

Teaching careers end for three historians

Three veteran historians retire this year. **Sandra Harmon**, **Paul Holsinger**, and **Niles Holt** represent vastly different areas of history and have developed these into department strengths. They were honored May 8 at a University ceremony in the Bone Student Center. As Chair **John Freed** put it in summarizing their contributions:

Women's history, women's studies and Sandra Harmon are synonymous at Illinois State University. I would call Niles Holt the Mr. Chips of the department, whose classes always filled instantaneously. As for Paul Holsinger, the wide range of courses he has taught—World War II, constitutional history, local history, Canada, sports history, and the history of sexuality, just to name a few—are indicative of his wide range of interests.

Women's studies have changed dramatically in the department since **Sandra Harmon** began taking graduate classes in 1968. She has had a major role in developing the program and even in putting her imprint on the offerings.



Sandra Harmon

A graduate of the University of Dubuque, Harmon received her master's degree from Illinois State University in 1970 and her Doctor of Arts in 1990. She taught at University High School in 1971-72, and then was asked in spring 1972 to also teach a course for this department in "History of United States Women." She then switched to the History Department

and since then has taught United States history surveys and teacher education as well as women's history.

Harmon was a participant in the struggles to create a women's studies program at Illinois State, initially linking history with English, psychology, and sociology. Twice she has served as interim director of the program, a position she



Paul Holsinger

will again fill for the coming school year. Harmon told of her approach to the subject: examining women's roles and status within an organizational framework that includes demography, ideology, economic structure, political and legal issues, and education, at different time periods and for different racial/ethnic groups and economic classes.

"I don't look at women as passive victims," she commented, but as participants who were influenced and also exerted influence on those factors. This is evident from her articles on such figures as Florence Kelley, and on women graduates of Illinois State Normal University in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

American constitutional history was the specialty that brought **Paul Holsinger** to the department in 1969, but the North Carolina native soon branched into other fields—many other fields. When he wraps up teaching this summer, he will have taught some 21 different courses, ranging from United States surveys to Canadian history, World War II, local and environmental history, and extending to courses and honors colloquia on popular culture and wars.

With a B.A. from Duke in 1959, Holsinger entered the University of Denver for doctoral work, writing a dissertation on the Western career of United States Supreme Court Justice Willis Van Devanter. He taught one summer at Black Hills Teachers College in South Dakota, and then went to Oregon State from 1962 to 1967, when he began a two-year stay at Michigan State. During that time he spent a year as Eppley Professor of History at Culver Military Academy in Indiana.

His publishing record includes some 18 articles, three books on popular culture and World War II, and a volume on the history of the McLean County Chamber of Commerce.

An interest in local history has led him into different areas, including teaching an adult education course 14 times and delivering many talks to local groups. Requests keep coming in, and he plans to continue such activities as he moves into retirement.

Holsinger and his wife, Nancy, will reside in Normal in the immediate future,



Niles Holt

but will have time for visits to their daughter Deblyn in Bloomington as well as Lisa and husband, Jeff Carlton, in South Carolina; Stephen and wife, Joan, in Michigan, and Alex and wife,

Kristi, and their children, Jordan, Lucas, and Eli, in Kansas.

The history of science and European intellectual history have been dominant interests for **Niles Holt**, who came to the

Duty calls Phil Karns to Afghanistan

"Greetings from Afghanistan!"

That E-mail message came to the department early last fall from master's student **Phil Karns**, who had been on military duty in the Middle Eastern country since the previous spring.

Karns, employed as a business analyst by State Farm, was in Afghanistan as commander of a four-man Army Reserve

of map." Karns's research paper for the "Global History" course will be on the territoriality of the Afghan state.

Basu added that Karns "will also be discussing its impact on the processes of nation formation in Afghanistan and link it up with Kurdish question in the Middle East."



Graduate student Phil Karns is shown last June interviewing Major General Stanley McCrystal, staff director for headquarters of the combined/Joint Task Force in charge of Afghan operations.

