



Today & Yesterday

Newsletter of the Department of History

Volume 48, 2024

History partners with the McLean County Museum of History

By Candace Summers, senior director of education, McLean County Museum of History

The McLean County Museum of History has enjoyed a mutually beneficial partnership with the Department of History at Illinois State University that has grown and flourished over the years. There are faculty and administrators serving on the museum's board of directors, students participating in our internship and volunteer programs, museum staff providing educational programs to faculty and their students, faculty members guest curating museum exhibits, and so much more. Several efforts stand out among all the rest, including the annual History and Social Sciences Teacher Symposium, which has been jointly sponsored by the Illinois State University Department of History, McLean County Museum of History, and Regional Office of Education 17 since 2007.

Each year, the annual History Social Sciences Teacher Symposium services hundreds of practicing pre-K through 12 history and social science teachers from throughout the state of Illinois, and a contingent of upper-class Illinois State history education majors. The inclusive scope of the target audiences reflects what has been a primary goal of the symposium since its inception—to facilitate a connection between working teachers and students who are actively engaged in becoming the next generation of educators, as well as to promote the use of local history resources in the classroom.

Over the course of the last 17 years, the symposium—just as its organizers—has changed and adapted to current educational practices, standards, and educator/student needs. Beginning in 2007, sessions were offered at several Downtown Bloomington locations near the museum. By the next year, the symposium included

the David Davis Mansion, University of Illinois Extension, and the museum as session locations. Fast forward to 2010, the museum served as the sole host of the event. In 2015, Illinois State University hosted for the first time to accommodate construction at the museum. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Shifting the conference location to Illinois State allowed for more participants than ever before. Because of the extra



This year's symposium welcomed over 300 attendees and hosted 38 individual sessions with keynote speaker Dr. Joel Sipress, professor and chair of the Department of Social Inquiry at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. Join us for next year's symposium on Friday, February 21, 2025.

space, the symposium was able to feature a record number of 35 unique sessions for the more than 200 educators, students, and presenters in attendance. Because of the overwhelming positive response by all those who participated in the 2015 conference, all three partners agreed the location of the symposium would alternate between the museum and Illinois State in order to highlight the assets of each location.

More recently, the museum partnered with **Dr. Taylor Soja** and the students enrolled in her M.A. seminar on family history. The museum's director of adult education, Dr. Maria Mears, connected with Soja in 2023 and, after learning about the topic of Soja's class, she immediately thought of the Evergreen Cemetery Walk as a potential project for the class.

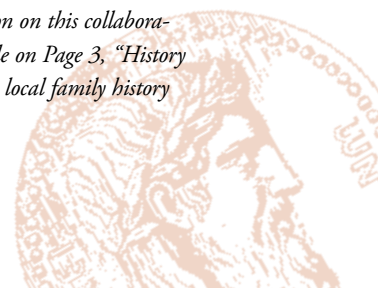


Andy Goveia, an eighth grade social studies teacher at Thomas Metcalf School, and Kate Pole, a social studies teacher at University High School, present to a full session.

Mears connected Soja with Candace Summers, senior director of education at the museum and lead organizer for the Cemetery Walk, to explore the possibility of the project. After discussing the need for more candidates to be researched for the Cemetery Walk as well as the goals for the class, Soja, Mears, and Summers agreed this would be a worthwhile project to pursue for both our students and the museum. Not only did the museum benefit by having 10 new candidates for the Cemetery Walk researched and biographies written about them, but the students got real-world experience using local history resources and working on a project that promotes public history. It was a win-win for both the museum and the Department of History.

The museum is thankful to have such excellent and supportive partners who see the value in including local history in their curriculum and encouraging students and educators to explore the history that can be found right outside their window. We look forward to continuing this partnership with Illinois State and the Department of History in all its facets for many more years to come.

For more information on this collaboration, please see the article on Page 3, "History graduate students in the local family history archive."



Undergraduate program highlights

Thoughts from History Department student intern Molly Jean Adams '24

This year, the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Program celebrated its 50th anniversary on campus. To honor the milestone, the exhibition *WGSS at 50: 1974-2024* was created, designed, and installed by Dr. Kyle Ciani, professor of history and core faculty for WGSS; Rebecca Fitzsimmons, special collections librarian; and María Tudela, humanities and social sciences librarian. The research team included April Anderson-Zorn, university archivist of the Dr. Jo Ann Rayfield Archives; Julie Neville, research archivist; Lillian Ridinger, archives student worker; and **Molly Jean Adams**, student intern. The exhibition opened in Milner Library's Benway Gallery in April and was free to the public through mid-May. The exhibit's student intern, Adams graduated in spring 2024 as an Honors Program student with a double major in history and organizational and leadership communication. In the fall, Adams will begin the graduate program in public history at Oklahoma State University.

We wanted to learn more from Adams about what she learned through this internship and sat down with her to ask a few questions:

How did this experience with archival research differ from course work assignments?

This was my first experience with physical archival research. It differed from course work assignments, as I normally do not have the honor of being able to physically search through primary source material. It was great to be able to hold pieces of history in my own hands. A few of my favorite documents in the collections were letters of correspondence from historical figures like Alice Paul, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth.

You helped with the exhibit installation. What did you learn from that experience?

While helping with the exhibit installation, I learned just how much thought goes into each piece used in the exhibit. Whether it is a button, a photograph, or a document, everything must be put in its proper position to ensure that the message of the exhibit is made clear. Little efforts can make a big difference.

Do you have further thoughts you'd like to share about working on WGSS at 50?

I am so grateful to have been a part of the process of creating the WGSS 50th anniversary exhibit. It was so nice to learn from so many amazing people on how to be a good archivist and historian. Especially since so many individuals have poured their hearts into the WGSS Program since its establishment, it was truly amazing to see all the hard work and dedication people have put into making ISU a more inclusive campus, demonstrating everyone can use their abilities to make positive changes in the world.



