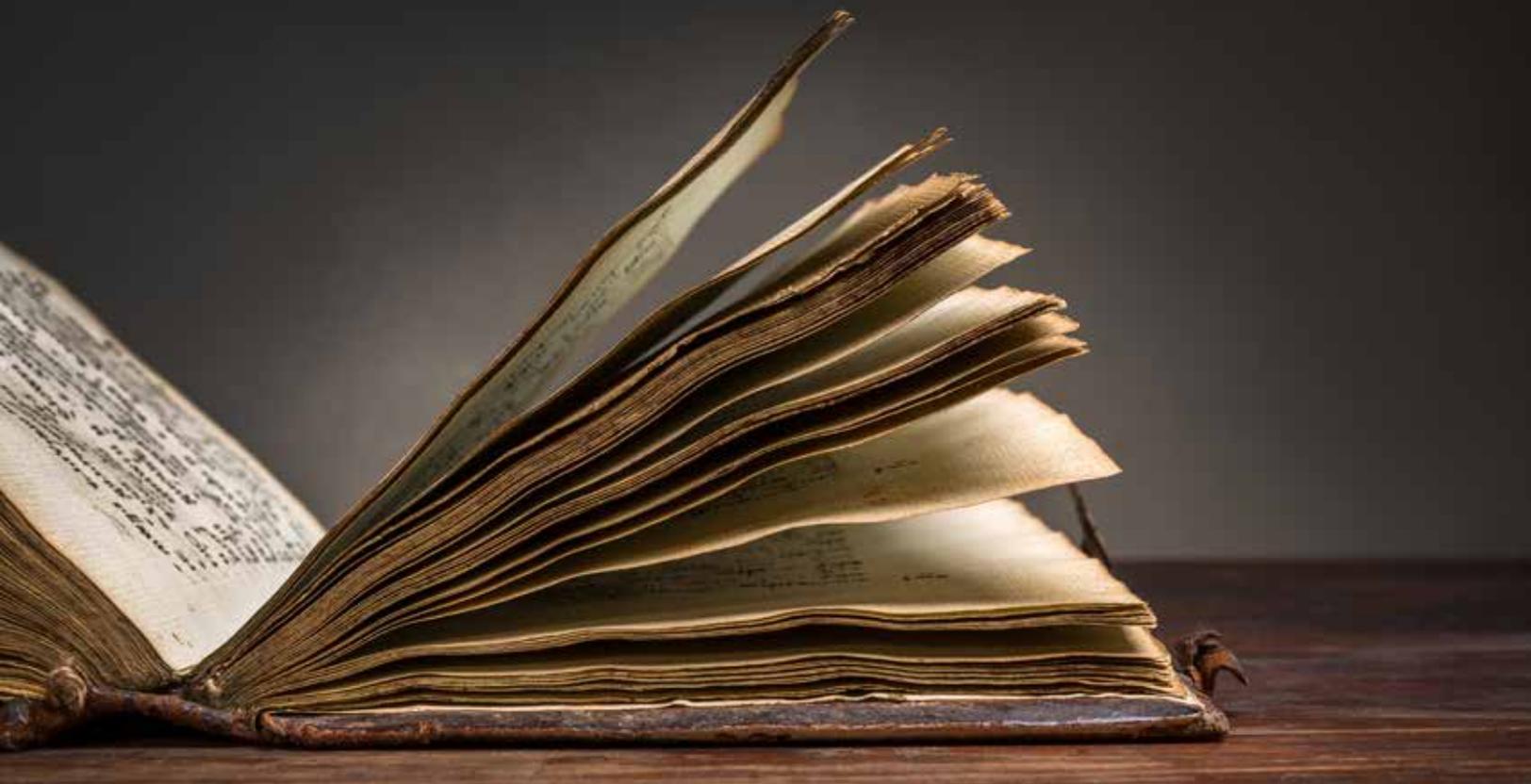


History's Happenings

SPRING 2018 VOLUME 8 ISSUE NO. 2



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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
LAMAR UNIVERSITY
Department of History

A STATEMENT FROM DR. SCHEER



Colleagues, Friends, and Students,

Reflecting on the past, as historians like to do, I have been privileged to have led the department for the past eight years. As the first woman to hold the history chair at Lamar University, I followed in the exemplary leadership paths of Dr. Ralph Wooster, Dr. Andy Anderson and Dr. John Storey. They set the bar high in terms of scholarship, character, and ability. Our able administrative associate Patty Renfro, who has taken this journey with me, has provided efficiency, enthusiasm, and always good humor. I know that I could not have done this job without her.

