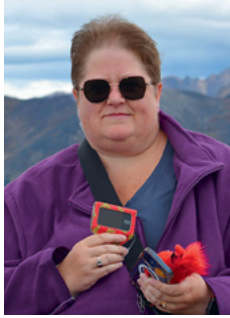
My retirement plan is to get organized and go through all the junk we’ve collected over the years! I also plan to spend more time with my family and hope to travel to warm places with my husband when it’s cold here.

### Faith Ten Haken

**When did you start working at ISU? What was your job? What brought you here?**

December 1991. It appealed to me because there were benefits and my husband was working construction. It was a consistent place that didn’t lay off people frequently. We were coming from the Chicago suburbs where we were living after we first got married to be close to family. We lived on the Shirley Blacktop for years and then bought down the street from my parents.

I was hired at secretary II, an entry-level clerical position in the Psychology Department. Psychology was interesting. I enjoyed my time and probably would have stayed longer but was able to test and get



Ten Haken on one of her many traveling adventures

the next level up; so I took a new job after a year and a half in the High Potential Students Office, which worked with first-generation and low-income students.

After HPS, I took another promotion and went to the English Language Institute, which worked with non-native English speakers who wanted to work on their skills to be admitted to a U.S. university. The students came from all over the place.

***What brought you to the Department of History?***

The job over there (at the English Language Institute) got cut to half-time as a result of the global economic crisis, but I was able to use a provision of the Civil Service position that allowed a “bump” into another job. I heard that this job just came open in History, interviewed, and was there for a long time, from either 2004 or 2005 in January. Since I came to History, Sharon Foiles and I have been next to each other. We’ve been together a long time.

***What is your favorite memory while working in History?***

I knew I was in the right place when in one of the very first days at lunch time, we were eating together, and a faculty mem-

ber came by and asked if I was knitting a sock or a sleeve. It was Larissa Kennedy, and I knew I was in the right place. I came home and told my husband, “At least someone around there knits.”

The department has always been kind and worked with me through health issues and family loss.

I debated retirement for a long time. I could have left about a year and a half earlier. I liked where I was at. I liked being in the department. It was only when Sharon (Foiles) retired that it made me think it was time.

***What are you most proud of during your career at ISU?***

I’m most proud of feeling like I helped students figure out where they needed to be and what they needed to do. In all of my jobs, I found myself always helping students to navigate where to go and what to do and who to talk to. I provided a safe place to vent and then would help people figure things out.

***Any retirement plans you’d like to share?***

I’m looking forward to more time to travel and, hopefully, to taking a cruise soon. My husband and I want to see more National Parks and just enjoy time together. I’m going to keep doing photography. Denali National Park in Alaska is going to be the big trip next year. We’re going to Texas this fall.

**John Reda**

***What are some of your first memories of working at ISU?***

Three things stood out to me during my first weeks working at ISU. I was pleasantly surprised by how friendly and supportive my colleagues were, the Quad in late summer and fall was beautiful, and I wondered how I could get students to put away their phones during class.



Dr. John Reda

***Do you have a favorite memory from your career here?***

In my first year, the department held a holiday party at Ewing Manor. The good food and festive atmosphere made me feel like I was becoming part of a special group.

***What will you miss most about teaching here?***

Teaching at ISU has been a privilege, and I’ll most miss the feeling I got on a good day in the classroom. I’ll also miss the contrast between working with so many impressive students as well as with so many who maybe shouldn’t be here at this time in their lives.

***Any retirement plans you’d like to share?***

I’ll be waking up each day and remembering I have no grading to do. Everything else is “to be determined.”

**In Memoria**

The faculty and staff of the History Department express their sadness for the passing of Drs. Lee Beier and Paul Holsinger and send their warm condolences to the families and friends. We wish to express our gratitude for their years of teaching and service at ISU and contributions to history.

**Dr. Augustus Leon “Lee” Beier (1941-2023)**

Dr. Lucinda McCray, previously a professor at ISU and Lee’s ex-wife writes:

He had a big personality to match his tall frame. People remember his enthusiasm for conversation, rock ‘n roll, soccer, basketball (Go, Bulls!), and anything with a motor. Lee Beier, who died on February 25, 2023, after a long battle with Parkinson’s Disease and Lewy Body Dementia, lived his 81 years to the fullest.

Born in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, on October 2, 1941, Lee grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, graduating from Monona Grove High School in 1959. His most

important and formative experience as a youth was marching and playing the bass bugle with the Madison Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps. He kept in touch with fellow members of the Corps for the rest of his life, attending reunions, maintaining friendships, and taking his sons to performances and competitions.

