

Department of History

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Letter from the Chair

Elizabeth V. Faue

Beginning my fifth year as department chair, and writing my eighth chair's letter, I can testify to both the vibrancy of our department in its student research and faculty engagement but also its relevance to the cultural and political world around us. As **Jim Grossman**, the Executive Secretary of the **American Historical Association**, often repeats, "**Everything has a History.**" So does that slogan, in the words of James Baldwin. Baldwin noted that *history is "not merely something to be read."* Its "*great force*" is that "*we carry it with us... and [it] is literally present in all that we do.*" "*We owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations*" to history.

Whether it is in the conflict over the meaning of political speech and gerrymandering, debates over reparations, or the rediscovery of diverse women scientists in the history of the space race and computing, **History is woven into our thinking.** Perhaps this is not new, but **the intensity of our debates and the relevance of our research seems to grow with each news cycle.**

It should not be surprising then that our remarkable faculty and students are doing work that has crucial relevance to today's issues. Whether it is **Eric Ash's** study of the draining of the fens and environmental degradation, **Liette Gidlow's** documenting voter suppression after the Nineteenth Amendment, **Marsha Richmond's** work on the discovery of endocrin disruptors, or my own research on new workplace risks; the environmental health history of Detroit in alum **Joe Rector's** work or changing museum practices as shown by public historian alums **Amber Mitchell** and **Caitlyn Dial**; and the engagement of undergraduate majors **Aya Beydoun** and **Ken Alyass** on civil rights and urban inequalities, the **Department of History's work touches the world and challenges the injustices in it, just as Baldwin imagined.** "*We carry our history with us. We are our history.*"



SAVE THESE DATES

9/19: *Public History Alumni Lecture Event*
w/Caitlyn Dial

10/24: *Alumni Lecture and Reception* w/Amber Mitchell

11/6: *Sterne-Lion Undergraduate Research Symposium*

4/7: *Otis-Reider Graduate Research Symposium and Spring Awards Reception*



WAYNE STATE
College of Liberal Arts
and Sciences

Edwin Hall, Professor of History (1955-1998), Solves the Mystery of the DIA's St. Jerome

Hans Hummer, PhD

Retired medievalist, Edwin Hall, helped solve the mystery of one of the most valuable and enigmatic paintings in the Detroit Institute of Arts' collection: the authenticity of Jan van Eyck's St. Jerome. The portrait had reappeared in the early 20th century after nearly four centuries of obscurity. The City of Detroit purchased it in 1925, and four decades later was pronounced an ignominious forgery.

Ed recalls that when he came to Detroit in 1955 the thing that excited him most was **having access to the DIA**. When he saw the Saint Jerome there, he couldn't believe it. *"It was so wonderful,"* he recalled. Because of the **painting's mysterious whereabouts** for centuries and **oddities in the painting itself**, questions had circulated about its **Eyckian credentials**. To address these concerns, Edgar Richardson, the Director of the DIA, sent the painting to **Paul Coremans**, the world's leading authority on early Flemish painting. Coremans found that, by contrast with other Van Eycks, **the St. Jerome lacked underdrawing and had a paper backing pasted to the board**, so he **adjudged it a forgery of the 19th century**. Coremans' report was kept under wraps.

This intrigue was unknown to Ed, who published two papers in 1968 and 1971 arguing that the **painting had to be of 15th-century provenance** and must have been presented as



a gift to Cardinal Niccolò Albergati, the principal ecclesiastical mediator at the Council Arras, convened in 1435 to settle the Hundred Years War.

Ed's evidence included a **description of the painting in a de Medici inventory** of 1492 that accords with the picture in the DIA, and the **date on the astrolabe in the portrait**, which Ed deciphered, that corresponds to the opening date of the Council. The notion that this could have been confected in the 19th century was preposterous.

The saga facilitated a **reevaluation of the assumed criteria of authenticity**: other Van Eyck paintings have since been discovered to have no underdrawing; paper backing has been found behind other 15th-century works; and the St. Jerome's pigments and the dendrochronology of its wood panel have been shown to be of fifteenth-century origin.

