Clio’s Correspondence

Keeping in Contact With You... From Judith Johnson

One task we all look forward to each fall is preparing for Clio and receiving bits of news from our graduates and friends of the department. Clio allows all of us to keep up with each other’s news and share our accomplishments.

Since the mid 1980s, the faculty of the department have contacted many of you during the annual nationwide telephone find-raising campaign. The benefits of those calls to you our alumni have been obvious in the support for student scholarships, for research, and for computer software. Less tangible but not less important has been the enjoyment which I have had in talking with you about what is happening in your lives and careers. When I first came to WSU in the fall of 1988, I joined other faculty in the huge room in the lower level of Woodman Alumni Center where probably 75 faculty from departments all over the university called graduates on dial phones. It was a noisy process, somewhat hectic, but energetic!

Things have certainly changed since then. The proliferation of answering machines has affected the campaign somewhat negatively, and while we still punch in the numbers manually, we sit in front of a computer screen and keyboard in a room where all but the History Department hire students to make the calls to alumni.

I mention this because I hope this reflects how much we enjoy keeping up with our students and sharing memories of the department. We hope to be able to continue doing the calling. However, in a world where technology drives so much of our lives, I am not certain this will always be the case. As far as I know, we will be calling again in November and look forward to talking with all of you. In the meantime, please let us know if there is any way we can serve you. Remember too that when you are in Wichita, you always welcome to drop by.

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From the Chair….

I am now beginning the second year of my second term as chair of the History Department.

You will note in the “Faculty Updates” that the members of our department are active scholars. John Dreifort and Jay Price each took a semester sabbatical, while Tony Gythiel and Phillip Thomas continued on phased retirement. We had hoped to launch a search to fill a Modern European position vacated when Keith Pickus took over as Associate Provost, but the dean of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences asked us to wait until fall 2008 to begin the process for a new hire. By the next newsletter, I hope to report the results of that search.

Awards

It proved to be another exciting year for the history department with a spirited competition for scholarships and awards. The department selected two graduate paper winners. Alida Boorn garnered the Fiske Hall Non-Seminar Paper award for “Nineteenth Century Sunglasses’ Place in the West,” and Emily Long received the Fiske Hall Seminar Paper award for “Mary Mallon and Typhoid Fever.”

The history department is particularly delighted to announce a new scholarship donated from the estate of Russell “Jiggs” Nelson, a local physician, who wanted to commemorate his lifelong interest in history by endowing an undergraduate scholarship. The history department is happy to announce that the inaugural winner of the Jiggs Nelson scholarship is Hugo Marquez.

Joining an esteemed list of previous scholarship winners, the department is pleased to announce that the Kamen scholarship was given to Sunny Scharnhorst; the Ard was won by Mathew Namee; Miranda Windholz was recognized with the Decker award; Amanda Carpenter received the Onsgard; and Morgan Rabon was honored with the Graham scholarship. As always the competition for the graduate fellowships was stiff. Robyn Hill was selected for the Rydjord award, and Mark Schock received the Gythiel. Mark was selected to replace Laura Hartley who successfully completed her master’s degree over the summer.

Graduate Studies

Any given semester sees about 45 students enrolling in courses. During the 2007-8 academic year, we graduated seven students and have admitted 9 new additions to the graduate program. These figures put us as a roughly medium sized graduate program for the university.

These statistics do not tell the whole story. The median age of a WSU history graduate student is 32, compared to 27 for the university’s master’s students overall. That may not sound like much but it means that our students are very much “non-trads.” Most work part if not full time. We in the department work to have as many classes in the evenings as we can because that is when students can take them. In addition to balancing work, classes, family obligations, and for some, commutes from as far away as Topeka, they continue to be active in projects, presenting papers, and attending conferences. Their effort and persistence is their greatest hallmark!
The Public History Program has seen some comings and goings. Several new students are coming on board this semester and are already taking to HIST 701 with great enthusiasm. This semester’s project involves research on the buildings of Wichita’s African American community, working with Dr. Galyn Vesey and fellow public history student Donna Rae Pearson with the Kansas State Historical Society. Internships this year include continued work with Sedgwick County Records Management, Hawker-Beechcraft as well as special projects with the Kansas Aviation Museum and the Augusta Historical Museum.

