

Oakland University

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

NEWSLETTER Spring 2010

DEPARTMENT HONOR ROLL

The Department of History has a well-established track record of success in winning the most coveted prizes awarded by Oakland University.

University Distinguished Professor 2007 Ronald Finucane

Research Excellence Award
1985 Charles Akers
1992 Richard Tucker
1998 Ronald Finucane
2007 Linda Benson

Teaching Excellence Award
1989 Carl Osthaus
1991 Anne Tripp
2001 Todd Estes

**New Investigator Research
Excellence Award**
1996 Geoffrey Wawro
2008 Matthew Sutton

President's Colloquium Award
1999 Geoffrey Wawro
2001 Linda Benson
2003 Sean Farrell Moran
2006 Sara Chapman
2009 Todd Estes

**Outstanding Thesis Award for
Graduate Students**
2009 Jennifer Laam

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

This year had a difficult start. After 28 years in O'Dowd Hall, the Department relocated to the 4th floor of Varner. The move was a burden to us all, and particularly to those who are the most senior. Files were lost, then found; books were delivered to the wrong offices; but after a few days of hard work we were settling into our new space.

The greater shock came when we were informed that Ron Finucane had suffered complications from an operation and passed away on the 1st of September. The sudden loss of Ron was shocking. We lost a teacher, a scholar, a mentor, and a friend.

Despite these disruptions, we all worked to put the department onto an even keel. As classes resumed after the strike, we slowly returned to normal. Our research projects are now on track and our classrooms are back in order. Once again we are active scholars and dedicated teachers.

We have managed to have a number of successes this year. In the fall Derek Hastings published his first book, *Rethinking the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity and the Birth of the Nazi Movement*. Luke Harlow started this year as our Civil War specialist, after Carl Osthaus's retirement. Luke's first year has been marked by two important

professional accomplishments—he has signed a contract with Cambridge University Press for his first book and he has been asked to be an editor for the on-line *Journal of Southern Religion*. We have hired a replacement for Mary Karasch; Sean McEnroe, who earned his Ph.D. from Berkeley last year will be joining us in the fall. Getnet Bekele has been unanimously approved for tenure by the FRPC; we expect the Board of Trustees will agree with the faculty committees and grant him tenure during their meeting this summer.

Our chapter of Phi Alpha Theta continues to demonstrate just how accomplished our students are. They were a strong presence at the regional conference this year, sending 10 students. Moreover, they organized several on-campus lectures and the annual History Careers Workshop. In response to the death of Ron Finucane, they arranged a wonderful celebration of his life.

Although we had to start the series late this year because of the move, "History Comes Alive!" launched its 6th season. Our audiences continue to be impressively large. Thanks to continuing financial support from the Knudsen Family Foundation, we will be able to return in the fall with a new series.

We continue to be a vibrant department. As we begin the summer, all of us are doing what we

can to prepare for a productive and exciting year in 2010.

By: Karen Miller

PROFESSOR MARY KARASCH TO RETIRE

After forty years at Oakland, Professor Mary Karasch, one of the foremost scholars of Brazil as well as Latin America, will retire at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year. Professor Karasch, who received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, came to Oakland in 1970, and, with the exception of a brief stint at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., has spent her entire career here. When Professor Karasch joined the department, it was a large group of roughly 25 faculty members and she was one of only two tenure-track women on the faculty. She remembers her early years of teaching at Oakland being marked by very large survey course sections of 100 or more students, not all of whom were especially well prepared for college. She notes, happily, that the quality of the student body has improved markedly over time.

Professor Karasch calls her book *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro* her proudest professional accomplishment—and with good reason. The book won the prestigious Albert J. Beveridge Award from the American Historical Association, a prize awarded annually for the best book in English on the history of the United States, Latin America, or Canada from 1492 to the present. An excellent example of how outstanding scholarship can take time, this book was many years in the making as Professor Karasch had to conduct extensive research not only in Brazil but in the United States as well, and had to translate a huge cache of material. But the book was well worth the work and the wait as it established her international reputation as a scholar of great repute.

While she will be retiring from Oakland, Professor Karasch is

hardly ending her career. She has drafted 10 chapters of her current book project, *Frontier Life in Central Brazil, 1780-1830*, and plans to complete that soon. She also has two standing invitations to work in Brazil, a place she has returned to almost every summer: one is an ongoing group research project on links between Rio and Angola, the other involves teaching at a Brazilian university. When not in Brazil, Professor Karasch will stay in the Rochester area for awhile but eventually plans to move to Arizona. She will miss the students and her colleagues but looks forward to the next stage of her life and work.

The department honored Mary at its annual dinner in April, presenting her with a gift while Professor De Witt Dykes delivered an eloquent tribute to her service. Coming from near and far to attend the dinner and say goodbye to Mary were several of her former colleagues, department professors emeriti Richard Tucker, James Graham, and Roy Kotynek.