"What I did here at Wayne, that's the thing I'm most pleased with," Ed told me. *"I feel I saved the Van Eyck [at the DIA]. Of the Old Masters' paintings, it's probably one of the two or three most important pictures in the Museum."*

Read the full profile on the website.

The WSU Humanities Clinic

Lillian Wilson Szlaga

The Humanities Clinic relaunched on June 1 for its third pilot summer. Modeled on a legal clinic, the Humanities Clinic is based in the Department of History and **makes the skills and expertise of humanities graduate students available, for free, to community partners throughout Detroit.**

Since it began in 2017, the Clinic has doubled in size with twelve graduate student interns currently working with with twenty community partners. Current community partners include: Stand with Trans, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Arab American National Museum, the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute, Rebel Dogs Detroit, the Public Humanities Working Group, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership, Pewabic Pottery, the Michigan State University Music School-Detroit, the Reuther Library, Wayne State University Department of History, the Mercy Education Project, the Hawk Migration Association of North America, the River Raisin Institute, the Prevention Network, Auntie Na's Village, the K&S Virtual Impact Solutions, and Zaman International. Clinic interns are enrolled in WSU PhD or MA programs in History, Communications, Sociology, Anthropology, English, Classical and Modern languages, and Political Science.

The dual function of the Clinic is to **provide free services to our community partners and to help prepare graduate students for meaningful careers beyond academia.** Interns support



community organizations by **writing grants, copy editing, conducting archival research, managing digital archives, performing quantitative research and historical documentation, and qualitative data analysis including program evaluation;** interns are also taking on projects that involve **graphic design, media development, administrative work, project development, and community outreach.**

The Clinic began with funding from a NEH NextGenPhD grant, and is currently made possible with support from the American Historical Association Career Diversity Initiative, the Graduate School, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Wayne State University Press, the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, the Departments of English, Anthropology, and Classical & Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

Clinic internships end on August 31 and **the Clinic will host a luncheon for its stakeholders at Tierney Alumni House on August 21.** To learn more about the work that the Humanities Clinic is doing this summer, follow [@WSUHumClinic](#) on Twitter.

Alumna sets Public History World on Fire

Amber N. Mitchell (BA, 2013)

I am the Assistant Director of Public Engagement at the **National WWII Museum in New Orleans**, where I lead the public programs and community engagement team in their efforts to create innovative educational programs for a variety of audiences, as well as purposeful community relationship building within the Greater New Orleans area. I have previously worked at the **American Association for State and Local History**, the **Indiana Historical Society**, and **Indiana Humanities**. I hold a master's in Public History from **Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis** (2017). I am passionate about telling the stories of underrepresented peoples in historical institutions, as well as making these institutions more accessible to all. Here's my story.

How I Got Started

I started my career as a public historian back in high school. I knew I was interested in history, but I did not have the desire to teach in a classroom. Encouraged by my teachers, I lucked up into an internship with the **Charles H. Wright Museum**, where I was able to **do independent research and fell in love with the idea of sharing African American history with the public through exhibitions--**a medium that I had not ever thought about before as something I could do as a professional, but fell hard for. **I couldn't imagine doing anything else, even at a young age.**



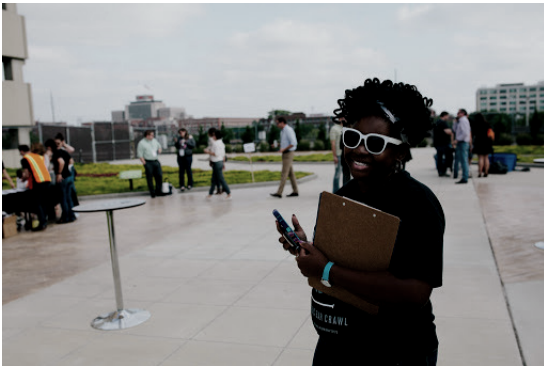
After graduating from Wayne State, I interned at the **National Museum of American History** under fellow WSU alum, **Christopher Wilson** of the **African American Programs Division**, and **lighting struck twice--I discovered that programming is a thing!** Using existing exhibitions and things I, as historian, was just interested in, **I could go beyond the limits of exhibit labels and square footage to assist people in learning about complex subjects in a fun way. I couldn't get enough of my two loves, exhibitions and programming.** I pursued both as a graduate student in IUPUI.