In Afghanistan Karns and his team conducted oral history interviews, typically lasting an hour or two. This took up three-fourths of their time, with other collections occupying the rest as they sought to acquire artifacts "to help tell the story of the war," Karns said. These were then transcribed and sent with photos and related documents to the Center for Military History in Washington, D.C. In his seven months in the Middle Eastern country, Karns conducted 75 interviews and collected dozens of items.

Karns said he sees the mission of the Army's Military History Detachments "as doing the groundwork for future historians." Such primary source materials from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam are used constantly today by historians, he noted.

How does a study of history fit in? Historians' skills are beyond the scope of formal military training, so Military History Detachments rely on the reserve soldiers who make up all of the 25 history detachments in the Army. He attended Syracuse University on an ROTC scholarship, graduating in art history, and from there receiving his United States Army commission.

Reflecting on his recent military service, Karns said that a study of history "definitely has helped to provide me a theoretical framework for understanding the professional and academic standards for things like museum operations and oral history work, which I have been able to apply to the somewhat general guidance the Army History Program provides."

Alumni to gather

As old Schroeder Hall undergoes a massive renovation, alumni and emeriti of the History Department will gather for a reunion on Homecoming Saturday, October 18. The theme for the reunion is "Say goodbye to Old Schroeder," according to Teri Farr, co-chair of the event.

The event, open to all former History Department students, faculty, and their spouses and friends, will open with a breakfast, adjourn to watch the Homecoming parade, and continue with a tailgate party before the afternoon football game.

Anyone interested in learning more can contact Farr, tjarr@ilstu.edu, Rick Pearce, rrpearc@ilstu.edu, or Jess Ray, jdray@ilstu.edu.

Awards presented

Six students in the fall and seven students in spring won top honors in the semi-annual History Department Awards Programs.

Winners at the November 21 fall awards ceremony were: Lucy Lucile Tasher \$4,000 Senior Scholarships, **Laura Fonte** and **Jeff Flott**; Helen M. Cavanagh Best Master's Thesis \$2,500 awards: **Larry Quiram**, **Tina Stewart Brakebill**, and **John Poling**; Gleyana A. Ray \$500 Award, **Michaelene Martin**.

At the April 3 spring awards ceremony, the major graduate student prize, worth \$2,000, went to **Andrew M. Koke**, who received the Helen M. Cavanagh Award for Best Master's Degree Student. The Kyle and Jean Sessions Honors Scholarship was shared by **Jared Nelson** and **Matthew Husky**, who received \$300 each.

Kyle J. Smith and **Marcus Leman** won the James Todd Wilborn Scholarship for sophomores, worth \$100 each, while the Ray Scholarship for \$100 each went to **Peter M. Falk** and **Stephen C. Rose**.

Awards committee members are **Susan Westbury**, chair; **Don Davis**, **William Philpott**, **Sharon MacDonald**, and Emeritus Professor **Kyle Sessions**.

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Alumni in action

Anita Revelle '95, M.S. '97, is writing the history of the Colfax State Bank for its 110th anniversary of service to Cooksville and Colfax. She is director of Senior Professionals of Illinois State, which was awarded second place for their class catalog from the State of Illinois Lifelong Learning Coalition.

A trip to visit South African schools is the most recent summer activity of **Sandra Henson '67** of Marquette Heights. She teaches social studies and Spanish in Georgetown Middle School.

Building on the “neighborhood walk” concept she had seen used in **Paul Holsinger's** “Topics in Local History” seminar, **April Martens '76, M.S. '95**, created a similar local history elective for her 7th and 8th grade Social Studies classes at Clinton Junior High School.

Employed as Heartland Community College's director of outreach, **Don Cavallini, M.A. '67, D.A. '80** decided to run for the McLean County Board in last November's election. He won.

Kimberly Shehorn-Martin '90, M.A. '95, is director of education for the Joliet Area Historical Museum, which opened in 2002. She lives in Frankfort with her husband, Eric, an assistant provost at Governors State University, and their two children.

A Ph.D. in educational administration is the new goal for **Steve Simpson '87**. Simpson, who teaches 8th Grade Social Studies at Waterman, is taking courses at Northern Illinois University.