DEPARTMENT MOURNS LOSS OF DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR RONALD C. FINUCANE

The Department of History was deeply saddened to announce the sudden passing of Professor Ronald C. Finucane late last summer. Professor Finucane, an internationally acclaimed scholar of Medieval history, died on September 1, 2009 after a short illness. He is survived by his wife, Claudia Voit, as well as a son, and a step-daughter. The author of four important and very well-received books, a winner of numerous fellowships and research grants, and a Fellow of the prestigious Royal Historical Society, Professor Finucane was also the recipient of Oakland University's highest honor in 2007 when he was given the title of Distinguished Professor, an honor accorded to only a handful of faculty members in

Oakland's fifty year history. Previously he had won Oakland's coveted Research Excellence Award. All of these honors are a testament to his illustrious reputation on campus, across the nation, and around the globe. At the time of his death, he had just completed a draft of his fifth book

Ronald Finucane, who earned the Ph.D. from Stanford and also studied at Oxford University, came to Oakland in 1991 to become Department Chair, a post he held for three terms. He was later known to many Oakland students as one of the department's undergraduate advisors, a task that required regular meetings with history majors and minors to plan coursework, oversee graduation requirements, and consult about career goals. Several of Professor Finucane's former students at Oakland, inspired by his teaching and example, later went on to pursue graduate degrees in history themselves.

Phi Alpha Theta, the student history honor society, held a special program to honor Professor Finucane February 5th in the Oakland Center. A dinner was followed by remembrance speeches by former graduate students Flora Tyll and Ryan Johnson. They were joined by other former students and colleagues who spoke warmly of Professor Finucane in this well-attended event.

Ronald Finucane was many things to those of us at Oakland: a teacher and advisor to students, a department chair, colleague, and friend to fellow faculty and staff. His contributions to the life of the department and university community were many and varied and he will be missed greatly.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT MOVES TO VARNER HALL

After many years of residence in O'Dowd Hall, the history department moved to Varner

Hall in August 2009, taking up their new space on the 4th floor. The timing was inauspicious as the move came just a few weeks before the start of the fall semester, itself delayed by a job action over the faculty contract. Department members were still unpacking and setting up filing cabinets and bookshelves well into the semester, but unpleasant memories of the move are receding as the floor begins to feel like home. Generally speaking, department members traded window space in O'Dowd for additional wall space in Varner (good for shelving our numerous books). The main office is located in 416 Varner Hall and the main office phone numbers remain unchanged at (248) 370-3510 and 370-3511. If you have not visited the department in awhile, please come see us in our new home.

LATIN AMERICAN HISTORIAN JOINS FACULTY

The department is pleased to announce the hiring of a new specialist in Latin American history, **Sean McEnroe**, who will join the faculty in the fall of 2010. Dr. McEnroe completed his Ph.D. at the University of California at Berkeley and has taught for the past two years at Reed College in Oregon. His first book, a revised version of his dissertation, is currently under review at Cambridge University Press. Dr. McEnroe replaces our eminent Latin American expert, Mary Karasch, who retired following the 2009-10 academic year after four decades of teaching at Oakland (see related article). Although his research focuses specifically on the history of Mexico, Dr. McEnroe plans to offer a broad variety of courses on Latin American history more generally. We look forward to welcoming him to the department.

PHI ALPHA THETA HAS STELLAR YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Oakland's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the history honor society, has concluded a breathtakingly successful year filled with events and honors, mixed in with a good bit of fun. Led by President Tara Fugate and an officer corps of Allison Gordon, Melissa Oliver, and Andrew Stonehouse, and supported by the efforts of faculty advisor Dan Clark, Phi Alpha Theta inducted 27 new members this academic year. Professor Don Matthews gave the annual Fall Lecture, sharing insights about how his current book project has developed—and reassuring many HST 300 and Capstone students that every research project has unforeseen twists and turns. PAT also hosted an informal luncheon with our newest historian, Professor Luke Harlow, who discussed his dissertation, the process of revising his dissertation into a book, his experiences in graduate school, and his diehard loyalty to the Philadelphia Phillies.

Gwyn Reece graciously hosted the annual Holiday Party, where faculty redeemed themselves by recapturing the Trivial Trophy after a stunning defeat at Trivial Pursuit the previous year. PAT considered an appeal when the faculty had two questions about FDR with Professor Karen Miller present—certainly the fix was in. But the faculty triumphed mainly on the basis of its knowledge about postage stamps, transistor radios, Giorgio Armani, and the Spice Girls.

In the Winter semester, Professor Todd Estes gave an inspiring President's Day Lecture, combining insights about the ratification of the Constitution with a recommendation to think through research by talking with peers, early and often, about projects in process. This was solid advice to HST 300 and Capstone students. PAT also hosted its

seventh annual Careers in History Panel, featuring former History majors talking about their diverse career choices and how a history background helped them. This has become a highlight of the year, and a tricky one to organize. Professor Derek Hastings discussed his recently published book, and the publishing process, at an informal luncheon. This gave students further insight into the hidden "research lives" of their professors. Phi Alpha Theta also sponsored and organized a special tribute evening to honor the late Professor Ronald Finucane. This event featured a buffet dinner and drew current and former students as well as faculty members who heard moving tributes from several of Professor Finucane's past students.

Most impressively, our chapter had 10 students present papers at the Regional Conference held in March at Western Michigan University. One student, Adam Hobart, won a Best Paper prize and all participants represented the department and university with poise and professionalism. There was some suspense in the week leading up to the conference, when the Student Activities Funding Board decided to enforce a nonexistent policy that would have undermined the trip. But PAT fought back, and when the SAFB gavel hit the table, we were funded to eat at the official conference luncheon—at least this year.