Most public history students are already working for local institutions. These include Old Cowtown Museum, Cessna, Sedgwick County Records Management, WSU Department of Special Collections, KMUW, the Coronado Quivira Museum, the Mid-America All Indian Center, and the Start-Thinking consulting firm.

Congratulations are in order for Laura Hartley and Luke Chennell, who both defended their theses this summer.

In Memoriam

Martin (Andy) LeBlanc (B.A. 1988) died in 2006, after retiring as a major with twenty years of service in the Marine Corps. He is survived by his parents, two brothers, and an eleven-year-old daughter.

We also learned of the deaths during the past year of Kenneth Locke, who resided in Hastings, Nebraska; and Raymond Leonard (B.A. 1981, M.A. 1985), who taught at the University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg. Leonard, forty-eight, received a Ph. D. in Modern Russia/Soviet Union history in 1997 from K.U., and was recently granted tenure and promotion to associate professor. A demanding professor and unrepentant Jayhawk, Leonard prided himself on pushing his students to excellence and not to settle for mediocrity. According to his colleague, Eric G. Tenbus, those who knew Dr. Leonard, “friends and students alike, will miss deeply his sharp and universal intellect, his entertaining lectures with impersonations from Caesar to Churchill to Clinton, his great appreciation for film and the British musical invasion, and his marvelous sense of humor.”

Anthony Gythiel’s Honor

This spring, Dr. Anthony Gythiel received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood New York. Gythiel has become a noted translator of significant Orthodox theological works, a scholarship that earned him this honorary doctorate, conferred at a ceremony in May at St. George’s Orthodox Christian Cathedral. Gythiel was born in the Flemish speaking part of Belgium close to the French border. As a young man, he joined the Jesuit order and in 1958 he went as a missionary to what is now Zaire. In the years that followed, however, he left the Jesuit order, came to the United States, received his Ph.D. in comparative Medieval literature from the University of Detroit and in 1971 he came to Wichita State University to teach in the English Department. In 1993, he joined the History faculty. It was while in Wichita that a student encouraged him to attend the local Eastern Orthodox Church. Eastern Orthodoxy opened for him a career in translation and a way of life for him ever since.

“For isn’t history, in the final analysis, a question of deciding who one’s ancestors are?”

Marilyn Coffey
Faculty News

Dr. George Dehner had another busy year in and out of the classroom in 2007 and 2008 is shaping up to be busier yet. He is slated to present a paper to a world history panel at the American Historical Association annual meeting in New York in January, and a lecture to the Jager Club History of Medicine Society at the University of Kansas School of Medicine (Wichita) in March. He is currently shopping his manuscript on influenza in the twentieth century to academic publishers and preparing for submission to journals in the field of the history of medicine a manuscript drawn from research he conducted at the World Health Organization. Professor Dehner; his wife Jodi; and their three boys Brendan, Patrick, and Sean; keep themselves busy with sports and can usually be found on Saturdays racing from field to field.

Europeanist John Dreifort continues to serve as the department’s graduate coordinator. He continues to teach his popular course--History of World War II and the History of Baseball—which he enjoys teaching because of the motivated and interesting students who enroll. His article “Anything but Ordinary: POW Sports in a Barbed Wire World,” has been published by the Journal of Sports History (Fall 2008). He continues to work on his book manuscript on the World War II relationship between Generals Eisenhower and De Gaulle.