“Circle of Time,” a video history of the Elgin National Watch Company and its impact on Elgin, is one of the tangible products which **Carl Flaks '60, M.S. '66** helped bring about as president of the Elgin Area Historical Society.

Retired after 34 years of teaching at Putnam County High School, **Ron Blue-mer '67, M.S. 72**, has found time to write and publish his third book, *Rails Across the Heartland*, a history of steam and diesel railroads in the Illinois River Valley from the 1860s on. He is also part-time history instructor at Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby.

Kirk Salmela, D.A. '78, is ending his eleventh year as principal at Mattoon High School. He has been in public school administration for 14 years.

Students shine in Phi Alpha Theta event

Five Illinois State University students won top honors on March 29 when the Illinois regional conference of Phi Alpha Theta took place on campus. Forty students from eight campus chapters around the state attended. **Sharon MacDonald** is chapter advisor and organized the conference, assisted in all aspects of the conference by **Richard Pearce**. Students who participated from the department and their awards follow.

Drew Koke's paper “God of Time, Time of God: Medieval Theology and Temporal Consciousness,” was honored as Best Graduate Paper. **Charles Ian Chun's** paper “Europe and East Asia: Orientalist and Occidental Dialogue,” was judged the Best Graduate Paper in Intellectual History.

Chapter President **Mark Roeder** also was a winner, for his paper on “The

Evolution of the Public Sphere: Women and Publishing in Post-Revolutionary France.” The category was European History – Undergraduate. The Best Undergraduate Paper in Asian History was by **Jason MacConnell** on “Mutsu Munemitsu and the Sino-Japanese War.”

Mark Frederiksen took top honors in Best Undergraduate Paper in 19th Century United States History for his paper, “Slaves and Scripture: The Impact and Outcome of Biblical Interpretation.”

Honorable mention went to **Susan Crowe** for “In a Land of Broken Promises: Mexican Migrant Workers and the Abuses of the Braceros Program” and **Carl Mueller** for “Divided and Conquered: Examining the Cherokee Removal.”

1793,” appeared in the April 2003 issue of *Teaching History*.

David MacDonald was co-author, with Werner Eck and Andreas Pangerl, of two articles in *Chiron* 32 (2002): “Neue Militärdiplome mit neuen Konsulndaten,” (“New Military Diplomas with Consular Dates”), pp. 401-426, and “Neue Diploma für das Heer der Provinz Syrien,” (“New Diplomas for the Army of the Province of Syria”), pp.427-448.

“‘Blood and Guts’—Civil War-Era Medicine,” was the topic February 11 when **Lucinda Beier** spoke at the McLean County Museum of History on medical challenges to both Civil War patients and doctors.

War sparks forums

As war clouds loomed in March, members of the department spoke out at different forums, ranging from church gatherings to campus programs. A forum on “War, Regime Change, and the Future of Global Civil Societies,” took place March 18 in conjunction with the University Art Galleries' exhibition “Ready for War.” Moderator was **Mohamad Tavakoli**; participants from the History Department included **Ross Kennedy** and **Anthony Crubaugh**. Another Tavakoli-led program was on April 2 and was entitled “Invading Iraq, Expanding Democracy?” It featured department members **Richard Soderlund**, **Susan Westbury**, **Paul Holsinger**, and **Patrice Olsen**, as well as Manfred Steger from Politics and Government.

Olsen leads inaugural Cuban trip

Twenty-eight ISU students and faculty spent Spring Break in Cuba on the University's first authorized group trip to the island. History Assistant Professor **Patrice Olsen** led the group.

Each of the 22 students was required to develop an independent study contract before leaving, combining research in Cuba with additional work at the University. They carried humanitarian aid, toys for the children's hospital, and books for the national library.

Graduate student **Stephen Parkinson** called the trip's “most eye-opening” aspect the chance to meet face-to-face with Cubans and talk: “This is not an army of robots who believe everything Castro tells them,” he said. Learning how these people desire to have dialogue with Americans was crucial: “They too want to

break down the stereotyped barriers that are held by both sides.”

Susan Westbury was the other history professor on the March 8-17 trip, joining one political scientist, one applied computer science professor, and two from psychology.

