

Murray
MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

History News

Summer 2008

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Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni & Friends of the Department of History:

Greetings from the MSU Department of History! This newsletter is full of news—some good, some bad—as we wind down one and begin the next academic year. During spring 2008, the department held three searches for permanent positions, and it is my pleasure to announce our hirees. Dr. James Humphreys joins us in August as the US Southern historian. He arrives to Murray from Lambuth University in Jackson, TN. In addition, Professor Taufiq Rashid received permanent lecturer status and I began a four-year term as our department chair. In 2008-2009, we will search for a British/British Commonwealth historian. Duane Bolin gathered another prestigious accolade to his already full resume by being named the MSU 2008 Distinguished Researcher. Professor Joe Fuhrmann, along with his wife Mary, will spend the fall semester in Regensburg, Germany teaching MSU students at the University of Regensburg. Ken Wolf, professor emeritus and the most recent Regensburg alum, returns to teach Honors Program and Religious Studies courses, as well as one History graduate course.

At the same time as we report the above successes, it saddens the Department of History to announce that Dr. T. Wayne Beasley, who retired from Murray State this spring, lost his battle with cancer in March 2008. Each of you may have your own Beasley “story”; we have included some in the following pages. We send sincere condolences to his family; each of us will miss his unique personality deeply.

Of course, the primary mission of education continues, and we have been preparing for coming changes in university curriculum. In the fall of 2009, the CIV 101 and 102 courses will become sophomore-level courses (201 and 202) with a restructuring of the Universities Studies Program. Incoming students in 2009 will be given the option of completing 201 or 202. We have initiated several changes to compensate for this alteration in the Department's service function to the university. Two significant changes include the ability to offer more upper-level courses each semester and the adoption of a new course, CIV 290, a special topics world history course. We have also initiated two co-requisite travel courses for our history classes. HIS 490 and HIS 491 are courses that will allow students to get up to three hours credit while taking another co-requisite history class. History 490 is for travel abroad and applies to all history courses outside the United States. For example, a European history course, such as Modern Germany, may also include History 490 and, either during spring break, winter break, or early in the summer, students will travel to Germany. Students will receive a grade for the travel course, complete course requirements, keep a travel notebook, as well as experience the joy of seeing some of the places they have read about. History 491 is for US domestic travel. We anticipate the co-requisite history courses will be popular since they add a dimension to courses such as History 434: Civil War and Reconstruction; History 431: America in Revolution; and a host of other offerings that will deepen student understanding of events and people they study.

Finally, we can not complete this issue without mentioning current state economic difficulties. Murray State University faced some belt-tightening to the tune of a 6 percent cut in state appropriations, over three million dollars of recurring reductions in the budget for the next biennium. The Department of History and MSU will survive these drawdowns, but they give us pause and slow our ability to address many needs of students. Your generosity by way of monetary support for the department is all the more apparent and needed. The department appreciates our supporters.

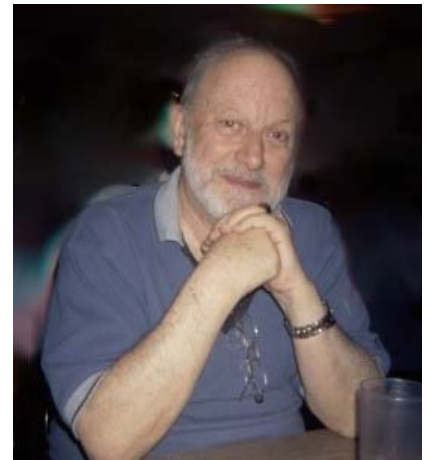
As always, the Department of History hopes you will contact us or come by Faculty Hall. We look forward to these visits. Stop by this fall, and view the newly commissioned portrait of Dr. T. Wayne Beasley honoring our long-time colleague, mentor, and friend. Thanks for your continued support of the department's faculty, students, and alumni. Please keep in mind the 2008 Dr. James W. Hammack, Jr. Scholarship Banquet to be held 20 September 2008 with speaker Alicestyne Adams. We welcome all who would like to attend.

Best,

Terry W. Strieter, Chair

~ T. WAYNE BEASLEY (1939-2008) ~

Dr. Wayne Beasley arrived at MSU after completing his PhD at the University of Georgia in 1965. Beasley often repeated how he secured his position; a native of Tennessee, he sent letters of introduction to schools within a two-hundred-mile radius of Dickson seeking employment. MSU answered, and we were the luckier for it. Promoted quickly, Dr. Beasley earned the rank of Professor in 1970. Hired as the Department of History's British Historian, Beasley quickly put away his dissertation research on the second Gladstone Administration in favor of communal societies and, specifically, the Shakers. He secured for the Pogue Library a complete microfilm set of Shaker writings. In 1981, Beasley became the founding editor of *Communal Societies*, Journal of the National Historic Communal Societies Association. As a result, Beasley presented numerous papers on the Shakers and other communal societies at professional conferences. While many faculty would be satisfied with a successful career of scholarship, Beasley knew that his passion lay in the classroom.



In the classroom, Dr. Beasley made the past come alive. His stories of British royals and their exploits kept many a class entertained. His passion for history and students did not diminish over his 43-year career; he continued to keep students engaged in history both as a lecturer and an advisor. Even as students lamented the requirement of taking "Modern Europe" or sang the "Beasley Blues," they could not stay away from class or from him. During his career at MSU, Beasley taught the following courses: Ancient History, Directed Studies, French Revolution, Introduction to Historical Studies, Making of Britain, Modern Britain, Modern Europe, Nineteenth-Century Europe, Readings in European History, Seminar in European History, Tudor-Stuart England, Western Civilization, and World Civilizations.