For Professor Anthony P. Gythiel, 2008 has been an annus mirabilis (wonderful year). His biography, including grants received and teaching awards, appeared in Who’s Who in America. Two of his book-length translations were accepted for publication: a work by Placide Deseille entitled Orthodox Spirituality and the Philokalia. The Philokalia refers to a collection of texts written between the ninth and the fourteenth century; and a work by Gabriel Bunge, Drachenwein and Engelsbröt. Die Lehre des Evagrios Pontikos von Zom und Zanfimut. (Dragon Wine and Angel’s Bread. The Teaching of Evagrius of Pontus on Anger and Gentleness.) Evagrius was a monk theologian in the deserts of Egypt in the fourth century. This translation will be published by St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York. Lastly, on May 21, Professor Gythiel was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree from St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary, in recognition of his translations of books by scholars including Ouspensky, Hausherr, Špidlík, Bobrinskoy and Evdokimov.

Dr. Robin Henry had another busy year at WSU. In addition to teaching both parts of the U.S. History survey, she developed the constitutional history and women and gender history series. Dr. Henry also presented papers at several academic conferences including “ Prosecuting Sex in the American West: Sodomy, Class, and Social Change in 1920s Colorado,” at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association in November; and “Consenting to Be Girls: Age of Consent, Property, and Female Identity in Massachusetts and Virginia, 1650-1820,” at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women in June. She also organized a panel, “Philanthropic Globalism: The Rockefeller and Post-Conflict Reconstruction,” for the January 2009 annual meeting of the American Historical Association. In addition to working on her book on the construction of masculinity in the nineteenth-century American West, she had her article “Sodomy Laws and Moral Reform in the Construction of Sexual Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century Colorado,” accepted in Law and History Review; and has been invited to contribute a version of her Berkshire paper as a chapter on age of consent laws in colonial America in a forthcoming multi-volume anthology on the history of childhood. Finally, Dr. Henry was selected to serve on the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession for the Organization of American Historians. Dr. Henry also took over as director of History Day.

Professor Willard Carl Klunder wrote a book review of Generals in Blue and Gray, published in Civil War History. He chaired and presented comments at a session, “1850s Politics Over Slavery in the Old Northwest,” at the Mid-America Conference on History. Dr. Klunder continues to serve as an at-large member of the Faculty Senate and a director of the WSU Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Judith Johnson read her paper “ ‘Thanks for the Memory’: The Bob Hope Christmas Shows in Vietnam” at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. The March conference was the 3rd Biennial Vietnam Symposium that drew scholars and researchers from around the world to the four day event. After reading the U.S. State Department Travel Warning list and investigating the costs of flights to foreign cities, Dr. Johnson decided this year was not a good one for travel outside the United States.

Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.”
Franklin D. Roosevelt
**Faculty Update Continued**

**Dr. Ariel Schwendner Loftus** continues to get around a bit more comfortably, and spent the summer revising her paper, "Poet as Civil Hero: Poseidippos Seal Poem Re-examined." Dr. Loftus completed a book-length manuscript examining women’s status in Hellenistic Athens, and submitted a paper proposal for a spring conference in Minneapolis.

**Dr. Craig Miner**, Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor of Business History, saw the University Press of Kansas publish his Seeding Civil War: Kansas in the National News. He is working on a book, Steam and Credit: America adopts the Railway, 1825-1862, scheduled to be published in 2011. After a break to deal with cancer, Professor Miner is back to full-time teaching and speaking in the community on local history topics.

**Dr. Robert Owens** enjoyed his fourth year at Wichita State, teaching courses on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier and American Indians, as well as the Introduction to Research and Writing and Historiography. In the summer of 2007 he took research trips to the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; the Illinois History Room at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and a whirlwind tour of the Southeast, with stops at the Florida State Archives in Tallahassee, the State Archives of Mississippi in Jackson, the Alabama State Archives in Montgomery, and the Georgia Historical Society. Professor Owens delivered papers at the Conference on Illinois History in Springfield, and the Mid-America Conference on History in Tulsa; and wrote an article published in Indiana Magazine of History. The University of Oklahoma Press published his first book, Mr. Jefferson’s Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy. He participated in several promotional events for the book, including a book-signing and dinner at Grouseland, Harrison’s mansion in Vincennes, Indiana. Buoyed by a generous ARCS grant from WSU, Dr. Owens recently returned from a research trip to the National Archives of Britain in Kew; the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh; and the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa. His current book manuscript concerns the role of the Southern Indians and the fear of pan-Indian confederacies upon Anglo-American Indian policy between 1763 and 1815.

