

# HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

The Newsletter of The University of Alabama Department of History

Volume 2 No. 2 Spring 2019



College of  
Arts & Sciences  
Department of History

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

## FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to the Spring 2019 newsletter from The University of Alabama Department of History. We've had a productive and rewarding

academic year. Though the History major is in decline nationally, our numbers have increased, crossing the 400-major threshold for the first time in several years. Our classes are at or near capacity, and nearly 8,000 students are enrolled in our courses.

We're thrilled with the contributions of our new faculty, Julia Brock and Lawrence Cappello, in building programs in Public History and American Legal History. We also welcome a new member of our administrative staff, Administrative Specialist Marla Scott.

Our graduate students continue to excel as teachers and scholars. Many of them have had success on the professional job market and in taking their MAs to top PhD programs. Our undergraduates are some of the finest students at the University. This year, one of our majors became the second History major in three years to receive the John Fraser Ramsey Award, one of the highest distinctions the University bestows upon its students. Two majors have been awarded the Randall Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award: one of them twice.

We have a number of new initiatives in the works, including plans for an undergraduate historical journal and a full slate of public and scholarly programming. We hope you enjoy being kept up to date on everything going on in the Department. Please do not hesitate to contact us and we encourage you to stay in touch. We want you to be part of our future as we continue to explore the past!

## UNDERGRADUATE EMILY ADAMS WINS JOHN FRASER RAMSEY AWARD



Emily Adams, a junior double-majoring in History and International Studies, is the 2019 John Fraser Ramsey Award recipient. Named after

a long-time member of our department, the Ramsey is one of the university's Premiere Awards, honoring students who embody the goals of a liberal education. Awardees receive a \$7,000 cash prize and a "Great Ideas Tour" of Europe, modeled after Dr. Ramsey's popular Great Ideas of Western Civilization course.

The Edmond, Oklahoma native has been involved in multiple research projects

in the History Department, including comparative studies of Alexander the Great and the ways in which nations have addressed controversial public monuments. Currently, Adams is researching how US intrusions into Cold-War Cuba's state sovereignty have affected relations among the US, Cuba, and Russia. For her Great Ideas Tour, she plans to visit Greece and Italy and, perhaps, England and Scotland.

After graduation, Adams hopes to pursue a dual degree in law and global policy or security studies. She believes that her travels will make her a "more culturally competent person" and prepare her for a career in government work. Adams describes the History Department as her "home away from home," where supportive professors have taught her to not only be a good researcher but to "think about hot button issues in really interesting and critical ways," too.

## UNDERGRADUATES LAUNCH CRIMSON HISTORICAL REVIEW

History majors have launched the *Crimson Historical Review (CHR)*, an undergraduate research journal. The idea for the journal started in Dr. Margaret Peacock's undergraduate research seminar, where students reviewed one of the few undergraduate historical research journals in the U.S. and concluded that they could do better. Peacock and students Jodi Vadinsky and Warren Martin formed an editorial review board, creating the *CHR*, the second undergraduate research journal in the SEC.

The *CHR* offers undergraduate authors the opportunity to publish original, peer-reviewed research covering any historical topic.

Students serving on the *CHR*'s review board practice peer-editing and critical thinking, gaining experience with the publishing process, layout design, and journal production. They also learned copy editing and other post-production skills through workshops conducted by UA Press. The review board is open to all majors.

The *CHR*'s goal is to gain a national profile for the undergraduate history research conducted not only at UA but nationwide. Starting next year, the *CHR* will open to national submissions. Submission details can be found at <https://crimsonhistorical.ua.edu/> or by emailing [crimsonhistorical@ua.edu](mailto:crimsonhistorical@ua.edu).



Crimson  
Historical  
Review

## 2018-2019 AWARD-WINNING GRADUATE STUDENTS



Colonial Dames of America Essay Award  
Essay: "African-American Slavery in the Cherokee Nation: Moravian and Brainerd Missionaries, 1799-1836."

**Jessica Brodt**



Albert Burton Moore Memorial Award for Outstanding Graduate Student in European, Latin American, or Asian History.

**Tanja Bacani**



Christopher G. Swindle Teaching Award

Awarded to the most outstanding graduate student teacher in the department.

**JC Riggs**



Frank Lawrence Owsley Memorial Scholarship for Superior Competency in American History

**Aaron M. Phillips**



Masters Student Teaching Award

Awarded to the most outstanding M.A. student teacher in the department.

**Liam Adkison**



Gary B. Mills Endowed Dissertation Support Fund

**Jessica Brodt**

## DOCTORAL STUDENT ASHLEY OBEDIYI WINS MEDIEVAL ESSAY CONTEST



Last October, doctoral student Ashley Obediyi answered an essay submissions call from the Society of Medieval Feminists (SMF). The contest parameters were fairly open: the paper had to cover a topic relating to women, gender, and/or sexuality in the Middle Ages, and be fewer than 8,000 words.

Obediyi's submission, which began as

a seminar paper under the guidance of Dr. Lesley Gordon, won first prize. This honor earned her a five-year SMF membership, as well as the article's publication in the *Medieval Feminist Forum's* winter 2019 issue.

SMF assigned Obediyi a society mentor, Dr. Jessica Barr of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, to assist with revisions. Barr is a literary scholar who researches mystical literature in the 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Obediyi's paper analyzes the mystical writings of three medieval female

philosophers - Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch of Brabant, and Marguerite Porete - who used discourses of courtly love and theology to reinforce and to subvert prescribed gender norms.

Obediyi's biggest take away from this experience is the importance of perseverance. "No matter how many times your applications for grants and fellowships or your submissions for conferences and journals get denied, keep trying," she says. "Do not give up and definitely do not despair. Keep working and keep submitting."