Working with the **Indiana State Humanities Council** allowed me to see that **museums aren't the only place that public historians can do their work.** That, even though we go through school and **have these expectations of how our career trajectory will go, life finds a way to switch things around on you.** That led me to work with a public history professional organization managing continuing education for museum professionals--and more importantly, **getting to know what our field needs to remain relevant not just for the public but also for the people who make little-to-no money staffing these institutions.**

Alumna sets Public History World on Fire, contd

What I'm Doing Now

After returning to traditional museum spaces in 2017, my time working in parallel organizations prepared me to look critically at many aspects of history museum life, including **meaningful relationship building and engagement with the communities that live in our city**. Ultimately, exhibits, programs, collections, whatever: **none of that matters if you can't get people in the door--museums are a space of stratification and accessibility is the challenge for all of us to master**. That's where I make my professional "home" now: **the intersection of history education and public advocacy for equitable accessibility for all**. And, I couldn't couldn't be happier.



The Joy of Public History

All of this is to say: **there is no one way to work in public history or become a public historian**. Sure, you may get a degree in it from some university, but **the joy of public history is that anyone and everyone can work to make history relevant in as many ways as one has ideas and/or ambition**. We can do anything when you have the right people in the room and that includes you and I, as the changemakers in this field.



Career Advice

The best advice I can give to those looking to build a career in the field generally is to **have a range of work experience before you graduate, even from undergrad**. Volunteer, intern, and work as much as possible in a variety of types of subfields (archives, libraries, museums, universities, humanities councils, corporate collections, just to name a few) so that you know what this entire field has to offer and can make wise decisions in framing your future. **The more diverse your skills, the more appealing you are to a wider array of potential employers, and the more likely you will have work consistently in this very competitive field**. But remember that life finds a way and that the skills you develop as a public historian are widely transferable. Sometimes, you can do all the cool history stuff you enjoy in places and spaces with people you never dreamt of previously. And isn't that just the tightest?



My Year at the Institute for Advanced Study

Hans Hummer, PhD

I had a wonderful experience as a member of the legendary Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, where I researched my current project on the development of the concept of genealogy. One might think of the Institute as an international academic Disneyland, a place where one returns to college as an adult, without the exams, but with all of the (mostly) charming social and intellectual interaction.

Members participated in their respective seminars, which in the School of Historical Studies encompasses Art History, Islamic Studies, Chinese Studies, Ancient History, Medieval European Studies, Early Modern European Studies, and Modern History. They also gathered for the general Historical Studies colloquium on Thursdays. My cohort included an exciting and congenial group of medievalists from the US, Romania, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, and Japan, but there were also medievalists in Art History, Chinese Studies, and Islamic Studies from Holland, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Britain.

The Institute sponsored many public lectures and my favorite, the After Hours talks, twice a week at 5:30 at Harry's bar. These could be on anything from the archaeology of ancient Palmyra to black holes, but the rule is that the speaker has just ten minutes and can use no visual aids, so that the presentation is accessible to anyone. Questions follow.

Simons Hall also hosted other memorable events, such as the whiskey tasting, the holiday banquet, and the formal Winter Ball. Simons was most memorable for the daily lunches in its dining hall.



Good food has been a priority from the inception of the Institute with the idea that people interact over attractive meals. That also explains the daily ritual of tea and cookies, at 3 pm sharp in Fuld Hall. I never really got used to being in the same room at tea and cookies or at lunch with Freeman Dyson, and two recent winners of “Nobels” in Mathematics, Akshay Venkatesh (Fields) and Karen Uhlenbeck (Abel).

Princeton and the Institute make good use of the other, such that faculty at Princeton routinely plunder the members' list for potential speakers and activities.