Now with the Provost’s Office, **Keith Pickus** saw his book, Eddie’s Story. The Weisz Family Correspondence, 1938-1941, published by the University Press of America in March. In April, Pickus gave an author’s talk at Watermark Books in Wichita, and he was the featured speaker at Wichita’s annual Holocaust commemoration events held on the WSU campus. In recognition of his contribution to the field of Holocaust studies, Governor Kathleen Sebelius appointed Professor Pickus to the Kansas State Holocaust Commission.

**Dr. Jay M. Price** went back east during his spring sabbatical to do research about religious architecture c. 1945-1965 for a book tentatively titled Temples for a Modern God. His research took him to St. Louis, Chicago, Notre Dame, Nashville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Toronto, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and the New York area. In addition, his article, “Jewish Community in Wichita, 1920-1970: Same Wagon New Horses” will appear in the Great Plains Quarterly in spring 2009. In addition to resuming his teaching and other activities for the fall of 2007, he has also become a member of the board for the Kansas Humanities Council. For more details about his research and other topics, you can check out of his blog: http://observationsfromkansas.blogspot.com.

It was a busy year for **Dr. Niall Shanks**, Curtis D. Gridley Professor of History and Philosophy of science. His publications include, “Prediction and Nonhuman Primates,” Letter in Nature; Medicine, vol. 10: 807-808; and “Speciesism,” Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy. “Problem-solving in the Lifestyles of Multi-cellular Organisms: Immunology and Cancer,” (co-authored with Rebecca Pyles), has been accepted for publication in Information and the Biological Sciences. In addition, his book-length manuscript, The Use of Animals in Science: A Handbook for the Perplexed, co-authored with Ray Greek, M.D., has been accepted for publication by University Press of America. Dr. Shanks was also busy on the speaker’s circuit, delivering the keynote address at the Kansas Junior Academy of Sciences Awards Banquet; and presentations to the Turnip Club and the First Unitarian Universalist Church, both of Wichita. He delivered two plenary addresses at the annual meeting of the Society for Evangelical Theologians at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Houston; and spoke at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Kansas JASON Argos Club, Wichita State University, the Jager Club of the University of Kansas Medical School at Wichita, and the University United Methodist Church of Wichita.

The coming spring semester marks the end of **Dr. Phillip Drennon Thomas**’s phased retirement. Over the past year, he made numerous presentations for the Kansas Humanities Council in the characters of Buffalo Jones and Theodore Roosevelt. Dr. Thomas also served as a member of the Speakers’ Bureau. His enthusiasm is missed here, but continues to enliven the lives of residents around Creede, Colorado.

**Dr. Craig L. Torbenson**, associate professor of geography, contributed two chapters and is co-editor of Brothers and Sisters: Diversity Within College Fraternities and Sororities, a book manuscript expected to be published this spring. Dr. Torbenson continues his interest in family history by volunteering at the LDS Family History Library; and serves as the undergraduate advisor for the History Department.
Alumni News and Updates

John W. Aarsen is the museum director at the 82d Airborne Division War Memorial Museum. He continue to serve in the Army Reserve and was recently selected to attend the Army War College Distance Education Program, which means two years of study and a second master’s degree.

Bryan Barr graduated with a B.A. in history in 1993, and is back at WSU seeking a degree in elementary education.

Gary Bateman (B.A. 1975) works at the United States-European Command in Stuttgart, Germany, as a senior program manager and security cooperation analyst, assigned to the Command, Control, Communications Systems, and Warfighting Integration EC6 Directorate.

Melody Beard-Shouse received her bachelor’s degree in history and anthropology in 2006, and is a master’s student in religious studies at KU. She specializes in ancient religions and dance, and is pursuing a career in ethnic dance and liturgical/sacred dance.