In addition to visits to such Cuban patriotic sites as the José Martí Monument, the Memorial to Che Guevara and the Plaza of the Revolution, the group also went to the Literacy Museum, a community development project, visited with Chinatown leaders in Havana, and engaged in discussions on United States-Cuban relations and public health issues. Their main trip outside the capital was to Santa Clara, three hours from Havana. Activities there included a visit to an organic farm and discussions with city and provincial assembly leaders.

Earl Reitan writes on

Building on his earlier writing on British politics, **Earl Reitan**, a department member from 1954 to 1991, has just published *The Thatcher Revolution: Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair and the Transformation of Modern Britain, 1979-2001* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

The study keeps its focus on policies of Prime Minister Thatcher, and how her two successors have continued implementing those politics. Reitan spoke at a history noontime seminar on March 26.

Women's Studies meet

The annual Women's Studies Symposium featured nine papers originally presented in history classes. Chair for the March event was **Kyle Ciani**. Student papers were:

Mark Roeder, “Women and the Evolution of the Public Sphere”; **Fatemeh Masjedi**, “Gender and Historiography of the Iranian Constitution Revolution in 1905”; **Erica Spangler**, “Irish-American Women: 1815-1920”; **Jamaal Crenshaw**, “Celia, a Slave”; **Danielle Zdon**, “Women of Les Gens de Couleur Libre”; **Diane Kraemer**, “Working Girl: How 1920s Society Affected Fay Ritchey”; **Amy Wyatt**, “The Image of Women in Postwar Magazines”; **Susan Harsha**, “Good Housekeeping Magazine 1953-1954: Was

Bone Scholar named

The Bone Scholar selection committee has named **Kelly LeJeune**, a junior in history, as a Bone Scholar for the 2003-04 school year.

LeJeune has been active in Phi Alpha Theta, giving a paper in December 2001 at the organization's convention in San Antonio, Texas, on “Rwanda: The Genocide that the West Ignored.”

Fourteen current Illinois State University students were chosen to be Robert G. Bone Scholars, the highest University-wide honor that can be bestowed upon a senior.

The designation, awarded since 1967, was created in honor of the contributions of President Robert Bone, now deceased, on his retirement. Bone Scholars are chosen from nominees named by the faculty of the various departments, and receive a financial award and a commemorative medallion as well as recognition at Commencement and special programs.

Lessoff, Tavakoli named to journal posts

The Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era has named **Alan Lessoff** to a five-year term as editor of its journal.

Lessoff is a long-time member of the organization, which dovetails with his work on urban history and United States history in the years from Reconstruction to the Great Depression.

His appointment brings to two the number of historians serving as editors of journals in their specialties. Last year **Mohamad Tavakoli** began a five-year term as editor of the journal *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. The interdisciplinary journal is published at Duke University Press.

Tavakoli is joined on the journal's masthead by department colleagues **Subho Basu** and **Richard Soderlund** as book review editors. Other Illinois State University professors brought into the fold under Tavakoli's editorship are Rebecca Saunders, English, as co-editor, Valentine Moghadam, women's studies, as associate editor, and Cassandra Veney, political science, as a book review editor.

Death takes James Goben

An alumnus who was active in Civil War history activities died February 2 in Bloomington. **James Goben, M.S. '75**, had written his master's thesis on "William Ward Orme of Bloomington, Illinois," one of Bloomington's Civil War generals, and frequently participated in Civil War history programs.

Goben, 68, was a Navy veteran of the Korean War, and after returning worked as an administrator and a bookkeeper. He became known locally, however, for his love of history, which included serving as volunteer director of the McLean County Historical Society in the years before it moved into the former county courthouse and was a small, struggling organization.

Teachers, alumni speak

Graduates of the department, along with present and former faculty, were prominent at the 23rd annual Illinois History Symposium last December 6 in Springfield.

Professor **Sandra Harmon** read a paper on "Assistants, Training Teachers, and Preceptresses: Nineteenth Century Women Faculty at Illinois State Normal University," and 2002 master's graduate **David Harbin** of Quincy spoke on "Reclaiming Zion," about the Mormons and later Icarians at Nauvoo.