The chapter closed its busy academic year with its annual Induction Dinner for new members in April. As the featured speaker, retiring Professor Mary Karasch recapped her forty-year career at Oakland, and offered tantalizing insights about conducting research in Brazil during times of political turmoil. In Quiz Bowl, the students reclaimed the Trivial Trophy, aided by the faculty's inexplicable botching of the Kate Turabian formatting question.

Not content to rest on past laurels, the chapter is already making plans

for 2010-11, which include hosting the Regional Conference in the Winter 2011 semester.

2009-2010 Inductees:

Ellen Archey, Justin Breyer, Jacqueline Dodd, Jennifer Doptis, Faren Garvey, Shawn Harig, Adam Hobart, Jeffrey Hopper, Angela Horne, Rachel Jenkinson, Erica Karlson, Elizabeth Kondrat, Zachary MacIntosh, Michal Matysek, James R. McCoy Jr., Gabriella L. Passarelli, Jacklyn Phillips, Dana Rosemeck, Patrice Sawa, Robert Hugh Sullivan, Matthew Szalkowski, Dylan Tanner, Addison Tuttle, Angela Wilhelm, Cameron Wood, Candice Yono, Melissa Zwolinski

Regional Conference Presenters:

Ellen Archey, Jonathan Fouch, Tara Fugate, Allison Gordon, Adam Hobart, Ryan Johnson, Zach MacIntosh, Melissa Oliver, Andrew Stonehouse, Dylan Tanner

RECENT FACULTY BOOKS

While continuing to emphasize excellence in the classroom, department faculty members have produced a significant amount of research in recent years—six books to be exact! In addition to the dozens of scholarly articles and reviews published by history faculty since the appearance of the last department newsletter, these six faculty books published since 2006 deserve special mention.

Professor **Todd Estes'** book *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture* was published by the University of Massachusetts Press in 2006, with a paperback edition appearing in 2008. As evidence of the book's significance, it was featured as the subject of a scholarly roundtable by the online forum *H-Diplo*, and was

praised by one reviewer as "a must read for any student of early American political culture."

Professor **Don Matthews** saw his first book, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine*, published by I.B. Tauris in 2006. Scholars have praised the book as a groundbreaking reassessment of a hugely important topic, with individual reviewers lauding it as "fascinating," "indispensable," and as an "empirically rich monograph which undoubtedly fills a gap."

During Professor **Matt Sutton's** second year in the department, in 2007, his book *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* was published by Harvard University Press. The book won Harvard's Thomas J. Wilson Memorial Prize and served as the basis for a major PBS documentary entitled *Sister Aimee*. Although Professor Sutton has since moved to Washington State University, the attention generated by his book helped greatly to enhance the department's research profile.

While still a doctoral candidate at Rice University, Professor **Luke Harlow** co-edited, along with Mark Noll, the second edition of *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the Present*, which was published by Oxford University Press in 2007. Additionally, after his arrival at Oakland Professor Harlow was awarded a contract by Cambridge University Press to publish his book *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880*.

Professor **Linda Benson** published her latest book, *Across China's Gobi: The Lives of Evangeline French, Mildred Cable, and Francesca French of the China Inland Mission*, with EastBridge Books in 2008. Along with her previous four monographs – *The Ili Rebellion*, *China's Last Nomads*, *The Kazaks of China*, and *China Since 1949* – this book further solidifies Professor Benson's position as a leading expert on the

history of modern China and Inner Asia.

Finally, Professor **Derek Hastings'** book *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity and National Socialism*, was published by Oxford University Press in December 2009. As the first scholarly examination of the religious identity of the early Nazi movement, the book has been praised by initial reviewers as "fascinating" and as a "powerful and provocative piece of scholarship."

The department is justifiably proud of its recent research accomplishments. Numerous faculty members are continuing to work on substantial book projects at present, and we look forward with great anticipation to their future publication.

ACCLAIMED "HISTORY COMES ALIVE" SERIES CONCLUDES 6TH YEAR

The department's highly successful lecture series, "History Comes Alive at Oakland University," concluded its sixth year in 2010 and plans for the 2010-11 series will be announced soon. This event showcases department historians lecturing on their research or teaching interests in a series of six public lectures delivered once a month in the Oakland Center on campus. Established in the fall of 2004 by then department chair Carl Osthaus, the series has a cadre of loyal supporters who attend regularly and often bring their friends. Attendance at the talks—which are free and open to all (and which feature tasty snacks and beverages)—averages between 75 and 100 people and regularly packs the room for informative lectures followed by a question-and-answer period.

The 2009-2010 series featured talks by Mary Karasch, Karen Miller, Don Matthews, Todd Estes, and Roy Kotynek and John

Cohassey who lectured on topics ranging from military rule in South America to housing in wartime Detroit to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war to *The Federalist* papers and finally to the avant-garde and American art. The schedule is currently being arranged for next year which will be the 7th for this highly acclaimed series. "History Comes Alive" is made possible by generous contributions from Annette and John Carter, The Knudsen Family Fund, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

To reserve a space at future lectures or for schedules and information on the series check the department's webpage, call (248) 370-3511, or email jkessler@oakland.edu.