## DEPARTMENT HOSTS PROSPECTIVE GRADUATE STUDENTS

The University of Alabama Department of History hosted a visit day for prospective graduate students on Friday, March 1. Students began the day with a warm welcome from Dr. Daniel Riches, Director of Graduate Students, and then met with faculty during their open office hours. They spoke one-on-one with

faculty members and socialized with current graduate students over lunch.

Later in the day, they toured campus, the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, and the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library. There was a symposium of current graduate students and faculty, followed by a dinner with current students.

The Department of History spent the day connecting with the prospective students, learning about their interests, and their goals for the future. It was a successful day which highlighted both the scholarly focus and strong sense of community which are central to the strength of the

department.

Thanks to all of the prospective graduate students who visited The University of Alabama. The Department of History looks forward to welcoming many of them this fall. Thanks as well to the faculty and current graduate students that spent the day welcoming the prospective students and making this a wonderful visit for all. Roll Tide!



## Follow Us!



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## 2018 - 2019 UNDERGRADUATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Charles Grayson Summersell  
Memorial Scholarship for  
Most Distinguished Undergraduate  
in History**

Emily Adams

**Charles Grayson Summersell  
Memorial Scholarship**

Lauren Tucker  
M. Isabella Garrison

**The Lee David and Florence  
Weinberg Black Scholarship**

Declan Smith  
Jodi Vadinsky  
Jacob Kynard  
Molly Steiner  
Jordan Green  
Gwendolyn Lemly

**Dr. Howard Jones Endowed  
Scholarship**

Margaret Lawson  
Chandler Piper

## TWO STUDENTS WIN RANDALL OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARD



History Major Molly Buffington has won not one, but two 2019 Randall Outstanding Undergraduate Research Awards for research projects conducted in the departments of History and Modern Languages and Classics.

Her honors thesis in History, titled "A Faith That Sings: Liturgy as a Theological Tool in the Reformation," completed under Dr. James Mixson's supervision, examined the crafting and refining of a Lutheran liturgy that was intended to teach complex theological concepts, facilitate conversion, and even insult non-Lutherans.

She also wrote an article with Dr. Kirk Summers of Modern Languages and Classics, titled "Hyperphysicism and Mystery in the Sacramentarian Dispute of the 1570s." Their essay, which will be published in an upcoming collection of essays on Calvinist theologian Theodore Beza, examines the intense theological debate between Lutherans and Calvinists over the translation of a specific passage of the Bible, and differing interpretations of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Margaret Lawson won a 2019 Randall Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award for a research project conducted under Dr. John Giggie's supervision.

The project, titled "History of Us: Empowering High School Students to Confront the Legacy of Lynching," helped guide students at Central High School to conduct research on lynchings in Tuscaloosa. Using both historical newspapers and genealogical databases, students studied both the circumstances of the victims' deaths and the details of their lives. They examined how the white supremacy culture that lay at the heart of lynching had far-reaching social implications in the Tuscaloosa community, including modern patterns of segregation, judicial inequality, and mass incarceration.

Working with the Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Task Force, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Equal Justice Initiative, the students will dedicate a monument to local lynching victims in May 2020.



## PEER MENTORS VOLUNTEER TO HELP THEIR FELLOW STUDENTS SUCCEED

The Peer Mentors is a group of remarkable undergraduates who excelled in History survey courses and want to share their knowledge of how to succeed in these classes. They help teach critical skills to students enrolled in 100-level classes, including how to take notes effectively, how to study for exams, and how to write historically-focused essays.

These tireless volunteers have helped many first-year and seasoned students perform at the peak of their ability.

2018-2019 Peer Mentors:

Allie Thatcher  
Allisen Lowrance  
Bridgette Davis  
Bryce Ledbetter  
Caitlyn White  
Camryn Walker  
Elise Helton

Harlyn Cowart  
Jana Venable  
Jodi Vadinsky  
Katelyn Adams  
Kendell Wilson  
Lauren Morris  
Lauren Van Fleet

Lucie Derikx  
Margaret Lawson  
Mason Blanke  
Matthew Culver  
Molly Steiner  
Pariss Bettis  
Tatiana Sousa



## THE FRIENDS OF HISTORY

Mr. William Garnett (Bill) Anderson

Dr. Edwin C. Bridges

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Mr. Bradley Hale

Mr. Trantum Fitzpatrick

Mr. Olin B. King

Dr. F. David Mathews

Mr. Chris McIlwain

Dr. Donald R. Noble

Mr. John T. Oliver, Jr.

Dr. Cathy Randall

Mr. Cleophus Thomas, Jr.

Dr. Earl Tilford

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## SUPPORTING THE DEPARTMENT

The extent and quality of the activities sponsored by the Department of History depends in large measure on our available funds and the generous support of donors. Endowments or significant targeted donations will enable us to increase our national visibility, expand our production of nationally-recognized scholarship, and to grow History programming and events. Naming opportunities are possible in conjunction with such gifts.

For more information about any of the opportunities to support The University of Alabama Department of History, please contact our Department Office Manager, Marla Scott, at [scott076@ua.edu](mailto:scott076@ua.edu) or 205.348.7104.

To make a general donation online, please visit <https://history.ua.edu/giving/>.

### ***Your support enables the Department to:***

- Fund endowed scholarships and awards for outstanding current and prospective students.
- Support the research travel and professional development of both faculty and graduate students.
- Fund student organizations such as Phi Alpha Theta and the Graduate History Association.
- Fund student publications, such as the department's award-winning *Southern Historian* journal.

## THANK YOU TO OUR PATRONS

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