Lee attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he majored in history and graduated in 1963. He then spent a Fulbright year in Nancy, France, where



Dr. Lee Beier

he firmed up his intention to become a professional historian. He completed his Ph.D. in history at Princeton University, beginning his life-long dedication to doing and teaching

social history. He worked as a history professor, first at Lancaster University (UK), and later, at Illinois State University. He published many books, scholarly articles, and reviews, mainly focusing on 16th- and 17th-century British history.

Although Lee spent much of his life far from the woods and waters of northwestern Wisconsin, the small lakes of the region were always his happy place. He grew up enjoying summers at Pine Lake, near New Auburn, and, as an adult, owned cabins on, first, Fireside Lake, then Round Lake, where he lived full-time after his retirement in 2009. An avid swimmer, he was always first in the chilly spring waters after the ice went out and took his last dive off the dock in September.

Lee Beier is survived by his children, Robert Joseph McCray Beier (Jen), Jesse Callaghan McCray Beier (Lisa), Jacob Leon McCray Beier, and Zachary James McCray Beier (Rachel). He is also survived by his ex-wife, Lucinda McCray, five grandchildren, and his sisters, Victoria, Ann, and Katherine.

**Dr. M. Paul Holsinger (1938-2023)**

NORMAL - M. Paul Holsinger, 85, died Monday, May 15, 2023. According to his wishes, he was cremated. His ashes will be interred at a later date along with his beloved wife, Nancy, at the Shrine of St. Therese outside of Juneau, Alaska, a place they both found exceptionally beautiful.

Paul was born in Philadelphia, on January 31, 1938, the son of Paul and Katherine (Spies) Holsinger. He married Nancy Leah Hiss on June 7, 1958, at the First Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina. She died in June 2020, just a few days after their 62nd wedding anniversary.

Surviving are three children: Stephen (Joan) Holsinger, Rockford, Michigan; Alex (Kristi) Holsinger, Kansas City, Missouri; and Deblyn Holsinger, of Bloomington. Four grandsons also survive: Jordan, Luke, and Eli Holsinger of Kansas City, Missouri; and Jack Holsinger of Rockford, Michigan. His parents as well as a beloved daughter, Lisa Anne, also preceded him in death.

After graduating from high school in suburban Washington, D.C., Paul received a bachelor's degree in history from Duke University in 1959 and a master's and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1960 and 1964 respectively from the University of Denver. He began his university teaching career in the summer of 1962 at Black Hills Teacher's College in Spearfish, South Dakota, then taught at Oregon State University from 1962 to 1967. In 1967, he moved to Michigan State University, and then, in the summer of 1969, he became a member of the History Department at Illinois State University. He remained on the faculty at ISU until his retirement in 2003.

Paul was a dedicated teacher who loved the classroom and the thousands of students with whom he had the opportunity to work. He was also a scholar who authored several books and dozens of articles in various history and American Studies journals. In many ways, however, his most enjoyable scholarly moments came during the more than 30 years of free classes in history of Bloomington-Normal and McLean County that he frequently gave not only under the auspices of both the old Bloomington-Normal Adult Education program or the McLean County Museum of History, but also at the Bloomington or Normal Public Libraries, or at any number of civil clubs and other organizations around the Twin Cities.

Paul loved nature and especially its multitude of animals and birds. Later in life, he and Nancy traveled widely, visiting

all 50 United States, most Canadian provinces, and places throughout the world where they could find wildlife. They loved southern Africa with its large mammals; Panama, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, and the Falkland Islands for their birds, especially their many different penguin and hummingbirds; and Churchill, Manitoba, or Kodiak Island, Alaska, and their numerous polar and grizzly bears.

Above all else though, Paul was, first and foremost, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He loved his wife, his children, and his grandchildren endlessly. There was nothing in his life which took priority over any of them.



Dr. Paul Holsinger

No service or visitation will be held; and in lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials in Paul's name be given to any of the many organizations in this country that reach out to help others. He always considered himself privileged to give to many of those groups though he was an especial supporter and sponsor of MAP International, an organization devoted to providing medical supplies to those in need throughout the world. Nothing would have pleased him more than knowing that even in death, he was able to encourage such giving from others.



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\_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred phone number

### OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT ISU

I (and/or my spouse/partner) work for a matching gift company:

Please send me information about ways to support ISU through a provision in my will, trust, retirement plan, or other deferred gift arrangement.

I have already included ISU in my will, trust, retirement plan, or other deferred gift arrangement.

*Please mail this form to:*

*Illinois State University Foundation  
 Campus Box 8000  
 Normal, IL 61790-8000*