HISTORIANS AND TEACHERS TOGETHER: THE OAKLAND AND WATERFORD ALLIANCE

Since 2007 the Department of History at Oakland University has partnered with the Waterford, Michigan School District in a major grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education to improve the teaching of history. Initially, this grant was designed to deepen the historical knowledge of the Waterford faculty, but it has grown into a much more complex and rewarding relationship.

Oakland historians acted as mentors and routinely met with groups of Waterford teachers to explore the deeper facets of colonial, 19th, and 20th century American history. Designed to operate in a seminar format, the participants met several times a year to examine key interpretations of American history as well as primary documents. The 5th grade teachers worked with Todd Estes and George Milne; the 8th grade teachers worked with Carl Osthaus; and the 10th grade teachers worked with Dan Clark and

Matthew Sutton. Karen Miller and DeWitt Dykes also provided occasional assistance to all faculty groups. In the final year of the grant Richard Stamps from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology provided specialized training in archeology.

In addition to regular meetings during the school year, Waterford sponsored a weeklong institute immediately following their school year. These three summer institutes permitted an extended discussion of how to stimulate student interest in history, including consideration of document-based learning, the use of music in teaching history, and the potential of historical societies and museums as teaching venues.

The grant also made possible an after school lecture series for faculty. Open to the entire staff and faculty of the district, these lectures drew an audience that included teachers from all grades and many disciplines. Historians and Teachers Together certainly achieved its initial goal of improving content knowledge of Waterford teachers. However, by the end of the third year participants had also adopted teaching techniques that were more vibrant and emphasized student interaction with primary documents. During this past year, teachers and selected students were invited to work with Richard Stamps on a dig in Waterford Township to investigate the earliest settlements in the area.

We are delighted to announce that the Oakland-Waterford partnership has recently won a second grant from the Department of Education. This new and extended program will include a far larger range of faculty. For the next three years Oakland history faculty will focus exclusively on the elementary curriculum. Working with teachers from Kindergarten to the 5th grade, Oakland historians will focus on the difficult process of introducing basic historical concepts to students in the elementary grades. Through a focus on local history and a methodology that emphasizes a "hands on" approach, we hope to

excite students at the earliest possible age.

We plan to utilize the talents of our undergraduate majors during this second grant. In the first grant, members of Phi Alpha Theta served as research assistants and created annotated collections of teaching materials, a practice we hope to expand over the next three years.

FACULTY UPDATES

Recent events in China have made **Linda Benson** much in demand as a source for media outlets. In Summer 2009 she did interviews with NPR's All Things Considered regarding ethnic violence in the Xinjiang region of China and was also interviewed by affiliated NPR stations in Champaign-Urbana, Philadelphia, and San Francisco on the same subject. Last fall she was an invited participant for a Presidential Panel at the Midwestern Conference of the Association for Asian Studies held at the University of Miami-Ohio and was also named as a research associate at the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at the University of Michigan. Here at Oakland Linda continued as director of the MA in Liberal Studies Program and was re-appointed for a second three-year term. In addition, she was a featured speaker for the program "Authors at Oakland: A Celebration of the Book," sponsored by Kresge Library. She used a Winter semester sabbatical to complete major revisions to her textbook, *China Since 1949*, forthcoming in 2010 from Pearson. This May she has been invited to participate in a series of seminars for Chinese graduate students in Lanzhou, Gansu province, China, as part of a project on Christian missions in China sponsored by the Ricci Institute, the University of San Francisco, and the Henry Luce Foundation.

Sara Chapman has been working on a primary source reader for introductory European history courses that is under contract with

Prentice Hall and scheduled for publication in late 2010 or early 2011. She is also continuing work on a monograph history of French settlements in the Great Lakes region, ~1650-1760s. She has submitted an article on teaching French colonial history of North America for a world history association publication, *World Bulletin*, that will be published in the Fall 2010 issue. In the Winter semester of 2010, she chaired the search for the new Latin American hire. She was also a 2010 Teaching Excellence Award nominee.

Our labor historian, **Dan Clark**, offers some thoughts and historical perspectives on the unpleasantness of last September here at OU, noting: "It was right out of the 1950s anti-labor playbook. Wait until the contract expires, make outrageous demands that no workers could possibly accept, provoke a strike, go to court for an injunction declaring the workers' actions illegal It was a labor history practicum, and the OU Administration played the part of the textile firms, the coal operators, and the meatpacking companies that had used this strategy for decades to bust unions and tame work forces. The Administration had high hopes: eliminate any role for the faculty in setting university policies, gain control over the faculty's intellectual property, hire part-time instead of tenure-track faculty, and withhold any information about the new medical school. The faculty could have its union, as long as that union had no power to do anything meaningful.