Comments were delivered by Professor Emeritus **Mark Plummer** and by graduates **David Bartlett '64, M.S. '67**, of Park Forest, **Floyd Mansberger, M.A. '81**, of Fever River Research in Springfield, and by **Terri Ryburn-LaMonte M.S. '88, D.A. '99**, of Normal.

Institute draws 130

More than 130 high school and community college teachers—with a good scattering of Illinois State University history education majors—attended the nineteenth annual Institute on History and Social Sciences on March 17.

Speakers on women's and family history, the United States and the world, and a forum on new trends in American history enlivened the event, which closed with a luncheon.

Kyle Ciani spoke on "American History Grows Up: Incorporating the Histories of Children into America's Story," followed by **Sandra Harmon's** talk on "Educating Women: Women's History Meets the History of Education."

Exceedingly apropos, in view of the impending Iraqi conflict, was **Ross Kennedy's** discussion of "Retrospect and Prospects: America and Great Power Politics." This was followed by the forum, featuring **Lucinda Beier** on the history of medicine; **Alan Lessoff** on urban history, and **William Philpott** on environmental history.

URG fruit bountiful

A veritable bonanza of University Research Grants has hit the department. Chair **John Freed** noted that "Everyone who applied for a grant obtained some funding—an indication of the high quality of the faculty's research."

Recipients are: **Ray Clemens**, Faculty Research Award; **Subho Baso, Ross Kennedy** and **William Philpott**, New Faculty Initiative Grants; **Kyle Ciani**, Pre-Tenure Faculty Initiative Grant; **Tony Crubaugh, Patrice Olsen**, and **Silvana Siddali**, Summer Faculty Fellowships.

Freed gave special thanks to **David MacDonald** and **Lucinda Beier**, who served on the College Research Committee, which scrutinized proposals.

Florence mapmaker target of Clemens

Honors continue to pour in for **Ray Clemens**. Early in the spring semester he learned that he had been awarded a Newberry Library/British Academy Fellowship for Study in Great Britain, and while catching his breath from that, news came that the Newberry has awarded him a Mellon Grant for the 2003-04 school year.

The first fellowship will take him to London to work at the British Library for a month next winter. For the Mellon Grant, he will live in Chicago and work on his project entitled "Mapping on the Margins: Gregorio Dati's *Sfera* and the Teaching of Renaissance Geography." The *Sfera* was written c. 1435 by Gregorio Dati, a Florentine merchant. It uses portolan charts broken up into parts and placed in the margins of the treatise. It was clearly intended for the education of merchant boys, probably after basic grammar and arithmetic.

Clemens also won a University Research Grant.

Retirees...continued from cover

University in 1968. He had completed his Yale Ph.D. the previous year while teaching at Eastern Connecticut College (now a state university).

Holt started with teaching the "Western Civilization" course in the summer of 1968, and that autumn he introduced "European Intellectual History" into the department's curriculum, a course he has continued to the present.

Within the University, Holt was an early participant in team-teaching in the old "Humanities" course—with professors from English, music, and art—and he wrote the original proposal for History 300, now one of the required courses for majors.

Holt's publications have generally been both in history of science and history of ideas, although he also co-authored two books on the Graduate Record Exam in history. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *ISI S* (journal of the history of science), and *British Journal for History of Sciences*.

Two of the highlights in his list of presenting some 30 papers at conferences were his invited lectures in 2000 at an Oxford conference on the Holocaust, and in 1982 at a University of Tübingen conference on German religious history. His Oxford paper focused on the way Germany's scientific organizations reacted to the Nazis' attempts to involve scientists in their work and philosophies.

Holt is very grateful for his loving and supportive wife, Cathy, a federal service retiree. Their daughter, Tricia, is an attorney in the Milwaukee area; she and her husband, Shawn, have one son. The Holts' son, Kevin, and his wife, Traci, live in Indianapolis, where Kevin is manager of construction for an Indiana firm.

What have you been up to?

Send your news to the newsletter.

Name (maiden if appropriate) _____

Graduation year(s), degree(s) _____

Mailing address _____

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