After playing football for four years and serving as co-captain on WSU’s Missouri Valley Conference co-champions in 1963, Larry Beckish (B.A. 1965) enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the coaching ranks. He served as a coach of various offensive and defensive positions at a number of universities, including Tampa, Clemson, and Miami. In 1978, Beckish returned to WSU to work for baseball Coach Willie Jeffries, the first African-American head coach in Division IA. He later joined the staff of Lou Holtz at the University of Minnesota, as the quarterbacks coach and offensive coordinator. During a brief retirement, he wrote two books before coaching at Ole Miss, Duke, and South Carolina State. He also held coaching positions in the USFL and the Arena League, before volunteering his time to Hilton Head High School, Hilton Head Christian Academy, and Beaufort Academy. In 2004 Beckish survived “the most serious battle of his life with lymphoma.” He resides in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Tim Buckley (B.A. 1971) is a co-owner of Buckley Industries in Wichita, and manages its polyplastics division in Austin, Texas. He will serve as governor of Rotary International District 5870 in central Texas, 2009-10, and is on the National Advisory Council of the WSU Foundation.

In September 2007, Tim Cunningham (B.A. 1989) moved to Chanute, Kansas, to become the executive director of Tri-Valley Developmental Services, an agency that provides services to over 200 individuals with developmental disabilities in four southeastern counties. Over the last six years, he and his wife visited Europe on three occasions to see some of the locations discussed in Dr. Richard Todd’s Greek and Roman History courses. “It is amazing how much one remembers from almost twenty years ago.”

After meeting as history students at WSU, Vince Dollmann (B.A. 1973) and Janice Briggs (B.A. 1974) have been married for thirty-four years. They have one son and three grandchildren. Vince is now semi-retired and plays lead guitar for a Wichita rock band, The Lesser Few (check out MySpace). Many of his classes were with Professors Duram and Collins, and he still enjoys reading history. Janice received an MBA from Oklahoma State, and works with Koch Industries handling pension funds and 401(k) plans.

Douglas J. Elwell (B.A. 1971) graduated with a degree in education but “was unable to find a teaching position largely due to the torrent of aspiring, starry eyed social science teachers who were flooding out of colleges and universities all over the land. A product of the turbulent sixties, Elwell remained motivated by President Kennedy’s exhortation to "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Returning to his home state of Illinois, he completed a master’s degree in instructional technology. "That proved to be the ticket. I took early retirement from a suburban Chicago school district in June of 2000." He has a second career as a warranty claims writer and parts buyer for a general aviation maintenance business. He keeps busy reading or writing (for personal pleasure) and riding a motorcycle to the slip where his "modest sailboat" is moored. He chose to submit an entry to Clio "after thirty seven years of silence to say to current students that my time at WSU was a defining moment in my life. I have nothing but the warmest memories of the friends and faculty I knew there. I trust that the collegiality, friendships, academic rigor and support I knew then still exists for you."

After her training in history (B.A. 1997) and public administration, Florence McLeish Ford lives with her husband in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She is taking the lead in organizing the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership (www.ithg.org ), a 175-mile corridor along the Old Carolina Road from Gettysburg to Monticello. In her spare time Flo enjoys riding horses on the battlefield with her husband, Paul. “I am grateful to the WSU History department for giving me the skills it takes to do the work that I do. I could not be here without them.”

A student of John Rydjord, Charles A. Goodrum (B.A. 1948) received his master’s degree from Columbia, and then began a three-decade-long career at the Library of Congress. He was the director of planning and development under the noted historian Daniel Boorstin, the librarian of Congress. Before he retired, Goodrum wrote fifteen books (including four murder mysteries) drawing “heavily on what I learned at the History Department of Wichita University—for which I am most grateful.”

Alumni News

Angie Gumm (M.A. 2006) is a third-year doctoral student in the agricultural history and rural studies at Iowa State University. Her proposed dissertation is an environmental study of trash policies in rural areas. An article adapted from her master’s thesis was published in the fall 2008 issue of *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*.

David Haight (M.A. 1970) worked as an archivist at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library since 1971 until retiring this year. He is now a volunteer at the library.