I'm proud of the faculty for fighting back, although as a labor historian I knew that it could very likely end badly for us. And if it ended badly for the faculty, students would also bear the long-term consequences. The support from so many History students was invaluable. They knew which side they were on. But no doubt the Administration is tweaking the playbook for the next showdown: "Doh! Why did we give the President a \$100,000 raise and

inflict a 9% tuition increase on students!" Stay tuned for 2012." On other fronts, Dan's research on autoworkers in the 1950s is progressing well, with more traditional historical sources corroborating themes uncovered in oral history interviews. Three M.A. students completed impressive theses this year. Phi Alpha Theta rocked, as always. His older son, Cameron, graduates this spring from the University of Pennsylvania. His younger son, Darren, is a freshman at Kalamazoo College. Most of the time that has materialized with the empty nest has gone into the microfilm room at the UM Grad Library. And there's still the occasional half marathon as well as a new organic garden to tend. Right now he's balancing research and teaching with fresh spinach.

Keith Dye published his article, "The Black Manifesto for Reparations in Detroit: Challenge and Response," in the Fall 2009 issue of the *Michigan Historical Review*. He was also nominated for a 2010 Excellence in Teaching Award.

DeWitt S. Dykes has had an active year of giving talks, receiving awards and recognition, and of service on a variety of fronts. In October he spoke on "African American Genealogy: Sources and Methods" at a genealogy seminar at the Bloomfield Hills Family History Center. Then in November he lectured on "The Growth and Development of American Cities" for a Teaching American History Grant program organized by the Flint Public Schools. In and around all of these lectures, De Witt was honored in November by being named the 2009 "Margaret McCall Thomas Ward History Maker" by the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society. Simultaneously, that organization recognized him as a Co-Founder, Board Member, and first President of the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society while also saluting his achievements as a teacher of American family history and African American History, and as author of more than 40 biographical articles in various reference books. De Witt was also

cited for his service as an officer or board member of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society headquartered in Washington, DC, the Michigan Black History Network, the Historical Society of Michigan, the Detroit Historical Museum and the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission. In December 2009, Dykes completed thirty years as a member of the Historic Designation Advisory Board of the City of Detroit including two years as Vice Chair and two years as Chair. In August 2009, he completed 40 years as a member of the History department, for which he was one of three honored in January by Oakland University for forty years of service. Congratulations to De Witt on these well-deserved honors.

Todd Estes has been busy this year, mostly on the lecture circuit, delivering six talks. He gave his first lecture as an Organization of American Historians Distinguished Lecturer last September at Central Michigan University. In October it was the President's Colloquium Address at Oakland and in February he gave presentations for the History Comes Alive series and for Phi Alpha Theta's President's Day lecture. Finally, he gave a series of lectures for a day long seminar for high school teachers in Flint for a Teaching American History grant sponsored by the Bill of Rights Institute and then a talk for the Adult Learning Institute in Farmington Hills. Also last fall he was discussion leader for a Bill of Rights Institute conference on "Liberty and the Constitution." All of the talks drew on his research for a book on the debate over ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1787-88, tentatively titled *The Campaign for the Constitution: Political Culture and the Ratification Contest*.

His book reviews have appeared recently in the *William & Mary Quarterly*, the *American Historical Review*, and the *Journal of American History* and he has essays on "The Federalists," "Fisher Ames," and the "Jay Treaty" in the new *Encyclopedia of the American Enlightenment* and the *Encyclopedia*

of *U.S. Political History*. Other current writing projects besides the book include an article on the electoral college currently under review at a journal and an 8000 word book chapter on “Thomas Jefferson as Party Leader” to appear in the forthcoming Wiley-Blackwell *A Companion to Thomas Jefferson*. Daughter Elizabeth (13) and son Brian (7) pay attention to their father even less than they used to, a sure sign that they are growing up. Keeping Todd’s ego in check, Brian recently told him “I don’t hate you, daddy, but I like mommy better.” Who wouldn’t agree with young Brian?

Since joining the faculty this past fall, Professor **Luke Harlow** has been working to complete his book manuscript, *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830–1880*. As of February, the book is under contract with Cambridge University Press, and Luke has earned an OU Summer Research Faculty Fellowship that will provide essential support toward the completion of the project. Over the past year, he has presented aspects of his research at the Southern Historical Association’s annual meeting in Louisville and the Conference on Race, Labor, and Citizenship in the Post-Emancipation South in Charleston, South Carolina. Along with American History to 1877, Luke has enjoyed teaching advanced courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction and American religion, 1775–1925. In 2010–2011, he looks forward to offering 300/500-level courses on American religious history and the American South.

The past year has been a productive and enjoyable one for Professor **Derek Hastings**. He was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor, and his first book, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity and National Socialism*, was published by Oxford University Press in December 2009. Professor Hastings also published two book reviews in academic journals and an essay in an edited volume, in addition

to presenting a paper at the annual conference of the German Studies Association in Washington DC and delivering lectures to several educational and civic organizations, including the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills.

The majority of Professor Hastings’ time over the past year has been devoted to his next book project, which focuses on Nazi conceptions of masculinity. He was awarded an Oakland University Faculty Research Fellowship that enabled him to spend the entire past summer conducting archival research for the book in Munich. He is also currently working on two related article-length projects, and he will present the initial results of his latest research at the German Studies Association conference in San Francisco this fall. Along with history department colleague Sara Chapman, Professor Hastings is also completing work on a primary source textbook project that is under contract with Pearson-Prentice Hall.

Professor Hastings enjoys teaching courses at OU on a variety of topics related to European and German history, but his favorite course is the capstone seminar, which he has taught every semester for the past several years. Finally, on a personal note, he and his wife Kris continue to be amazed at how quickly their two daughters are growing up.