In sum, the Institute is a fantastic place for professional and personal growth. My recent book, for example, was the subject of a day-long workshop, and a fellow member at the Institute has facilitated another workshop on the same in Paris. Stay tuned. But perhaps what I will treasure most is the people I met, the visits from my family, spontaneous discussions about work or whatever in our offices or at lunch or at tea and cookies, the weekly, rotating evening social hours (I organized) in member housing, the excursions with colleagues to museums in New York, and the lunches with the woman who kindly endowed my membership. Most of all, I got to spend the year with my advisor, Patrick Geary. As I was his first doctoral student, it was perhaps fitting that I was fortunate to be near him and Mary for the final year of his long and distinguished career – a kind of sad happiness.

History Majors Storm the AHA

Editor

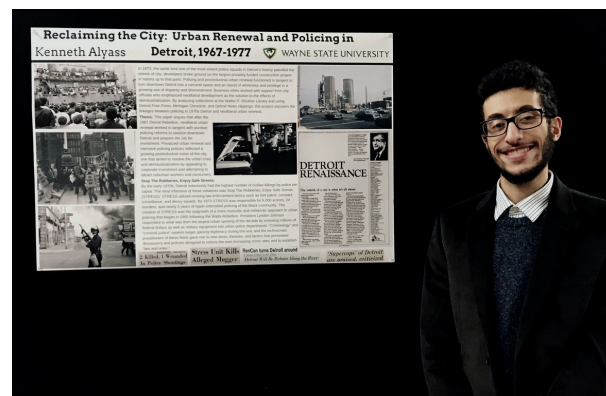
This year, the History Department had three majors present at the American Historical Association's 2nd annual undergraduate student poster session.

Last year, **Aya Beydoun** (below) was one of 20 students accepted from several hundred applicants to present at the AHA's very first undergraduate poster session in Washington, D.C. The Association was overwhelmed by history majors' desire to participate in the annual meeting and very impressed by the innovation and rigor of their research.

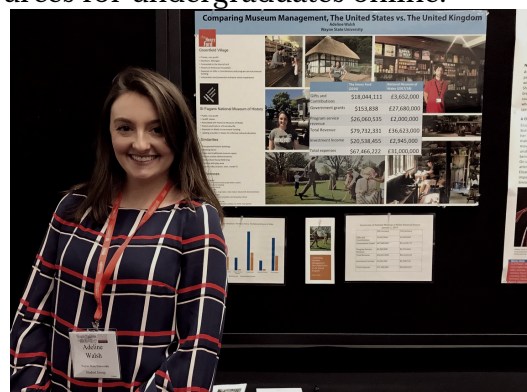
Aya presented her research on **Perceptions of Detroit's 1967 Uprising**, attended the plenary session commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the **Kerner Commission's Report on the Disorders**, and even asked a surviving member of the commission a question.



This year, Aya, who presented her research on **The Roots of Political Women in Early Islam**, was joined by **Kenneth Alyass** and **Adeline Walsh** (below). Kenneth researched **Urban Renewal and Policing in the wake of Detroit's 1967 Disorders**. Addie, who intends to pursue a career in museums, researched the **Management of Living History Museums** by comparing St. Fagans National Museum of History in Cardiff, Wales, UK, and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan.



History undergrads who are interested in applying for future poster sessions should notify the Director of Undergraduate Studies by September and speak with their accomplished peers to get tips on applying, developing their posters, and answering rapid fire questions from diverse audiences. They can also find information as well as other AHA resources for undergraduates online.



Undergraduate Student Award Recipients, 2019

For the complete listing, including photos, visit our website or Facebook page

Mark and Linee Diem Endowed Scholarship:

Leah Warren

The Professor Effie K. Ambler Memorial Endowed Scholarship in History:

Aya Beydoun and Megan Eisenstein

Baiardi Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship:

William Weis

Sterne-Lion Research Scholarship in History:

William Weis, for "Politics and Theology through the Lens of Early Medieval Manuscripts in Vienna"

Joseph Gelinas Drouillard & Elizabeth Lesperance Annual History Award:

Adeline Walsh

F. Richard Place Endowed Memorial Award:

Kenneth Alyass, "From Crisis to Statehood: The Great Panic of 1837 and Competing Notions of Economic Development in Michigan"

Place Gateway Award:

Kyle Donahue, "The Napoleonic Enigma"; Rob Macaulay, "The Descent of Darwin"; and Steven Stoddard, "Darwin's Sexual Revolution: An Analysis of the Reaction to Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man by Women"

Rolf and Jennie Johannesen

Endowed Memorial Award:

Emmeline Birchall, for "The Political Power of the Oracle of Delphi"

Dr. Gerald R. Dreslinski Award:

Jackson Hoover, for "'To Stand between the Living and the Dead': Tracing Lewis Cass's Changing Views on Indian Policy, 1813 to 1830"

Faculty Undergraduate History Award:

Michaela Lewalski, for "Rhetoric and Reaction: Russia's Second Chechen War and its Place in the United States-Led Global War on Terror"

Thomas Frank Mayer-Oakes Annual Memorial Scholarship:

Undergraduates: Molly Minamyer and Catherine Gracik

Graduate: Sean O'Brien

Phi Alpha Theta Inductees:

Ken Alyass, Aya Beydoun, Emmeline Birchall, Brian Bouchard, Thomas Hayes, Jackson Hoover, Matthew Mutnick, Lydia Virzi, Leah Warren

Graduate Student Award Recipients, 2019

For the complete listing, including photos and project titles, visit our website or Facebook page

Merit Awards

Dr. Gerald Dreslinski Award
Christine Cook

Rolf and Jennie Johannesen
Endowed Memorial Award:
Scott Cichowlas

Joe L Norris Endowed Award:
Michael Wyner

Richard D. Miles Endowed Award:
Nathaniel Arndts
Katie Parks

Research Awards

Thomas Frank Mayer-Oakes Annual
Memorial Scholarship:
Sean O'Brien

Dr. Gerald Dreslinski Research
Award:
Erik Noren

Michael D. Patterson Memorial
Award:
Rochelle Danquah

Charles F. Otis and Dr. Jeffrey L.
Reider Scholarship in the History of
Gender and Sexuality:
Jamie McQuaid

Kruman-Lion Endowed History
Graduate Student Award:
Christine Cook

Alfred H. Kelly Memorial Research
Award:
Lillian Wilson Szlaga

Service Awards

Antoine Durocher and Elizabeth
Chevalier Annual Scholarship:
Rachel Manela

Dr. Louis Jones HGSA Award:
Lillian Wilson Szlaga



News & Notes

The Department proudly recognizes our Students' Achievements

Undergraduate Students

Kenneth Alyass completed his Honors thesis and will be enrolling in **Harvard University's History PhD program**.

Aya Beydoun was accepted into the **2019 Trials Pre-Law Summer Program at Harvard University**, a 5-week program for pre-law students. Aya was chosen for the 20-student cohort from a pool of over 2000 applicants. She was also named a **2019 Gilder-Lehrman History Scholar**.

Dwjuan Frazier will be enrolling in the **University of Minnesota's History PhD program**.

Kyra Goeller completed her Honors thesis.

Kaitie Martinelli received an **Honorable Mention prize** for her presentation at the **Ohio Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference at Baldwin Wallace University**.

Her presentation on a Jewish rescuer in Fascist Italy stemmed from her **2018 Undergraduate Research Opportunity Project/Sterne-Lion-funded research**.

Addie Walsh presented at the **National Conference for Undergraduate Research**, which originated from her **2018 UROP/Sterne-Lion-funded research** on living history museums in the US and UK.

Graduate Students

Public History student **Leah Buhagiar** was selected to be the sole intern in the Collections Department at the Baseball Hall of Fame for the summer.

Degree Completions

Ciera Casteel, MA

Samuel Hogsette, PhD

Laura Kennedy, MAPH

Miriam Mora, PhD

Joshua Morris, PhD

Sean O'Brien, MA

Alexandrea Penn, MA

Amanda Walter, PhD

Alumni News

Beth Fowler won an **Arts and Humanities Research Support grant** from the OVPR for her work on Rock n' Roll and Civil Rights and has secured a contract with **Lexington Books** for her book, *An 'Integrated Effort.'*

Louis Jones was inducted as a **Fellow of the Society of American Archivists**, the highest honor bestowed by the Society.