Kathleen Epps Hankins (B.A. 1967) was selected as a delegate by the Hillside Christian Church (Wichita) to the Disciples of Christ regional assembly in Manhattan, Kansas, meeting in October 2008. She researches family history and retains memberships in Alpha Chi Omega Sorority Alumnae, the Junior League of Wichita, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the local Historic Preservation Alliance, Inc. She is vice president of JLW Wit and Wisdom; and a member of the Kansas Aviation Museum and the Sedgwick County Zoo.

After receiving his master’s at WSU, Douglas Harvey completed the Ph.D. program at KU. He defended his dissertation, “Theater and Empire in English-Speaking North America, 1700-1860: A History of Assumptions,” on April 7, the day the Jayhawks won the national title. “About 50,000 of my close friends showed up in downtown Lawrence that night to celebrate.” He regularly presents papers at Omohundro Institute meetings and Society for Historians of the Early Republic (SHEAR) conventions. Harvey’s musical career continues; his band “Rowan” is a member of the Mid-America Arts Alliance. He also presents “Songs of Revolution” to schools, as part of the Kansas Arts Commission Arts on Tour program. He remains an adjunct professor at Johnson County Community College and Washburn University. Nevertheless, both places have been pretty good to me in non-monetary ways. Doug sends his best wishes “to everyone at WSU who may remember me.”

Laura Hartley received her master’s degree in the summer of 2008 and is now working at the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame.

Linda Hemmen received two master’s degrees from WSU and is currently completing her clinical fellowship year at Rainbows United in Wichita, where she works with three-to-five-year-old developmentally delayed children. Linda will receive her permanent license in a few months, and then expects to work with adults, who are generally well motivated and “work hard in therapy.”

Ben Hruska, after serving as director of the Block Island Historical Society museum in Rhode Island, has started his Ph.D. work at Arizona State University.

Helen Hund (M.A. 2007) is teaching Latin and theology classes at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School, and pursuing a master’s degree in Spanish at WSU. Her leisure time is spent partying with her husband, nine children, and eleven grandchildren.

After graduating from Wichita University in 1959, John Edward “Jed” Hurley, Jr., received a J.D. from K.U. (1962). He practiced law in San Francisco for three decades, specializing in insurance, real estate, and white-collar criminal cases. In the 1970s, Hurley was instrumental in the founding of Nor-Cal Mutual Insurance Company and the Southern California Physician’s Insurance Exchange, medical malpractice insurance companies. In addition, he served as president and CEO of MPC Insurance, Ltd., a reinsurance company for legal malpractice insurance. From 1990 to 2003, Hurley was the chair of the California State Bar Committee responsible for the oversight of the State Bar sponsored malpractice insurance. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Wichita State University Foundation, and a recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Citation from Kansas University School of Law and the Wichita State University President’s Medal.

Chad Kannady (B.A. 2000) lives with his wife, Kerri, and their two sons in Denham Springs, Louisiana. He works in Baton Rouge with Hancock Investment Services as a financial advisor; Kerri is an elementary school teacher. Chad is seeking an appointment to the East Baton Rouge Parish Historic Preservation Commission. He will let you all know how that goes. After eight years of service he was discharged from the Louisiana Army National Guard. His only deployment was four months in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. “If you ever want to know what the Super Dome and the Convention Center were like during the storm I will be happy to let you know. Please give my regards to everybody and I look forward to reading the Clio when it comes out.”

Robert C. Key (B.A. 1960) received a master’s degree in military arts and sciences from the Army Command and General Staff College in 1980. He served for twenty-one years as a signal officer, retiring in 1981. Key subsequently worked for Lockheed Martin Corporation as manager for Advanced Development Programs, retiring in 2004. He currently writes children’s books, and in June celebrated fifty years of marriage with Dorothy, a graduate of Wichita East High and student at WSU. They have three children, all college graduates, and three teenage grandchildren.

After receiving his history degree from WSU, Lee Krehbiel did his graduate work at Indiana University in educational leadership and policy studies. Dr. Krehbiel was recently appointed vice president for student affairs at Idaho State University.