History student intern Molly Jean Adams



Molly Jean Adams and María Tudela install a display case for the WGSS 50th anniversary exhibit in Milner Library.

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WHC's visit to the Lois Jett Historic Costume Collection



Incoming Women's History Club board members Sam Lewis (social media), Kaili Stanford (vice president), Jazmine Cruz-Rafael (president), Kylie Black (secretary). Not pictured: Mia Norris (treasurer).

History Clubs

Women's History Club (WHC) had another successful academic year. The club hosted nine faculty speakers from six different academic units who spoke to members about topics ranging from women's roles in shaping narratives about the American West to early modern portraiture. Talks ranged across broad subjects, from Indonesia to the Ottoman Empire, Michigan to China, and Bloomington to the Netherlands.

Additionally, WHC visited the Lois Jett Historic Costume Collection in Turner Hall. Dr. Jennifer Banning (Family and Consumer Sciences) spoke to the club about how clothing can serve as a historical primary source and gave a tour of the collection's archive.

Special News

Genevieve Fritz received the 2023-24 Robert G. Bone Scholar award. This is the fourth history major to win the coveted university award in the last three years. Thank you to **Dr. Kyle Ciani** for successfully shepherding another student through the process.



Genevieve Fritz

Graduate program

History graduate students in the local family history archive

By Taylor Soja, assistant professor of History

This spring, History Department master's students could be found in various local history archives and collections—from the McLean County Museum of History to the State Farm Archives to the Second Presbyterian Church. They were there to conduct research for a collaborative project with the McLean County Museum of History. **Dr. Taylor Soja's** HIS 402 M.A. seminar, The Family in European History, was designed to introduce students to the field of academic family history, but it also

confronts the rising popularity of family history and genealogy research across the world.

In order to understand the relationship between how historians approach family history and everyday people approach family history, the course centered on a project with the McLean County Museum of History that gave each student an opportunity to contribute original genealogical and family history research about a resident of McLean County for use by museum staff

in their public programming, including in the popular Cemetery Walk held each fall. Nine students produced new research for the museum. A Community Engagement Learning Grant from Illinois State's Center for Civic Engagement helped fund the collaboration. Students worked closely with Candace Summers and Dr. Maria Meers at the museum's education department, along with local archivists. The project was an opportunity for students to learn about public history careers and programming,

Continued on page 4

and to make connections with museum professionals. At the same time, students served and engaged with their community at a local institution and were encouraged to think critically about family history and genealogical research.

Here are some examples of what history students uncovered:

Emma Malone researched the life of Sylvia Caldwell Mecherle using archival records from the McLean County Museum of History and State Farm Archives. Caldwell Mecherle was born in Pittsburgh in 1883. She married in 1909 and, within a few days, the couple left for Siam (Thailand) on a missionary trip during which they had their first son, Alden. In 1912 on their journey home, the fam-

ily survived the sinking of the Titanic. In 1925, Caldwell Mecherle became State Farm's 11th employee. She worked first as a stenographer, and eventually as G.J. Mecherle's secretary. Caldwell Mecherle divorced, remarried, and raised her children in the Bloomington community. She was active in theater, community social events, and the Second Presbyterian Church until her death in 1965.

Joshua Blood researched the life of Long Hong, a 19th century Bloomington resident who was known in town because of his relationship to the city's premier Chinese launderer, Ah Moo Long, as well as his tragic death at the hands of a fellow employee. The only mention of his name in the local records are in relation



Sylvia Caldwell Mecherle. TIS Archives at Park College, the Michael Findlay Collection

2023–24 Student Awards

HELEN M. CAVANAGH AWARD FOR BEST MASTER'S THESIS— U.S. HISTORY

Zach Carlson
Alex Silverman

HELEN M. CAVANAGH AWARD FOR BEST MASTER'S THESIS— NON-U.S. HISTORY

Brandon Dull

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

Alex Silverman
Brandon Dull

LUCY LUCILE TASHER SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP

Fall 2023

Liliana Beard
Katura Hagerman

Spring 2024

Brianna Bowman
Bradley Harris
David Meyer

GLEYNafa T. RAY AWARD

Fall 2023

Paul Miller
Lou Moore

Spring 2024

Julia Baker

Joshua Cihlar
Joel Garvey

MARK WYMAN-STEPHANE BOOTH SCHOLARSHIP

Kathleen Kramer

JAMES TODD WILBORN SCHOLARSHIP

Kylie Black
Maxwell Silkaitis

SESSIONS HONORS SCHOLARSHIP

Jack Jordan
Katherine Norris

WILLIAM AND JEANNE HOWARD SCHOLARSHIP

Margaret Allen
Erin Wilcox

HARMON RECRUITMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Gary Gomez
Kathleen Kramer

DARREL A. SUTTER SCHOLARSHIP

Ashley Medlin
Stephanie Tadda

DARREL A. SUTTER TEXTBOOK AWARD

Luke Biondi

Aamari Taylor

DARREL A. SUTTER WRITING AWARD

Mason McClure, Margaret Allen, Alexis
Dimaso, Nate Logsdon

THE TOUSEY SCHOLARSHIP

Melanie Donis

DARREL A. SUTTER STUDENT TEACHER AWARD

Fall 2023

Lily Vellenga

Spring 2024

Rhianna Skoog
Benjamin Gearman

LAWRENCE MCBRIDE AWARD

Fall 2023

Mark Anbinder

Spring 2024

Serena Burtschi
Wiktoria Zawadzka

HOWARD ROMANEK AWARD

Fall 2023

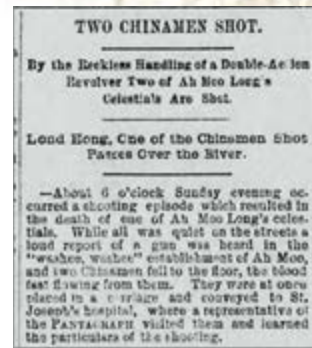
Mary Nunemaker

Spring 2024

Henry Judge
Abby Hanlon

to the shooting of May 18, 1884, that brought his demise, and the consequent suicide of the guilt-ridden shooter, Quang Hong, in February of the following year. Researching Long Hong was a task of investigating his surroundings and the 19th century Bloomington in which he arrived. Long Hong was one of a handful of Chinese immigrants whose passage and employment were secured by Ah Moo Long, arguably the most famous member