Joe Rector has accepted a **tenure track position as an Assistant Professor of American Urban History at the University of Houston**.

Amanda Walter published "Rights and Respect: The Working Women's Movement's Influence on Clerical Unionization in the United States," *Journal of Labor and Society* (2019) and has accepted a one year position at **Towson State University**.

News & Notes

Faculty Recognition & Staff News

Eric Ash published "By Any Other Name: Early Modern Expertise and the Problem of Anachronism," *History and Technology* (2019).

Jorge China published "Legal and Extra-legal Measures of Labor Exploitation: Work, Workers and Socio-Racial Control in Spanish Colonial Puerto Rico, c. 1500-1850," *Mundo Do Trabalho e Dos Trabalhadores*.

Liette Gidlow has been awarded a 2019-2020 Mellon Schlesinger Fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University as part of the Long Nineteenth Century Project, for her research on "The Nineteenth Amendment and the Politics of Race, 1920-1970." She also won a 2019 President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Jennifer Hart has been elected the new North American President for the International Society for the Scholarship on Teaching and Learning in History, a recognition of her work in the field of pedagogy and assessment, in addition to her recent appointment to WSU's 2019-2020 Academy of Teachers and her being in the first cohort of the Academic Leadership Academy.

Hans Hummer won a 2019 Board of Governors' Faculty Recognition Award for his book *Visions of Kinship*.

Marc Kruman has won a grant from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation to

support the Center for the Study of Citizenship's new citizen health project.

Bill Lynch published, "The Domestication of Animals and the Roots of the Anthropocene," *Journal of the History of Biology* (2019) and "Between Kin Selection and Cultural Relativism: Cultural Evolution and the Origin of Inequality," *Perspectives on Science* (2019).

Andrew Port won a competitive 2019-2020 Graduate Research Assistant Award for his project, "Hearts of Darkness? German Reactions to Genocide after the Holocaust."

Aaron Retish was awarded an 2019 NEH Summer Stipend award for his project "Russia Behind Bars: A History of Prisoners of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, 1863-1932."

Marsha Richmond won an Arts & Humanities Research Support Grant, Arts and Humanities Research Support grant from the Office for the Vice President for Research for her project, "Sentinel of Science: Theo Colburn and the Discovery of Environmental Endocrine Disruptors."

Fran Shor published "The Long Life of US Institutionalized White Supremacist Terror" in *Critical Sociology* (2019) and "Lessons from the Poletown Auto Plant," *Riverwise* (2019).

Marilyn J. Vaughan, who has been our front office staff for five years, has retired from Wayne State. We thank her for her work and wish her the very best in this next phase of her life.



From the Editor

Kidada E. Williams, PhD

When I answered Marc Kruman's call for reviving the newsletter, I did so with a specific vision. I didn't want to duplicate the exhaustive lists of faculty accomplishments. These lists seemed more for the university administration's eyes than for keeping students, faculty, and alumni apprised of department news and activities. I also didn't believe we were spotlighting our faculty's innovative teaching and public engagement or our students' many achievements. Without a centralized space for showcasing our work, it was easy to miss (and let be missed by others) how talented our department is.

I envisioned a space where we could broadcast our accomplishments and insights to the larger world and where individual members of our history community could see that we are all part of something bigger. Thankfully, the department let me run with it. Students and faculty have been very generous with their time enabling us to share their stories with you.

Over time, we have committed to shining a bright light on our ambitious and accomplished students. I think this communicates our deep appreciation for their choice of History as a field of study, even in the face of skepticism from concerned kin and amid a university and political culture that is isolating students not pursuing careers in STEM.

Cultivating a space for Wayne State historians to shine combined with widespread enthusiasm for doing it this way makes editing the newsletter a pleasure. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Want more timely department news? Visit the website, <https://clas.wayne.edu/history/news>, where we announce all news and post longer profiles than you see here. You can also find us on the social medias at: HistoryatWayne.

"A world of opportunity opens up when you receive support like I have from the history department. I can really branch out as a student — access more resources, meet expert historians and seek answers to tougher questions."

— Aya Beydoun, undergraduate student

Giving?
Choose History.