Kenneth King is an adjunct instructor of history and evening coordinator at Butler Community College.

Darin Lang (B.A. 1993) is practicing law in Denver, Colorado, “a convenient location for rock climbing, cycling, skiing, and other outdoor activities” that he enjoys with his family.
Alumni and Updates Continued

Michael S. McDonald graduated in 1969 with a B.A. in history, received a J.D. from Texas Tech Law School in 1972, and is a federal magistrate judge in El Paso. "I must say that I loved my experiences at WSU and have very good memories of the History Department."

For the past several years, Donna McCalla (B.A. 1971, M.A. 1973) has been working to preserve and restore the Peters House, located in Hebron, Connecticut, where she resides. It is the site of the earliest documented evidence of abolitionism in New England. She appears in an online Yale University educational portal program on slavery in Connecticut, entitled Citizens All. McCalla plans to produce an historical play later this year, and in 2009 co-produce a film on the Peter's slave story with five-time Emmy Award winner Karyl Evans.


Eric Melgren (B.A. 1979), a former WSU student body president and Alumni Association president, is a federal prosecutor in Wichita and a "frequent traveler and fond visitor of historical sites."

The past year "went by uneventfully" for Ellen Myers (B.A. 1983, M.A. 1986). She is still teaching at Pilgrim Christian Academy, and giving private foreign language lessons (Russian, Spanish). Several short sequels to her novel, They Shall Not Be Ashamed, were published this year. One of her grandsons is serving in Afghanistan, and a granddaughter spent the summer in Israel.

Michael Nations (B.A. 1977), fifty-three, in April 2007 was diagnosed with a squamous cell tumor in his lower jaw. After months of chemotherapy and surgery to remove the cancerous area, he underwent plastic surgery to reconstruct the jaw and completed thirty radiation treatments to his face and neck areas. He is "now cancer free." Despite losing his small business and most of his savings, Mike has "more than enough": the love and support of his family and friends. He plans to go back to work, "grateful for everything . . . because my Lord Jesus Christ has restored me." Mike closes by noting that he will always be glad he attended WSU.

After graduating in 2004 with a double major in history and political science, Ben Nelson moved to Chicago and earned a master's of public administration from Northern Illinois University. A summary of his thesis was published in Public Management magazine. Two years ago, Ben moved to Kansas City where he works as a government consultant. He hopes eventually to teach high school civics and history, but acknowledges that could be "a good twenty years or so from now."

Kirsten (Cregar) Nickel received a bachelor's degree in history and English literature in 1994. She lives with her husband, a WSU alum, and four children in Longview, Texas; and teaches computers part-time at a Christian pre-school. "I really miss taking classes from Dr. Gythiel and Dr. Todd."

Sandra Reddish (M.A. 2003) continues to work on her Ph.D. in history at Kansas State University.

James Regier received his master's in 2006, and is a graduate student at Notre Dame University, specializing in modern Germany (with interests in eastern Europe, Russia, and the Middle East).

Theresa St. Romain has had two great events happen in 2008. One is recent publication of her book Margarita Fischer: The Biography of a Film Star. Theresa and her husband Bill Head also had a joyous addition to their family with the birth of their daughter Natalie.

After a varied career as an industrial engineer at Boeing and public school teacher, James (Jay) Schaper (B.A. 1967, M.A. 1970) continues to each history at Butler Community College. He also acted in more than forty stage productions ranging from grand opera to farce.

Mike Shields (1983), after working at various Kansas newspapers covering politics and government, is managing editor of the KHI News Service in Topeka. Affiliated with the Kansas Health Institute, the news service focuses on health issues facing Kansas.

Larry Shuman (B.A. 1965) majored in American history and secondary education. After graduation, he entered the life and health insurance industry, and ultimately served as chief executive officer for a family of companies. An understanding of American history background defined his management style. "The excellent education I received at WSU in the art of researching and writing papers transferred easily to business analyses and report writing. I believe very strongly that my history degree, in my case, was more valuable than a business degree would have been." Recently retired, Shuman reads history books and is participating in a project to index censuses and other genealogical sources.