Craig Martin returned to Oakland’s history department in 2009, after spending the previous academic year utilizing a Dibner Fellowship in the history of science at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. His return has brought new departmental roles, most importantly as undergraduate advisor, as well as providing the opportunity to teach a class on Renaissance Italy for the first time. The year of research was extremely productive, resulting in one article published in *Early Science and Medicine*, another that will be published in the *Journal for the History of Philosophy* in June, and a book typescript that is under review. The book is provisionally titled

Renaissance Meteorology from Pomponazi to Descartes and examines early modern theories about the weather and natural disasters. Craig will spend most of the summer in Rome, partially funded by an Oakland University research grant, conducting research for his next book that looks at issues surrounding natural philosophy and faith in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Karen Miller, in addition to serving as department chair, has found herself drawn increasingly over the past two years to the history of metropolitan Detroit in the mid-20th century. Detroit provides a wonderful instance of how Americans perceived economic entitlement. What sort of life was a secure, well-paying job supposed to provide? What constituted an ideal home? How did the community interests of a neighborhood get defined? These sorts of questions become fascinating in the context of Detroit’s development between 1920 and 1950. She will be pursuing these interests in at least one book project over the next several years. But first she plans to finish her book on the Republican Party in the early 20th century. That project examines how the party redefined itself in the context of progressive reform. It explains how the party recovered from the 1912 party split and regained control of the national government in the 1920s. Karen hopes to complete a substantial portion of this book manuscript by the end of her sabbatical next fall.

Over the past couple of years **Sean Moran** has been slaving over a historical novel set in Dublin in 1915. It features many historical characters and while it is a murder mystery, it is meant to be a meditation on violence in politics. All was going relatively well with this until he was advised that his intention to use some fictional characters from James Joyce as if they were real people – which he thought was one of his moments of brilliance—would probably lead him into litigation from the ridiculously protective Joyce Estate so he had to rethink major parts of this all over

again. In any case the book has also required major research on subjects like the Dublin police department, the state of forensic medicine in 1915, the effects of various wounds, etc. Otherwise Sean has written a raft of book reviews over the past year, and has given a number of talks and papers, here and in Canada. He also developed a new course on Europe and the Great War and has made some early forays into the issue of "shell shock" as a medical diagnosis in World War One. He hopes to have a research proposal for a project on this next fall.

Jeff Powell, who teaches at Oakland as well as other institutions, was asked to create two new courses for the history department at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit: "A Modern World History" and "Revolutions." Both courses have been added to the department's curriculum and will be offered periodically. While finishing his own doctoral work, Jeff received in 2009 the Wayne State University Alfred H. Kelly Endowed Memorial Award for Graduate Student Research in History, the second time he has won this prize. On a personal note, he and his wife are expecting their second child in June.

Bruce Zellers published a book review of [Samuel Adams: A Life](#) by Ira Stoll in the January 2010 issue of the [Michigan War Studies Review](#).

CATCHING UP ON RECENT DEPARTMENT NEWS; OR, "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO..."

A lot has changed since the last History department newsletter in 2006 and many of those happenings are documented in other articles in this newsletter. Besides the retirement of Mary Karasch, the death of Ron Finucane, and the move to Varner Hall, there have

been other comings and goings in the department.

After nearly 40 years on the faculty, part of which was spent as both acting and full-time department chair, **Carl Osthaus** retired in 2009. Remembered fondly by generations of students in his Civil War and American South classes, Carl taught thousands of undergraduates, mentored dozens of graduate students, and won Oakland's prestigious Teaching Excellence Award. The author of two books and several articles, Carl saved one of his greatest achievements for the end of his academic career when his article, "The Work Ethic of the Plain Folk: Labor and Religion in the Old South," published in *The Journal of Southern History*, was chosen as one of the ten best articles of 2006 by the Organization of American Historians and republished in a special volume, *The Best American History Essays, 2006*. He continues to work and read (and fish and garden and travel with his wife Wendy) and he occasionally turns up at department events where his presence is always welcomed and where his former colleagues are glad to see him.

While his time at Oakland lasted just three years, **Matt Sutton** is fondly remembered even as he, his wife Kristin, and their two young boys moved on to Washington State University in 2008. Matt's acclaimed book on Aimee Semple McPherson has established him as one of the outstanding young scholars on American religious history and Oakland University can be proud that he began his career with us. Matt made quite a mark in his short time at Oakland, contributing to the life of the department in many ways, winning a summer research fellowship, and becoming the second department historian to win Oakland's New Investigator Research Excellence Award. Now at work on his second book on religion and politics in the 20th century, Matt has been active this past year presenting papers at both the American Historical Association and Organization of American Historians meetings. For those interested, an online video of

Matt's OAH panel appeared on the History News Network's website.

Serving an even shorter time was **Yoichi Nakano**, a Harvard Ph.D. who joined the department in 2007-2008 as our historian of Japan. Unfortunately for us, Yoichi took a leave of absence after his first year and moved to Japan to work, eventually converting a temporary leave into a permanent one. He is missed and his position remains unfilled.