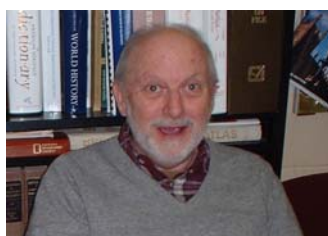


MSU also recognized Beasley's passion by bestowing the Max Carmen Outstanding Teacher Award presented by Student Government Association and Regents Award for Teaching Excellence. Dr. Beasley often repeated that he wanted to be the first MSU professor to reach fifty years of employment, and although he did not attain that goal, he certainly left his mark on Murray State

University.

Over the years, Beasley advised countless undergraduate and graduate students, regarding what class to take or how to complete their thesis. Ora Bailey Brooks '78, G'85 writes, "In 1985, I was a graduate assistant in the MSU History Department, working on my Master's Degree in History. Dr. Wayne Beasley was my director for the thesis I had elected to write in partial fulfillment of the program. In our meetings, Dr. Beasley kept insisting he could not find my "thesis statement." No matter how hard I tried, no matter how many rewrites, he just kept saying my thesis statement was not clearly stated. On one such occasion in his office, I became so frustrated I found myself shouting at him. Within nano seconds, the Department Chair, Dr. Joe Cartwright, was standing at the door, and a small group of professors stood behind him, all wondering what was going on. I was mortified, wanted to crawl into a hole, but there sat Beasley, a big grin on his face, enjoying the scene immensely. He was like that.

The issue was soon resolved by another member of my panel, Dr. Charlotte Beahan, who suggested I write, 'My thesis statement is . . .' That's all it took. Anyone wishing to know what it was can find it by checking out my thesis from the MSU Library under the title, "The Evolution of the Parks of London."



Even as he advised students on their academic careers, Beasley's favorite pastime was talking with students in his office. He liked all students, and it was not unusual to see several students in his office at one time, all speaking on a different subject. Amy Pryor Hite '00, one of Beasley's student workers, writes, "He's always held a special place in my heart, and what a character. You could never forget T. Wayne

and his unique personality. We spent so many hours upon hours together in that little corner office chatting away about everything. I'll never forget him."

A Remembrance: Popular MSU Prof Dr. Wayne Beasley Dies

Shannon McFarlin '02, G'04, writer, journalist, and friend, wrote the following which first appeared in the HenryCountian.com online newspaper the week following Dr. Beasley's death.



I became friends with Wayne Beasley the first time I met him. Within a few minutes into our first conversation, we developed a lasting bond. And given my innate shyness, that doesn't happen to me very often. But what's really extraordinary is that I know I'm not the only one. There are many others out there who became instant friends with "Beasley," as most of us called him. And I'm not talking about the acquaintanceships that pass as friendship in most of our day-to-day encounters. *I'm talking real friendship.*

I had first noticed Beasley in the hustle and bustle of my first days at Murray State. I had moved back to our homeplace in Paris after living elsewhere for most of my life. I had always been a reporter, but wanted to embark on a career in history and was going to college for the first time, long after the age most people call themselves a college freshman. In other words, I had a lot on my mind.

Walking through the History Department in Faculty Hall, I noticed that the room at the end of the hall was always crowded with students. So crowded that you wouldn't think another person could fit in that room. Is this a college stunt? Is it like a circus act; are they trying to see how many college kids can fit in a tiny office? At first, I thought it was a lounge area because the conversation was so hearty and the laughter so infectious. I finally figured out the crowded room was Beasley's office, and I found out why it was so popular on the first day I attended one of his classes.

After my first European History class, he asked me to stop by and talk. "I'd like to hear your story," he said. Once we sat down in his office--which for some reason was quiet that day--it became obvious that he really meant that. Most people will ask you how you are, but all they really want you to do is say "I'm fine." But Beasley really wanted to know how you were. We talked for a long time that afternoon; I told him my story, and he told me his.

I soon became one of Beasley's groupies--one of the group that crowded in his office every day. It was a routine--during breaks from classes, I had to stop by and visit with Beasley and the crowd that gathered there. In many ways, Beasley's office was like a salon, an old-fashioned drawing room where lively conversation was encouraged. Beasley was especially popular with women, and he understood why. "Women like me because they know I really like them. I really enjoy the company of women, and I listen to what they say. Most men, or so I'm told, really don't do that."

His teaching style added to his popularity. He had an unorthodox way of teaching history, putting you in the middle of the scene in straightforward fashion. And he was known to let loose with a cuss word here and there. But all of that added to the mystique that was Beasley.

He became sick with cancer and took medical leave. True to his nature, he rejected the idea of chemotherapy. When he died at home [March 16, 2008], I just happened to be reading a book on Elizabethan history. The irony of that is not lost on me, nor is the profound influence that Beasley had on my knowledge and view of history. Beasley had said he didn't want a funeral, and unlike most people, he stood by that. There was a visitation, and there will be a memorial service at some point down the road. Until then, I know I'm not the only person who spends a lot of my days with tears in my eyes.

GRADUATES

BA conferred degrees, December 2007

Savannah Blue Bryant	Cambellsville, KY
Matthew Curry	Owensboro, KY

Andrew Ryan Felker
Brittany L. Fentress
Pamela Rushing Flickinger

Providence, KY
Paducah, KY
Benton, KY

The Department of History is proud to
announce the seventh annual

Hammack Scholarship Banquet

featuring

Professor Alicestyne Adams

20 September 2008

Curriss Center Ball Room
Murray State University

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