of Bloomington's small Chinese diaspora. Long Hong was a husband and a father who came to America for the promise of greater pay, which he intended to send to his family back home. His untimely death at 30 years old was not the end of his legacy, however, as his memory would be used in an intrigue to tarnish the name and reputation of his employer, Ah Moo Long.



Local news report on Long Hong's death. *The Weekly Pantagraph*, Friday, May 23, 1884. (Photo/[Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com))

Graduate program spotlight

The Illinois Association of Museums bestowed the "2024 Award of Excellence in Community Partnerships" to the Champaign County History Museum due to the efforts of its former manager and History M.A. student, **Connor Monson**. Last year, Monson partnered with Dr. Dan

Gilbert from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) for a project about the attendees of the first Farm Aid concert at UIUC's Memorial Stadium in 1985. This partnership brought together nearly 1,000 historic photographs, documents, and artifacts. The items are now

part of the Champaign County History Museum collection and will be turned into an exhibit at the Spurlock Museum next year for the 40th anniversary of the famous concert.

Interviews with the 2024 Helen M. Cavanagh "Best U.S. Thesis" winners, Alex Silverman and Zach Carlson

In the spring 2024 semester, **Alex Silverman** successfully defended his thesis, an exploration on the politics of memory and memorialization. By exploring the history of a John C. Calhoun memorial that sat in the main square in Charleston, South Carolina, until protestors recently had it removed, Silverman analyzed the various ways Calhoun, slavery, and the Confederacy have been remembered and how those memories have been shaped by changing political contexts. (*Note: The interview has been edited for clarity.*)

If you had to describe your thesis in one to two sentences, what would you say?

Silverman: It is an exploration of Southern civic identity and the commemorative landscape.

How was your experience in our program during the last two to three years? How has your intellectual journey been?

Silverman: I felt nurtured, challenged, stimulated, and genuinely cared for.

If you were to give advice to someone who is entering the program in the fall, what would you say?

Silverman: On a practical level, try not to get discouraged as you learn to synthesize complex information more quickly. Gutting a text takes practice and patience and is really quite unnatural, but it is necessary. On a more emotional level, don't forget to have fun; that's why you're here.

Were there any classes or topics that inspired you in any way?

Silverman: Dr. Hartman's introductory class ruptured my prior understanding of history and instilled the importance of critical theory. Dr. Kapoor's seminar on electricity reshaped my understanding even further.

What will you do now that you are graduating?

Silverman: I wasn't sure how to answer this question, so I tried offloading it to Chat-GPT by asking the large language model to suggest an aphorism about the unpredictability of the future. It offered a suitable quote from Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan. However,

when I tried to verify the quotation, I determined it to be a product of the software's somewhat infamous tendency to "hallucinate." With that said, I've invested too much time in this endeavor to turn back now, so without further ado: "We can predict the future of nations and political systems, but we cannot predict the future of a person."
—ChatGPT

Also in the spring 2024 semester, **Zach Carlson** successfully defended his thesis on the history of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) since the 1950s. Although historians have fully fleshed out the history of the CPUSA from its inception in 1919 through the end of World War II, very little has been written about the party in the years since. Based on a series of interviews he conducted with former party members and on archival research he did in the party archives in New York City, Carlson tells a fascinating tale of a party trying to remain relevant and, in the process, change the world for the better.

If you had to describe your thesis in one to two sentences, what would you say?

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Carlson: It's a survey of the Communist Party of the United States focusing on their critical and overlooked role in the New Left Movement, particularly among the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war movement, and their protection of civil liberties.

How was your experience in our program during the last two to three years? How has your intellectual journey been?

Carlson: This is my sixth year in the program. I started as a part-time student while working full time at ISU, taking one class a semester. The past two or three years specifically have been focused on my thesis, researching, traveling for interviews, writing, and revising. My journey overall was a little rocky. I completed my undergraduate degree at Illinois State as well, starting in computer science. I began my academic career with a .6 GPA in my freshman fall semester. A few semesters

later, I took HIS 310 wholly unprepared as a last-ditch effort to see if history would be the right fit for me and, while I did not do as well as I had hoped, it reignited my love for the field and brought me to where I am now.

If you were to give advice to someone who is entering the program in the fall, what would you say?

Carlson: Take your time and enjoy it. It's OK to go part-time or take a needed break. Everything will be here for you when you're ready.

Were there any classes or topics that inspired you in any way?

Carlson: HIS 468 on the Soviet Union showed me there is always more to a topic or narrative, especially one that appears to have been decided already. It showed me everyday people doing everyday things, which helped me formulate how I

approached my thesis while also removing some of my Cold War bias that is deeply ingrained in U.S. history and culture.

What will you do now that you are graduating?