But happily, the retirements and resignations are balanced by some stellar recent hires including, for next year, a new Latin Americanist to replace the retiring Mary Karasch (see article elsewhere for more on **Sean McEnroe**). In 2009 the department welcomed **Luke Harlow**, a Rice University Ph.D. and a specialist in the American South and Civil War era with a particular focus on American religious history. Luke succeeds Carl Osthaus on the department roster and is off to a fast start. He is finishing his book manuscript, *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880*, which is under contract with Cambridge University Press for the series Cambridge Studies on the American South, edited by Mark M. Smith and David Moltke-Hansen. **George Milne** joined the department ranks in 2008 as a historian of Colonial North America after finishing his Ph.D. at Oklahoma University. A specialist in Native American history, George completed a dissertation on "Rising Suns, Fallen Forts, and Impudent Immigrants: Race, Power, and War in the Lower Mississippi Valley" and has contributed a number of classes to the department's offerings including Native American history, a course on American Borderlands, and a hugely popular new class on piracy in the Atlantic world. The department is pleased to welcome these historians to the floor.

Not all the faculty news involves arrivals and departures. Several historians have earned tenure in recent years. **Don Matthews**, our Middle Eastern historian and **Derek Hastings**, our

German history specialist, have both been tenured and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. And, pending final administrative approval, they will soon be joined in August by **Getnet Bekele**, our African historian, who will become the department's newest tenured member. Congratulations to all three.

Finally, the department office has seen changes as well. After two terms as chair from 2000-2006, Carl Osthaus passed the baton to the department's current chair, **Karen Miller**, in 2006. She was reappointed to a second three year term which she began serving in 2009-2010. Assisting Karen, just as she has long done, is the department's Administrative secretary, **Janet Chandler**. **Debbie Misztura** left the department in 2007 but remains on campus in Development Information Services. Taking her place and lending an able hand to Janet and the department is **Johanna McReynolds** who previously worked in the Disability Support Services office. Fortunately, for a department filled with strong personalities and the typical professorial foibles, the administrative professionals keep sane and level heads and (try) to steer us out of trouble.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HISTORY MAJOR AT OAKLAND

We thought it might be interesting to hear from a current senior history major about his experiences at Oakland University and in the history department in particular. Jonathan Fouch was the 2009 Holzbock Humanities Scholarship recipient. Here, then, is a perspective on the Oakland experience.

Reflections on an Undergraduate Experience in History

By Jonathan Fouch

Sitting here in my dorm room on a rainy German day, I've had a great deal of time to reflect upon my undergraduate career and how I've evolved as a student over the past five years. Indeed, time for reflection has been abundant since I had unwittingly arrived here for my study abroad term five days too early.

Feeling somewhat lost after an unsuccessful stint as an information technology major at a local technical college, I applied to Oakland University in 2005 with the hope of getting my life back on track. I declared history my major and entertained the thought of one day being a high school history teacher.

Regrettably, my first two years at Oakland were relatively low-key. I was the stereotypical out-of-sight commuter student. I slugged it out in the traffic of I-696 and I-75 everyday just to venture back to my car once classes were over with. Why stay at Oakland an extra hour to catch an activity or club meeting when I can just drive home and do my homework?

My outlook began to change during winter semester 2007. The main catalyst was my experience in Professor Ronald Finucane's "Seminar in Historical Research," better known as the dreaded HST 300. It was while writing my term paper for that class that I discovered my passion for research-oriented academic history. It came to me while I was sitting on the third floor of Kresge Library, examining charts of wool production in fourteenth-century England. My inquisitiveness led me to one source after another, and I felt as if I was living my boyhood fantasy of being Sherlock Holmes, interpreting one clue after another in search of the truth. In short, the experience was fun, and I didn't want it to end.

I spent the following summer thinking about how I could turn historical research into a professional career. The most obvious choice would be to become a history professor. But how? What

would be my historical focus? Where would I go to school? And what would the requirements be? I had many questions, yet few answers.

The first bit of advice came in fall 2007 from Professor Jace Crouch during an "Ancient Greece and Rome" lecture. He stated succinctly that if any of us wanted to go on to graduate school to study history – even American history – there would most likely be a foreign language requirement. At the time I was retaking introductory German, which I had done poorly in the first time around, and was greatly unsure of my ability to learn a foreign language. Moreover, to become proficient in a foreign language would require an additional two or three years of classes, prolonging graduation. Yet I would not be deterred; a language would have to be learned, at least partially, before I entered graduate school.

Over the next two years, I stepped up my academic efforts. I declared German my minor and approached my history classes more vigor than ever before. Working more closely with Professor Derek Hastings, I explored the possibilities of German history while incorporating my growing foreign language skills into my papers. My participation on campus also increased as I began attending Phi Alpha Theta meetings and taking part in school events. Admittedly, my intentions were at first selfish. My Curriculum Vitae – or academic resume – was weak and I wanted to add a few lines to it. However, I soon found myself enjoying these extra-curricular activities as they greatly enriched my academic experience.

The results of my hard work were fruitful and soon the puzzle pieces began to fall into place. In April 2009, I was awarded the prestigious Holzbock Humanities Scholarship, a great accomplishment considering my situation only a few years ago. I also began to figure out the complex process of applying to graduate school, through my own research and through heavy

consultation with my professors in the department.