Over the years the department has had its ups and downs--threats to the MA program, setbacks to our public history program, and the loss of valued faculty. But the department has also experienced great strides. With the assistance of our outstanding faculty, several initiatives such as History Day, Student of the Month, a departmental newsletter, an academic journal, a film series, and new course additions of Capstone, Internships, and Historiography, are now standards in the department and the history curriculum. During my tenure we also welcomed several new fulltime faculty—Dr. Mark Mengerink, Dr. Jimmy Bryan, Dr. Gwinyai Muzorewa, Dr. Miguel Chavez, Dr. Brendan Gillis, Dr. Tina Kibbe, and Mr. Ken Poston, who have enhanced the breadth and depth of the department both professionally and personally. They joined a stellar line-up composed of Dr. Howell Gwin, Dr. John Carroll, Dr. Rebecca Boone, Dr. Jeff Forret, Dr. Yasuko Sato, and Mr. Jim Seratt. Collectively, they have demonstrated the hallmarks of a great department—collegiality, cooperation, and generosity. I am particularly proud of our culture of community and helpfulness, especially the creation of Historians Helping Healing after Harvey (HHHH), in the recent aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

I could say that I am stepping down as chair to spend more time with the grandchildren, and that would be partially true. But I also want to further pursue my research interests, make room for younger faculty to lead and shape the department, and return to my roots in the central Texas area. I am profoundly grateful for all the opportunities I have had at Lamar in pursuing my chosen career. I am especially proud to have been associated with such a fine group of scholars, staff, and students. While I won't miss the slow Mondays and endless committee meetings, I will miss all of you.

I congratulate my successor, Dr. Mark Mengerink, who will capably lead the department forward.

Thanks for all your support and friendship,

Mary Scheer

A STATEMENT FROM DR. MENGERINK

I am honored to serve as Interim Department Chair and to have the opportunity to lead such a great department. Dr. Scheer has done an excellent job setting us up for success as we chart the future course of the History Department. Her leadership over the last eight years has improved the education of students at Lamar University and the quality of the History program. The last couple of years has seen the department in transition, as the department personnel has changed. Trends in higher education, like more reliance on online classes, have also pulled on the department. The department will continue to change with the retirements of not only Dr. Scheer, but also Dr. John Carroll and Patty Renfro. All have served the department and university tirelessly for several years. We thank them and wish all three happiness and success in retirement. We will continue to build on the solid foundation they helped create, as we renew our commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service to the Lamar University community and beyond.



Patty Renfro (l) and Dr. Mary Scheer (r). Photo courtesy of Dr. Mary Scheer.

GRADUATES

The History Department congratulates our undergraduates earning a B.A. in History at spring commencement. Congratulations to Colby Almendarez, Taylor Blount, Brandon Boullion, Shyann Caudel, LaKeisha Fontenot, Jacob Melancon, Karli Pittman, Emily Smith, Nathan Vaughn, and Suzanne Williamson. Good luck to all of you!

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to our Students of the Month for Spring Semester. Michaela McNeil was selected as February's recipient. Michaela is a member of Phi Alpha Theta and has made the Dean's List. She is interested in the military history of the Cold War and hopes to earn an M.A. once she graduates Lamar. March's award went to Caitlin Davis, a history major minoring in dance. Caitlin has an interest in World War II and Nazi Germany and plans to pursue an M.A. in education and teach middle and high school history. David Greer earned the Student of the Month honor for April. A veteran who served in the United States Air Force from 1989 to 2009, David participated in eight major operations including Operation Just Cause in Panama and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Iraq. Following graduation, David will earn a teaching certificate. The May recipient was Hope Flores. Hope is a sophomore history major and Reaud Honors College student who studied abroad in South Africa and Zwaziland.