Carlson: My immediate next steps are to take a break, get involved in more community work, and then ease back into academics in the near future. I still intend to work at the University for the foreseeable future and stay in Bloomington. Other possibilities include rounding out my anthropology minor as a second B.A., getting a minor in urban studies, strengthening my German, or eventually applying for a Ph.D. program, likely in history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

New faculty profiles

Camille Cole

Hi, I'm **Dr. Camille Cole**, one of the new faculty members in the Illinois State Department of History. I came to Illinois State University from the University of Cambridge, where I had a postdoctoral



Dr. Camille Cole

fellowship after completing my Ph.D. at Yale in 2020. I'm a historian of the modern Middle East (specifically the Ottoman Empire) and of global capitalism. I've lived in many different parts of the U.S., the

U.K., Turkey, and Jordan—but this is my first time living in the Midwest. So far, some of the main challenges of living here have been everyone's love for being early—and realizing everyone is taller than me!

My research focuses on the histories of environment, capitalism, and law in Ottoman Iraq just before the First World War. I'm currently working on my first book, which explores how wealthy elites in and around the Persian Gulf used the changing structures and tools of the modern state to accumulate wealth, land, and access to resources, in both licit and illicit ways—and how they used the resulting conflicts to talk in new ways about what it meant to be Ottoman. Essentially, what I'm interested in is how, specifically, the rich got richer. For the book, I've visited state archives in Turkey and the U.K., and private collections in Iraq, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi. It's a good thing I like learning new languages, because I work mostly in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, as well as Persian, French, and Spanish (and English,

of course). If you're making a list of most obscure skills, learning dead languages like Ottoman Turkish is probably right at the top.

Here at ISU, I teach classes on world history, the history of global capitalism, the modern Middle East, and the Ottoman Empire. I love teaching, in part because I love helping students find new ways to look at and understand the world—and because I also love developing the research and writing skills they can keep using even after they've graduated. So far, I've been really impressed by my students here and their enthusiasm for learning about the past.

When I'm not teaching, writing, or researching, I love to read trashy novels, cook elaborate meals, and lift weights. I split my time between Bloomington and Chicago, where I live with my partner Ben, who is a lawyer, and our cat Harriet, who specializes in finding that perfect square of sunshine.

Lindsay Stallones Marshall

I'm **Dr. Lindsay Stallones Marshall** and I'm thrilled to join the Department of History at Illinois State University. I come from a long line of teachers, so it



Dr. Lindsay Stallones Marshall

was probably inevitable I'd become one. After college, I took a job teaching high school history in San Jose, California, and spent 11 years there, eventually chairing the department. While I was teaching, I completed a Master of Liberal Arts degree at Stanford University, which ended up being the beginning of the end of my high school teaching career. I wrote my thesis on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (focused on debates over public memory about the Holocaust), specifically the turning points

in the national conversation that Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* and the 1999 film *Nichts als die Wahrheit* provoked. Researching that project revealed to me how few of the same questions I'd asked about public memory of U.S. history, and that eventually led me back to graduate school.

At the University of Oklahoma (OU), I wrote my dissertation, "Teaching Us to Forget: United States History Textbooks, the Plains Wars, and Public Memory," which investigates the ways in which narratives about the wars of westward expansion in historical writing and U.S. history textbooks shaped each other from the late 19th century to the late 20th century. These narratives play a central role in actively distorting public memory about Indigenous history and perpetuating prejudice against Indigenous peoples. I also had the opportunity to research in my secondary field, environmental history, focusing on horse-human relationships and the ways in which settler colonial frameworks discredit Indigenous knowledge about those relationships. While there, I also worked with Natsu Puuku, a wild horse rescue and horsemanship program for Comanche youth and volunteered with equine-assisted therapy program Hoofbeats for Hope. Spending time with those horses and their people got me through grad school.

After graduating from OU, I was

awarded the two-year Chancellor's Post-doctoral Research Fellowship in American Indian Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While there, I did some consulting work with the Illinois State Board of Education on the revised social science standards and wrote a chapter on horse history for *Traces of the Animal Past: Methodological Challenges in Animal History*. I returned to OU at the end of that postdoc to work as an assistant professor of educational leadership and policy studies jointly appointed with Gateway to Belonging at OU, teaching graduate education studies courses and an undergraduate first year experience course.

It's been a wonderful academic journey, but I've learned that my heart is in history and I'm so happy to be able to return to my disciplinary home at ISU. I look forward to the work ahead: developing and teaching courses, building relationships with students, getting to know colleagues in the department and across campus, urging the University to expand its commitment to the principles of land acknowledgement in partnership with Native Nations, and completing my book. But I also look forward to returning to Central Illinois (where I'm a much more successful gardener than in Oklahoma.) I can't wait to revisit and explore new forest preserves with my family and find riding trails to explore with my horse, Caz.

Emeriti spotlight

Dr. Lou Perez co-authored and published with Dr. R.W. Purdy, *Modern Japan: Understanding Modern Nations*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2024.



For more information, visit Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu

The History of History education at Illinois State University

By Charles E. Gray, professor emeritus of History

The fall 2023 edition of *Today and Yesterday* featured an article about history education. This prompted me to wonder if today's history faculty and students might have an interest in learning about the beginnings of history education in the department. So, what follows are some memories from an ancient retiree:

For many years, all courses related to teaching (including student teaching) were centered in the College of Education. However, for the History Department, this began to change in the mid-1960s with a federal grant.

In 1965 I was a member of a group of history faculty and grant specialists that developed and submitted a history education proposal to the U.S. Department of Education. At the time, I was teaching history at University High School and completing my doctoral studies at the University of Illinois, specializing in history-social science education.

Major portions of the grant proposal were approved. Included was multiyear funding for the development of a history/social science teaching materials center and an experimental history/social sciences teaching methodology course.

The federal grant became operative in 1966-67, and I was asked to develop both the materials center and the experimental methods course. Thus, for several years I held a joint appointment in the History Department and at University High School. The eventual result was a teaching materials center in a large room in the old Schroeder Hall annex and a teaching methodology course known as History 290.

