



# *Viewed Historically*

The e-Newsletter of the Department of History  
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## Thoughts at the End of the Academic Year

I am writing these lines in the second half of May, the quietest time of the year at the university.

The regular academic year is over, but summer school has not yet begun. Students are few and far between; many of the faculty are taking a few days off before they teach in the summer session or get to work on their research projects. Facilities, such as Ellis Library, the Memorial Union, or Brady Commons, are open, but on a reduced schedule. The campus is quiet—or would be, if it were not for the fact that its emptiness offers Campus Facilities an ideal time to do its street-work, building renovations and landscaping projects.

In spite of the sound of jackhammers, this second half of May is a good time to take stock on the past academic year. At commencement, the weekend of May 12-14, eighty-seven history majors received their B.A. degrees, and four graduate students their M.A.'s and four their Ph.D.s. Current enrollment trends being what they are, it is likely that these numbers will be increasing at future commencements, at least through the end of the decade.

The end of the academic year is often a time of personal transition, and we can note three different kinds here. One is the department's new Ph.D.s. moving forward in their scholarly careers. To mention two of them, Kyle Day will be taking a position teaching history at Quincy College, in Quincy, Illinois and Mark Geiger, will be a post-doctoral fellow at the Minnesota Population Center.

Another transition involves the work of the department faculty. The news section of the last issue of *Viewed Historically* contained a report on the research project of Professor Kerby Miller, on religious demography and religious conflict in Ireland, and the major grant he received for it from the John Henry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Professor Miller has just received an even bigger, six-figure project grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for his work, a strong testimony to the significance and high quality of scholarship.

A third kind of transition involves the career of senior scholars, and the two faculty members involved will be familiar to many of our readers. Richard Bienvenu, professor of French history and modern European intellectual history retired this May after almost forty years at the University of Missouri. Susan Flader, professor of environmental history, and of the history of the American west, received a major university distinction for her long and distinguished career, the 2006 Faculty-Alumni Award. In future issues, we hope to have special features on Bienvenu and Flader, and their careers at the university.

The focus of the news section of this issue is another aspect of summing up, the history department's annual book event. At the end of April, the department holds a reception in honor of the faculty members who have published a book in the course of the previous year. Since the history faculty, as a

## Books by History Faculty

### Wilma King

Professor King has published two books during the past year. One, [\*African American Childhoods: from Slavery to Civil Rights\*](#) (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2005) is a collection of essays, explaining how major events in American history, including the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the civil rights movement, have affected the lives of black children. Her other book, [\*The Essence of Liberty: Free Black Women during the Slave Era\*](#) (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006) analyzes black women's experience in both the North and the South from the colonial period through emancipation.

### Catherine Rymph

Professor Rymph published [\*Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right\*](#) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Her book explains how in the wake of the Nineteenth Amendment, Republican women set out to forge a place for themselves within the Grand Old Party. As the work shows, their often conflicting efforts over the subsequent decades would leave a mark on both conservative politics and American feminism.

### Jonathan Sperber

Professor Sperber has published two books over the past year. [\*The European Revolutions, 1848-1851\*](#) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) is the second edition of his history of the revolutions of 1848. First published in 1994, the book has become the standard work on the topic. [\*Property and Civil Society in South-Western Germany 1820-1914\*](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) is a study of the place of property in everyday life, based on civil court records.

### Julius Thompson

Professor Thompson co-edited, along with James L. Conyers, Jr., *Pan-African Nationalism in the Americas: [\*The Life and Times of John Henrik Clarke\*](#)*. (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005), The book is a collection of essays by and about the historian, poet and activist John Henrik Clarke (1915-98), one of America's foremost Pan-Africanist intellectuals.

group, are very active scholars, there are invariably a number of professors and books to be acknowledged. This year, the authors were Professors Wilma King, Catherine Rymph, Jonathan Sperber, Julius Thompson and Steven Watts. In the news section, you will find these authors' brief accounts of their works, and links to web sites with more information about their books. The topics their books cover should give alumni and friends an idea of the many and diverse intellectual interests of the history department faculty, and the many different ways that historians investigate the past.

One of the authors honored at the book reception, Catherine Rymph, has also been involved in explaining her ideas to a more general and less academic audience. The historical reflections section of the newsletter contains an account of her experiences doing two radio interviews about the topic of her book—the role of women in the Republican Party during the twentieth century.

As summer approaches, we would like to wish all our alumni and friends a very pleasant season and a refreshing vacation. We will be back with the first issue of the second volume of this newsletter in November. In the meantime, if you would like to get in touch, please send news of yourself and your accomplishments, as well as changes of e-mail address and any other such details to the history department's administrator, [Ms. Melinda Lockwood](#).

Suggestions about new features, possible improvements, and comments on the newsletter more generally can be sent to the history department chair, [Jonathan Sperber](#). You can always check out the history department's web site <http://history.missouri.edu> and send comments on it, to the departmental webmaster, [Professor Jeff Pasley](#).

Jonathan Sperber  
Chair, Department of History

## Steven Watts

In 2005, Professor Watt's [\*The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century\*](#) (New York: Knopf, 2005) appeared. A full-scale biography of the celebrated industrialist, who was one of the key architects of modern American society, the book explores Ford's role in shaping consumer values and his populist sensibility. It was a finalist for the 2006 Los Angeles Times book prize.

## Historical Reflections

### History on the Radio

Recently I had the opportunity to give two live, one-hour radio interviews in support of my recently released book, [\*Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right\*](#). They were both arranged by the ever-helpful and vigilant publicity department of the book's publishers, the University of North Carolina Press.

John Rothman, of San Francisco's KGO-AM 810, was an advisor to Richard Nixon before switching parties. I'll probably never have an interviewer with more firsthand knowledge of (and interest in) this particular subject matter; he personally knew many of the figures in my book, including Mary Louise Smith, a feminist who was the first woman to chair the Republican National Committee.

Rothman's show is on at a fairly exotic time – I got interviewed Sunday morning at 5am Pacific – but the listenership was involved and thoughtful. I'd girded myself in preparation for left-field "talk radio" questions, issues of the day, at best only tangentially related to my narrow field of expertise – but it turned out I had nothing to worry about.

Celeste Quinn hosts "The Afternoon Magazine", a weekday afternoon interview show for Champaign-Urbana's NPR affiliate, WILL. This time I didn't get any commercial breaks – time to catch my breath – and unlike with Rothman, who guided the interview closely, Quinn allowed me to ramble on at length in response to her thoughtful questions. That's a difference between public radio and commercial radio!

Both interviewers showed a lot of interest in anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly, as most people do – she's always a fascinating figure to dissect.

One great thing about radio interviews in the modern era: my family was able to tune in live via the web, and we were able to download the archived interviews in MP3 format so that my great-great grandchildren will be able to share the fun.

Although not yet sought after on the lecture circuit as are some of my colleagues, I've enjoyed these opportunities to introduce my work to a wider audience.

Catherine Rymph