Brady G. Simmons (B.A. 2004) served as class president for the 190th Basic Training Academy at the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center and graduated second in the class. A Haysville police officer, he is working on a book tracing the history of the HPD.

Ray Soderholm (M.A. 1970) retired from teaching but substitutes in English and social studies at Minnetonka High School in Minnesota. He recently submitted essay questions and sample essays for the next edition of The American Pageant, frequently used in Advanced Placement history courses.
Alumni and Updates Continued

William B. Stoebuck (B.A. 1951) served as a cadet in Air Force ROTC, and commissioned as a second lieutenant upon graduation. He was selected for the Air Force Psychological Warfare Program, and sent to study for a semester at the Political Science Graduate School of Georgetown University. On Christmas Eve, Lt. Stoebuck married Mary Virginia Fields, who graduated from Wichita University that same year with a degree in home economics. The Air Force sent him to study the Uzbek language at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he also earned a master’s degree in history. Stoebuck completed his commitment to the Air Force with duty in Korea and Kansas City, and then enrolled in the University of Washington School of Law. He served as editor-in-chief of the Washington Law Review, and joined a Seattle law firm upon graduation. He soon "was drawn more to the academic side of the law," and became an assistant professor of law at the University of Denver. He subsequently earned an S.J.D from Harvard University and joined the faculty at the University of Washington, where he served as the Judson Falknor professor of law before retiring four years ago. He is the author of several law texts.

Charlene (Day) Van Wallegehan (M.A. 1985) retired from USD 259 and is now a staff member at the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, co-managing the gift shop. She enjoyed co-teaching a workshop through Friends University for early education teachers the past two summers. Charlene and her husband travel the back roads of Kansas whenever possible. She continues to study quilts and the lives of people who made them, and hopes to fashion quilts from fabric collected on her road trips.


Myron L. Webster (B.A. 1965, M.A. 1968) retired after teaching Advanced Placement United States History in the public schools, but contributes to the APUSH ListServ. He is a member of Are You Ready? Ministries Church where his wife (the former Elaine Woydziak) is the pastor; and they participated in the 28th annual Journey to Bethlehem. He recently returned to Wichita from his home in Lompoc, California, to visit family and attend the fiftieth anniversary of Southeast High School. In addition to watching his granddaughter play varsity volleyball and performing in her high school’s drama productions, Webster serves as a spotter for the public address announcer at Cabrillo High School football games.

Bette A. Thul (B.A. 1940) taught in Kansas and Colorado before retiring; and now serves as a volunteer at an elementary school. She has curtailed her traveling, but still plays bridge twice a month. A widow, Mrs. Thul has two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Marshall Whitlock (B.A. 1973, M.A. 1975) studied American constitutional history and public administration at the University of Minnesota before working in a number of civil service jobs in Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska. He is currently the director of the Milwaukee Center of Upper Iowa University, a private non-profit university with twelve campuses throughout the Midwest. Marshall has been married to Laurel Whitlock (B.A. 1975) for thirty-four years, and is the proud father of two sons and grandfather of two fantastic granddaughters. He was an adult leader in the Boy Scouts (both of his sons are Eagle Scouts) and is the proud father of two sons and two great-grandchildren.

Durham was his faculty advisor and he "survived" History 300 with John Dreifort. "It wasn’t until I met those guys that I realized how much I didn’t know. They somehow managed to light a spark that has led to a lifetime love of learning." West is enterprise vice president with McKesson, managing sales of clinical and hospital information technology solutions in several northeastern states. It is a long commute; he and his wife live on one of the barrier islands (Siesta Key) near Sarasota, Florida.

John L. Whitlock (B.A. 1969) lives in Jackson, Mississippi, and is a member of the American Library Association (ALA); GLBT Round Table of ALA; Mississippi Library Association; Southern Conference of Librarians Serving the Blind (National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped-Library of Congress); Mississippi Council of the Blind; Directors of Volunteers in Agencies; and the Gerber/Hart Library (Chicago).

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