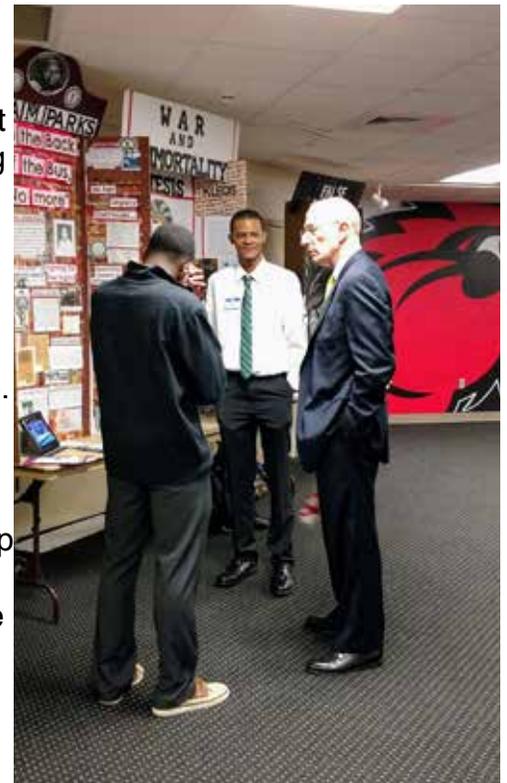
SPRING BANQUET

The department held its annual banquet and Phi Alpha Theta initiation on April 19, 2018. Lia Arce, Bailey Ballard, Taylor Mayo, and Michaela McNeil were inducted into Phi Alpha Theta. The department also named Michaela McNeil History Student of the Year. Michaela also won the Paul E. Isaac History Award, which is given to a senior history major committed to research and writing. Dr. Todd Romer, Associate Professor of History at the University of Houston, gave a presentation called, "The Accidental Public Historian."

HISTORY DAY

The History Department hosted the annual National History Day regional competition on February 22, 2018 in the Montagne Center. Despite many local schools still trying to recover from Harvey, we had 75 students from area junior high and senior high schools. There were several great projects in all the categories (performance, exhibits, documentaries, and websites) that examined this year's theme, "Conflict and Compromise" in history. The top two students and groups from each category moved on to the Texas State History Day, which was held on April 28, 2018 in Austin.

Local History Day participants performed well at the state meeting in Austin, with three students advancing to the national competition in Washington, D.C. Drew Dunson and Jackson Potter won 1st place in the group documentary category for "The Cuban Missile Crisis: The 13 Days of Conflict That Proved Compromise is the Key" and Maci Hill won 2nd place in the individual documentary category for "The Tie That Binds: The Conflict and Compromise of Adoption Rights and Reform." All are from Livingston Jr. High School. Congratulations to all participants and thank you to Dr. Tina Kibbe and Cassandre Durso for organizing this year's regional event.



*President Evans speaks with local participants.
Photo courtesy of Dr. Tina Kibbe*

FACULTY NEWS



Jimmy L. Bryan Jr. has been busy with journal articles, book proposals, and conferences. He published “Give me my skin’: William J. Snelling’s ‘A Night in the Woods’ (1836) and the Gothic Accusation against Buffalo Extinction,” in Dawn Keetley and Matthew Wynn Sivils, eds., *Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2018). Dr. Bryan also received a contract for the anthology *Inventing Destiny: Exploring the Cultures of US Expansion* from the University Press of Kansas. In addition, he served as a panelist for “21st-Century Westerns: Old and New Forms of Imagining History,” at the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting in Sacramento, CA, in April 2018 and chaired a conference session called “Commerce, Occupations, and Empires across Southwestern Borders,” at the Texas State Historical Association Meeting in San Marcos, TX, on March 9, 2018.



Dr. Rebecca Boone published *Real Lives in the Sixteenth Century: A Global Perspective* (Routledge 2018) in April. Based on Plutarch’s Lives, it presents four sets of biographies that illustrate important themes in world history. The vibrant narratives span four continents and include the following pairs: Henry IV of France and Hideyoshi of Japan, Hürrem Sultan (Roxelana)

of the Ottoman Empire and Lady Zheng of the Ming Dynasty, Afonso I of Kongo and Elizabeth I of England, and Pope Clement VII and Moctezuma II of Mexico. One reviewer described it as “bloody, plotting, romantic, dramatic, shocking.” Intended as a supplementary text for introductory courses in World History, Dr. Boone envisions it as the first book in a series of Lives books that will cover every century from the sixteenth through the twentieth.

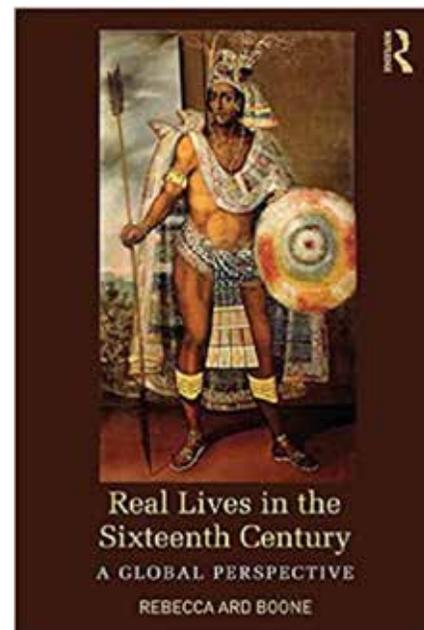


Photo courtesy of Dr. Rebecca Boone

History’s Happenings is produced every fall and spring semester at Lamar University. Its creation relies on the assistance of voluntary contributions of stories and pictures from students, faculty, staff and alumni. Have history-related news to share? Please send any submissions into **Dr. Mark Mengerink** at mark.mengerink@lamar.edu



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