In 1971, after completing a funded research project in University High School, I was asked by History Department Chair Earl Reitan to join the History Department full-time. Soon thereafter, the second teaching methods course was added: History 390 (as well as two courses for the Doctor of Arts program). In those days, history education was pretty much a "one man" operation, with some support from the Laboratory Schools and the Normal Community High School.

Hence, history education at Illinois State University grew from federal "seed money" and gradually developed into a recognized program between 1966-67 and the early 1970s. I retired in 1986 and turned the future of history education



Dr. Charles Gray, professor emeritus of History

over to the very capable hands of Larry McBride. And some years later, I was delighted when one of my history teaching methods students became director of the program, Fred Drake.

I believe today's history education program is a *world class* operation. In particular, I commend the program for the working relationships it has established with school personnel in Illinois.

Thank you, Dr. Monica Noraian

By Sara Piotrowski

After 26 years in the history-social sciences education program, the Department of History is saying farewell to **Dr. Monica Noraian**. While she is just moving across the Quad to serve as the director of the Cecilia J. Lauby Teacher Education Center, a role she's been serving in since 2021, her absence will be felt in Schroeder Hall. Noraian has served as our program's director and a tenured track professor since 2008. Previously, she wore various hats in the department, including coordinator of student teaching, university supervisor, and adviser. Noraian began her teaching career in 1991 at both West Chicago and Adlai E. Stevenson high schools before coming to Illinois State.

Dr. Ron Gifford, the department's director of undergraduate education and enrollment management, remembers when Noraian arrived in 1998:

"She came to ISU as a veteran high school teacher, and she elicited excitement from her students. More than once, I heard a former student tell her that she had changed their life. As an instructor, adviser, tenured professor, and director, Monica always focused on how she could help students become the best teachers possible. In the process, she played an essential role in our mission and continues to do so. I will miss having Monica in the Department of History, but ISU will always be best served by people like her who want to make the institution work for students, faculty, and staff alike. She truly understands more than most that we are all rowing in the same boat."

If your cohort went on one of the famous two-day urban education trips to Chicago or helped clean along Route 66, then you experienced Noraian's commitment to service-learning in action. She is responsible for partnering with the TCH program on campus and the University of Brighton in England to bring the student teaching abroad opportunity



Dr. Monica Noraian visited the University Archives with her HIS 300 class.

to our program. Her work with the Ivy Collegiate Academy in Taichung, Taiwan, has made the summer internship possible for secondary education majors. These are just a few examples of how Noraian has gone above and beyond for our program to ensure our students have exposure to various educational experiences. Gabe (Buckrop) Vandewostine '17 remembers how "Dr. Noraian expanded my view of what learning, and teaching, could look like. During our History 300 seminar, she held our classes all over Bloomington-Normal. From visiting the ISU Archives and library's Special Collections, to the McLean County History Museum and Eyestone one-room schoolhouse, she made learning memorable and impactful." That is a perfect example of practicing what you preach. Megan Somers '18 appreciated how "Dr. Noraian always made the class interactive and fun. She didn't just tell us how to create a student-centered classroom; she truly modeled it for us. I remember using silly bands or candy to group up differently in class. I use many of the strategies she modeled with us in my class with my own students. I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to learn from her in both 290 and 390!" Noraian's impact can be felt in Vandewostine and Somers' classrooms today.

Longtime colleague Dr. Fred Walk

fondly remembers his time working with Noraian. "She is the consummate creative professional who initiated numerous life-long learning avenues for the thousands of students she has mentored. The history-social science education program has greatly benefitted from her leadership and organizational skills. Monica has served as an excellent role model who has had a tremendous impact on enhancing our educational system in Illinois and throughout the nation. I am proud to have been her colleague and remain her good friend," Walk said.

Dr. Ross Kennedy, chair of the Department of History, classifies Noraian's work for the department as exemplary. Upon taking over as chair of the department, he stated how "navigating the complex world of history-social sciences education is no easy task—as chair, I have found the various constituencies and requirements involved with it to be confusing. Monica has consistently given me sensible



Dr. Sara Piotrowski, Dr. Fred Walk, and Dr. Monica Noraian in 2016

counsel about how to advance the goals of our program, and I have always been impressed with her ability to represent the department's interests with the history education community with good cheer and determination, and to maximize our students' chances for success in a challenging field. The College of Education is very, very lucky to have her!"



Dr. Sara Piotrowski, Dr. Ron Gifford, Reggie, Dr. Monica Noraian, Dr. Dan Stump, and Dr. Ross Kennedy

Dr. Richard Hughes, who has taken over as the program director, offered

more accolades. “One of Monica’s many strengths in the classroom has been her ability to create and sustain a sense of community among our large and diverse cohorts of teacher candidates,” Hughes said.

This is a bittersweet article to write about my former professor-turned-mentor and friend. Monica Noraian was my HIS 290 professor back in 2002. I didn’t know it then, but she was already modeling what it meant to be a dedicated teacher and mother. Since we began working together in 2011, I have been in awe of her dedication to our program and the University as a whole. I would be remiss if I didn’t

thank her for teaching me (and all her former students) how to lead while fighting for those excluded (both in history and our classrooms). Over the years, we have presented at countless conferences, traveled to England on behalf of our program, and served on various committees. As a graduate student, I helped research her book. At the time, her daughters were young and my kids were infants. She showed me that women can be scholars, teachers, and mothers simultaneously. On behalf of all your students and colleagues, thank you, Dr. Monica Noraian, for your 26 years of service to the history-social sciences education program!

Distinguished alumni spotlight

Katie Lopez ’11, M.S. ’17, is a local social studies teacher who has been teaching in McLean County Unit School District 5 schools for the past 12 years. She currently works at Normal West High School, where she teaches U.S. history and AP psychology. In addition, Lopez also teaches a section of TCH 212 at Illinois State each semester. She lives in Bloomington with her husband and three children.