It is now spring 2010. With everything figured out, I will return from Germany next fall and apply to many of the nation's top history graduate programs. My goal is to eventually be a professor of European – and specifically German – history, spending the rest of my life teaching students and conducting research.

Looking back at the past five years, I have a bit of advice for my fellow history undergraduate students out there, be you bound for further study or the STEP program. First, talk to your professors. Trust me on this one: they are treasure troves of information. Use their office hours. They don't bite and they can often point you in the right direction, whether you are confused about a paper or a future career path. Third, as the Fleetwood Mac song goes, "don't stop thinking about tomorrow." Research the future job markets that you will be competing in as soon as possible. Indeed, even if you are a freshman, take advantage of every opportunity you can to build up your academic resume. Remember, Social Darwinism is alive and well in the job market, be it for a graduate assistantship or a secondary education position. Only those with the strongest resumes will survive. Third, get involved. In many ways, this is tied to my previous bit of advice. Active participation on campus illustrates that you are more than just a trained drone that has figured out how to pass through all the hoops of undergraduate coursework. It shows that you are an active member of an intellectual community and that you can handle pressure outside of your classes. It will also bring you into contact with a dedicated group of students who are intellectually sound and who will enrich your academic experience here at Oakland. Finally, don't be a one-trick pony. Learning how to memorize dates is great, but try to broaden your skill set. Improve your analytical and writing skills. Take up a minor and approach it seriously, whether you're studying French or

sociology. Again, this will make you a more desirable college graduate, no matter what career path you choose.

In closing, your undergraduate study here at Oakland University is what you make of it. Good luck, and I wish you all the best!

HISTORY DEPARTMENT UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS FOR 2009-2010

Congratulations to the following history students who earned degrees this past year:

History Bachelor of Arts degrees

Jeremy P. Bois, Justin B. Breyer, Jason P. Burnett, Nicole Christine Burris, Carole M. Delozier, Sara E. Duncanson, Faren Michelle Garvey, Allison D. Gordon, Rachel N. Jenkinson, Jacques P. Lapeyre, Sarah C. McClain, James R. McCoy, Megan L. Nowicki, Karen L. Olshefsky, Joseph Palushaj, Bryce Ropp, Kevin J. Schneider, Kaitlyn C. Shields, Thomas C. Sirhal, Elijah Smith, Michael J. Smith, Mark C. Steinbrecher, Andrew Michael-Trevor Stonehouse, Matthew T. Trausch, Jonathan Wachlarz, Sarah A. Willis

History Secondary Education (STEP) Bachelor of Arts degrees

Amanda E. Goodson, Philip D. Lewan, David Liano, Matthew J. Onica, Jonathan D. Pete, Katherine M. Trobaugh, Walter A. Waelchli, David R. Wyatt

History Master of Arts Degrees

Connor Artman, Donald Haffner, Edward Hayden, Gary Shea, Anne Marie Wambeke

FULL-TIME FACULTY 2009-10

Bekele, Getnet (PhD Michigan State 2004; asst. prof.) Africa
bekele@oakland.edu

Benson, Linda (PhD, Leeds, UK 1986; prof.) Modern China
benson@oakland.edu

Chapman, Sara E. (PhD, Georgetown 1997; assoc. prof.) Early Modern Europe, France
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Clark, Daniel J. (PhD, Duke 1989; assoc. prof.) US Labor
djclark@oakland.edu

Dykes, De Witt S. (MA, Michigan 1961; assoc. prof.) African American, US Urban, Family and Gender
dykes@oakland.edu

Estes, Todd A. (PhD, Kentucky 1995; assoc. prof.) Early National US, Revolutionary US, Political Culture
estes@oakland.edu

Harlow, Luke (PhD, Rice 2009; asst. prof.) Civil War, Reconstruction, US South
harlow@oakland.edu

Hastings, Derek K. (PhD, Chicago 2003; assoc. prof.) Modern Germany
hastings@oakland.edu

Karasch, Mary C. (PhD, Wisconsin, Madison 1972; prof.) Latin America, Brazil, Comparative Slavery
karasch@oakland.edu

Martin, Craig (PhD, Harvard, 2002; assist. prof.) Renaissance Europe, History of Science & Technology
martin@oakland.edu

Matthews, Weldon C. (PhD, Chicago 1998; asst. prof.) Modern Middle East
matthews@oakland.edu

Miller, Karen A. J. (PhD, Columbia 1992; assoc. prof.) US 1877-present, Diplomatic, Political
kjmiller@oakland.edu

Milne, George E. (PhD, Oklahoma 2006; assist. prof.) Early American and Native American History
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Moran, Seán Farrell (PhD, American 1989; assoc. prof.) Modern Britain, Ireland, 19th- and 20th-century European Intellectual
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PART-TIME FACULTY 2009-10

Crouch, Jace T. (PhD, Michigan State 1997; lect.) Europe
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Londo, William (PhD, Michigan 2004; lect.) East Asia, Japan, Religion & Society
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Shelly, Cara L. (MA, Michigan 1990; lect.) US
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Zellers, Bruce L. (MA, Clark 1978; lect.) US
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If you have information about yourself to contribute to the next newsletter please send it to estes@oakland.edu. We especially love to have the latest news from our alumni.