Katie Lopez

Simon Rodriguez, Jr., ’13, is the proud son of parents from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Rodriguez was an admissions ambassador and a member of Phi Alpha Theta, Alpha Psi Lambda, the Association of Latin American Students, and a Fulbright scholarship recipient. He studied abroad in Mexico and England. Rodriguez went on to teach bilingual social studies at East Aurora High School and is the current

youth services director for the City of Aurora, where he advocates for youth. Rodriguez took the first group of Illinois high school students on a cultural exchange to Cuba in 2017. Rodriguez is also on the board for Boys & Girls Club



Simon Rodriguez, Jr.

Aurora, is president of the Illinois State Latinx Alumni Network, a mentor for Waubesa Community College’s Triumph program, and a U.S. Army veteran. Rodriguez lives in Aurora with his wife, Thaise, and their son, Simon Gabriel.

Special events

February 28: History co-sponsored the Black History Month lecture by Dr. Barbara Fields, professor of history at Columbia University, “Is Race Identity?” which can still be heard on our website, [News.IllinoisState.edu/2024/01/black-history-month-speaker-is-race-identity-february-28](https://news.illinoisstate.edu/2024/01/black-history-month-speaker-is-race-identity-february-28).

February 29: “*Killers of the Flower Moon*: A panel discussion of the Oscar-nominated film,” hosted by Dr. Lindsay Stallones Marshall.

March 23: Dr. Nathan Kapoor organized the first Midwest Junto for the “History of Science Conference” at Illinois State.

April 18: History Department Trivia Spectacular saw fierce competition between student tables, each of which hosted a faculty member. The grand prize went to Matthew Nalefski’s table, “Phineas and the Ferbs.”

Faculty accomplishments

Dr. Alan Lessoff published an article in *Urban Planning* this year titled “The Texas Coast: Ship Channel Network of the Petroleum Age.” It is open access and available through Cogitatio Press online. He also worked with interns Sam Clement and Mike Forieri on the Project XV museum in El Paso, Illinois, and brought a group of students to the Pullman National Historical Park in April.

During her sabbatical in fall 2023, **Dr. Kyle Ciani** researched at the Special Collections of the Navajo Nation Library and Museum in Window Rock, Arizona, and at the Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections in Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico to advance her book project on educational changes in the Southwest in the mid-20th century. Closer to home, Ciani presented at “*The Power in Education: Generational Change in the 20th century, 50 Years of Women’s Rights: An Interactive and Intergenerational Exploration*” sponsored by the League of Women Voters of McLean County and McLean County Museum of History and served on the design and installation team for *WGSS at 50: 1974-2024*. That exhibition launched in April in Milner Library’s Benway Gallery to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, of which Ciani is a core faculty member.

Dr. Richard Hughes co-authored a book chapter titled, “Teaching History in a Place with a Different History: Theory, Policy, and Practice in the United States and England” in Bob Bain et al’s *History Education and Historical Enquiry* (2023). He was one of many authors who contributed to “The Hospitality of the Commons: A Collaborative Reflection on a SoTL Conference” in *The International Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (2023). He presented a paper at the American Historical Association’s annual conference, “Teaching History in a Place with a Different History,” and participated on a panel titled, “Education Programs, History Departments, and the Current State of K-12 Teacher Preparation.” More recently, he presented a paper, “Reorienting the Past: Reimagining a Survey Course Amid Calls for Uncoverage” at the Teaching and Learning Symposium at Illinois State.

Dr. Katrin Paehler began her tenure as graduate coordinator last fall, a role she has been enjoying tremendously and hopes to grow into even more in the coming years. She presented a paper, “Women Who Work(ed) in Nazi Germany: Hildegard Beetz, Nazi Fluidities, and American Bewilderments,” which is related to her current book project, at the German Studies Association annual meeting in Montreal in October. In addition, she authored a brief foreword to the De Gruyter edition of Thomas Boghardt’s excellent book *Covert Legions: U.S. Army Intelligence in Germany, 1944-1949*, and she was delighted to be asked to join the

advisory board of De Gruyter Studies in Military History. In February, she was invited to a regional institute of the Holocaust Educational Foundation at Northwestern University. She spent an intense holiday weekend studying “Border/Borderlands and the Holocaust” in Austin. (She also had some great barbecue!) This spring, Gov. JB Pritzker appointed her to the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission. She has had the good luck to work with some excellent students this year. Several saw their work published in *Recounting the Past*, and one of them also presented her work at this spring’s University Research Symposium.

Dr. Christine Varga-Harris, who received a promotion to full professor, presented two academic papers this year. One was on exchanges between Soviet women and women in “developing” countries for the conference “The State-Socialist World Turned Global,” held at the University of Bucharest in Romania. The other paper was on Soviet women in foreign policy, delivered at the annual convention of the Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies held in Philadelphia. She also engaged in outreach activities related to her area of expertise. In early February, she delivered a talk at the ISU History-Social Sciences Teacher Symposium on strategies for teaching the war in Ukraine, and Russian and Soviet history more generally. Then in late February-early March, she taught a four-session “World Classics” seminar for the ISU Senior Professionals titled “a Taste of Russian Literature.”

Dr. Georgia Tsouvala co-authored an article on the earliest extant magnifying lenses in ancient Greece titled “Quantitative Characterization of Archaic Magnifying Lenses from Ialysos, Rhodes,” for the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, and she presented “Reading Primary Sources from the Cradle of Civilization: The Code of Hammurabi” at the DuPage County Social Studies Conference in March.

Dr. Lindsay Stallones Marshall facilitated multiple teacher support programs at the annual conference of the “Western History Association” (WHA) in Los Angeles in October as chair of the WHA Standing Committee on Teaching and Public Education. She also presented papers on her work in animal history, film history, and education history at conferences of the WHA, the Popular Culture Association in Chicago, and No Decolonization without (Re)Conciliation at the University of Poitiers in France.

Dr. Keith Pluymers was a fellow at the Shelby Cullom Davis Center in the Department of History at Princeton University in fall 2023. He presented material from his current book project in invited talks at Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He published book reviews in the *Journal of Modern History* and the *American Historical Review*.

Dr. Janice Jayes continues to write on U.S. foreign policy and domestic social issues for the *Public i* of the Independent Media Center of Urbana-Champaign. Her essay, “Frozen Conflicts, Flashmob Militants and the End of the Gunpowder State,” was published for the *Public i*, then picked up by *Responsible Statecraft*. “The Age of Disconnect: US Policy and the War beyond Gaza” was published in February, and the latest on the Shamar Betts case, “The \$1,686,170 Slap: The Shamar Betts Case Continues” came out in November. While investigating that story, she was escorted from the mall by security for asking inconvenient questions about how the fine was calculated by the corporations alleging damages. In May,

the Federal Appeals Court agreed and sent the matter back to the lower court. This summer, she plans a trip to the border to take a firsthand look at the confrontation between federal and state border security as she writes about how history echoes in the current rhetoric on migration.

Prof. Matthew Nalefski, M.A. '21, will be leaving the History Department to begin doctoral studies at Princeton University this fall. He is grateful for the department’s support and encouragement throughout his graduate work and in his three semesters teaching at Illinois State. He especially thanks Drs. Ron Gifford, Ross Kennedy, and Stewart Winger for their service on his thesis committee and for acting as recommenders for further graduate study.

Retirement news

An interview with Dr. Will Reger, 1998–2024

What drew you to history as a profession?

Perhaps like many, I came to the study of history in stages. First, as a young man living in Europe, I encountered a gentleman



Will Reger

on the Keyzerlei in Antwerpen. We got into a conversation about U.S. revolutionary history in which he bested me in knowledge of facts by a long shot—very annoying. At the time, I vowed that would not happen again. Years later, graduating with a double B.A. in Russian language and literature and European studies, I found I didn’t want to work for the NSA or teach language, so I decided history made more sense and entered the graduate history program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, focusing on medieval Russia. I have enjoyed teaching the Russian history course at Illinois State but have also been able to teach related courses in military and frontier history. My pub-

lications over the years have come out of those interests.

What has changed since you began teaching history at Illinois State?

Insofar as I recall, the quality of students was increased with tougher entrance requirements. I remember the “soldier years” when the nation was fighting in Bosnia (Kosovo), Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan, when ISU students seemed older, more mature and, in some ways, more troubled by their demons of war. I remember the “leaner years” when students were older and came back to college to retool for new careers. I remember in the early days being committed to asynchronous online education, then Reggient, and then Canvas. And then the pandemic hit, and we all began using Zoom. Since then, the informed consensus has been that students have found it difficult to remain as committed as they once were to come to class. As I consider the almost three decades I’ve taught here, there really have not been many changes. Students have changed over time as the national and global economies and military policies

changed. On the whole, the student body and the environment they operate in have changed very little.

What classes have been your favorite to teach?

My favorite courses have been the ones that most reflect my interests in history. The IDS courses have been particularly favorite topics such as the Swash-bucklers course and the Monuments, Memorials, and Movies military culture course. I also loved teaching the Medieval Russian course, which is my core topic as a medieval Russian scholar, and the U.S. Military History course.

What are your retirement plans?

Aside from tagging along with my spouse on her travels in pursuit of the various contests and examinations required for achieving the highest degree taekwon do black belt she can—she’s fourth degree now—I plan to pursue writing and publication goals, as well as to learn Swedish, do genealogy, and perfect my performance on the various flutes I have played over the years.

An interview with David Johnson, 2000–2024

What drew you to history as a profession?

An interest in the political affairs that went on from the time when I was a real little kid. The first presidential election I remember was '48, the famous Dewey-Truman election. I didn't just fall into a history career. My undergraduate degree was in physics. The Air Force sent me a letter and said "We're hurting for meteorologists. We'll send you back to school." So, I joined up in the summer of 1963 and became a lieutenant. I went to Texas A&M and one day as I was walking across the lawn, it struck me that what I really wanted to do with life was teach history on a college level. A lot of that came from going to Illinois Wesleyan and being recruited by a friend to be assistant editor of the campus newspaper. I did that my senior year, and I got interested in writing about politics. The germ was there; it germinated in the summer of '64 and boom!—I became a meteorologist in the Air Force, worked my assignments around places where I could go to school and study history, spent some time in the intel community, and when I was done in December 1991, I came to Illinois State and entered the history master's program. I went to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and was in the Ph.D. program there. I was working on my dissertation, but John Freed from ISU called me up in December of 2000 and said, "The new semester starts in six days, and someone just quit. Can you help me out?" So, I came up here, joined the faculty, and by that time I had seen enough of the academic world that I had realized: 1) the Ph.D. is primarily the union card for a tenure track position, and 2) I was 60 years old, and thought "is anyone going to waste a tenure track position on someone 60 years old? Probably not." So, the dissertation went up on the shelf, and I've been teaching here ever since.

What has changed since you began teaching history at Illinois State?

I would say the most interesting change is an unfortunate change, and it's not limited



David Johnson

to ISU or academics. It seems to be basically across society. Because of the COVID pandemic, there is a really strong aversion to getting involved. People don't seem to realize this all counts. In talking with people who aren't even in academics, I find that this is true in a lot of occupations these days. It seems to be that something happened during that roughly two-year period that sort of switched off the involvement, and people are more disconnected. I'm hoping this rights itself eventually. The people that we have here now, these are the people who were in high school when this happened, and it had a lot of influence on them. I hope that we, as a society, can grow out of that, because if we don't, we're in deep, serious trouble.

What classes have been your favorite to teach?

My favorite class to teach was the 1960s. It was basically an Interdisciplinary Studies class rather than a department-specific class, and the '60s was the period when I was in college and a young adult. I found it a very interesting thing because I'm interested in social movements. It's interesting how you can see, for example, the anti-Vietnam war movement was a social movement. The Civil Rights Movement was a social movement. You can see them going through the steps of a social movement at almost the same time. I also like HIS 249 United States since WWII

because I lived most of it, so I basically saw all of this.

Any retirement plans you'd like to share?

I have a number of books I'm hoping to read. But one of my mottos, stolen from a winemaker, is "make no decision before its time." When I walk out of here, I'll find something to do, but I have no need to know that now. I've had two full careers. I consider myself to be extremely lucky. Lou Gehrig gave a famous speech when he retired, and he said, "I consider myself the luckiest man alive." He had had the kind of experience that he wanted. I have had so many experiences—teaching here was only one of them. In the Air Force, I got to walk on the Greenland ice cap; I got to walk on the North Pole; I got to take my binoculars and look across the Iron Curtain and see some East German or Russian officer watching me with his binoculars. I've spent some time in East Berlin and East Germany that was very enlightening. I got to do so many things that when I was growing up, I never thought I'd do. I grew up in a house about five blocks east of campus here. I remember ISU when it was the Quad and that was it. The stadium and the field house were all just the farm. Looking back, I had so many neat experiences I've never thought of before.

Dr. Katherine McCarthy, 2005–2023

Dr. Katherine McCarthy retired at the end of the 2023 semester. After receiving her Ph.D. in European social history from the University of Pittsburgh, McCarthy began teaching at Illinois State in 2005.

Over the years, she taught such classes as Doing History: Introduction to Historical Methods; Western Civilization, 1500 to Present; The Making of Modern Europe; Nineteenth-Century Europe; Twentieth-

Century Europe; Contemporary World, 1939 to Present; and numerous iterations of Interdisciplinary Studies 121: Text and Contexts.

In memoriam

Margaret Rose Allen (1998–2024)

By Patrice Olsen, associate professor of History

“I am seeking, I am striving, I am in it with all my heart,” Vincent Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo. Van Gogh was Margaret’s favorite painter; though she loved most of the Impressionists since she was a child, Van Gogh resonated with her. It was not just the vibrant color and energetic brushwork, or the reverence for nature he so often depicted, and she shared: it was his vulnerability. A childhood keepsake was a mug bearing his portrait, the wounded artist with bandaged ear. Margaret’s compassionate nature and empathy was evident at an early age. Much blossomed as she grew older, and certainly her intellectual curiosity nurtured by her grandmother, Vickie Loranca. The two read together, beginning when Margaret was in third grade. Vickie recalls their summers in New Mexico as they read an average of 20 books, with Margaret insisting that each would be accountable to the other to share their thoughts about a particular book—no shortcuts! As a preteen, Margaret read Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, *Dawn*, and *Day*; perhaps it was then the commitment to social justice, so apparent in the work she did at Illinois State, took root. Her wholeheartedness was an essential characteristic throughout her life.

We are very grateful Margaret Rose Allen chose to major in history at ISU; she brought integrity to our classrooms, and we, faculty and students, are the better for having studied with her. She thought deeply, carefully, and respectfully, and by quiet example encouraged others to do so. While reviewing the final draft of her impeccably researched paper, “The Entanglement of Justice: Eichmann, Argentina,

Israel, and U.S. Foreign Intelligence,” for publication in this year’s *Recounting the Past*, I noted there were no errors to correct, no ambiguity, no reason for an editor’s mark. Her response? She’d discussed her work-in-progress with her Theo, who likewise was “in it” with all his heart: Theo Allen, dedicated, inspiring teacher at Delavan High School. They’d met several years before when he was hired to drive a bachelorette party around. One of the young women in the party was Margaret. They talked each day thereafter, never missing a day. They married in June 2022 and made a home in Delavan, not far from Theo’s school. The quiet afforded Margaret the space to read, write, study French so she could read beloved authors without needing translation, grow her roses, make amazing breads and pies, tend to their cats and dog, and plan future adventures with Theo. They’d traveled to Albuquerque, New Mexico, in November so Theo could experience the places that meant so much to her. She shared the trip with us as our Doing History class had been studying atomic history, and Margaret became our source for all things weird in atomic pop culture thanks to her very finely tuned sense of humor and careful notetaking at the National Atomic Museum. Classmates in our course on dictatorships in Latin America benefited a great deal from her knowledge of current events; her essays responding to the monographs assigned each week were insightful and thorough—summer reading with Vickie had been the ideal preparation for this exceptional young scholar. Her close friend Julianna Cullotta hoped one day they’d be profes-



Margaret Rose (Jett) Allen

sors together, with adjacent offices so they could continue to inspire each other.

There was so much for her to do and see and explore. Theo informs us she was studying to take the LSAT; she wanted to work in defending human rights. It still feels so unnatural to speak of Margaret in the past tense. Her quiet dignity and her brilliant scholarship enriched all who had the good fortune of being in contact with her. If her years did not afford her the time to pursue the profession she was choosing, her example will surely inspire others to find ways to use their knowledge for the public good. Her dedication to the pursuit and sharing of knowledge combined with an innate joy and delight. Never content with facile explanations, Margaret possessed a rare, strong spirit: undaunted, full of wonder, idealistic. We shall miss her immensely. Rest in peace, Margaret Rose.



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