



## Selected Fall 2017 Faculty Achievements

- Dr. Lee Brice was chosen as the 2018 Gertrude Smith Professor by the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece.
- Dr. Peter Cole was awarded a summer 2018 teaching fellowship from the Organization of American Historians and released *Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW* (Pluto Press)
- Dr. Jennifer McNabb was named Chief Reader Designate for the College Board's Advanced Placement European History Program

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Volume II, Issue I

Fall 2017

## From the Chair's Desk

Dear Students, Alumni, Faculty, and Friends,

Another semester at WIU has come to a conclusion, and it is once again my great pleasure to present you with news from the Department of History. As you will see in the pages of this newsletter, the department had a fantastic fall. History's outstanding students continue to make an impact as student organization leaders and academic standouts, and I am delighted to announce that History Teacher Education major Mary Beth Lane is not only the recipient of History's departmental scholar designation but also this fall's Centennial Honors College Scholar. History's award-winning faculty continue to be valuable mentors and productive teacher-scholars, and the depart-

ment's many supporters continue to astound me with their generosity. Thank you for your support of undergraduate and graduate education in History at WIU and for making a positive impact on the lives of our students!

One of the most exciting things about being on a University campus is the opportunity to learn outside the classroom, from visiting scholars, from distinguished alumni, and from faculty experts. I think a University should be abuzz with intellectual energy, so I am particularly proud to say that History has been generating quite a buzz of its own this fall. Historians have valuable insights to offer in these interesting times, and my colleagues and I have worked throughout the semester to sponsor events that provided much-

needed historical context for issues making mainstream headlines; see page 6 for details.

Please accept my best wishes for a happy holiday season, and thank you for helping us make history!



**Dr. Jennifer McNabb,**  
Professor and Chair of  
the WIU Department

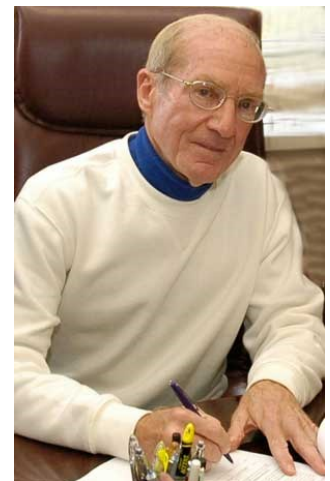
## Celebrating Gil Belles

Last May the Western Illinois University community lost one of its greatest supporters with the passing of Professor Emeritus Gil Belles. Gil retired from WIU's Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration, but he came to Western in 1968 to teach in the Department of History. As a History faculty member, he helped create a Black Studies Area, and he later chaired WIU's Department of African American Studies.

Gil's impact on his students was profound, as memories by this newsletter's featured alumnus Robert Weems (see page 3) and

donor Cliff Haka (see page 8) make clear. My own fondest memories of Gil, though, are not of him as a teacher or a mentor but as a student. Gil was an enthusiastic participant in my spring 2017 Learning Is ForEver course on the Reformation, which concluded just weeks before his death. Gil's great joy at learning was infectious and on obvious display in each class session. He was a marvelous student!

During the summer family and friends celebrated Gil's life and shared their reminiscences at the Gil Belles Memorial 5K Run/1 Mile Walk and an ice cream social. Gil continues to be missed,



but his legacy lives on in his students and in his many contributions to WIU and Macomb.

## Fall 2017 Department Scholar: Mary Beth Lane

The Department of History is proud to announce the selection of History Teacher Education major Mary Beth Lane as the Fall 2017 Department Scholar. Mary Beth, a recipient of the Larry Balsamo Scholarship, has had a stellar undergraduate career and has also been named this fall's Centennial Honors College Scholar. Mary Beth, will graduate Summa Cum Laude and receive multiple honors at this fall's Honors Convocation.

Mary Beth came to Western all the way from Maryville, TN. Of her journey toward the study of History at WIU Mary Beth says, "Throughout my K-12 education, the classes I always enjoyed the most were Social Science classes, like Government, Economics, and History to name a few, and from the beginning, I excelled at classes like these due to my appreciation of them. By the time I reached Western, it only made sense to choose a major in an area I was passionate about that afforded a variety of opportunities. What led to me selecting Teacher Education as my chosen career preparation was my fondness of teaching others. I especially enjoy seeing others when they grasp an idea or concept, and I knew seeing this daily in students would make the whole experience worthwhile."

While at Western, Mary Beth has been a member of the Associated Students of History, Golden Key International Honour Society, the Student Education Association, and the Centennial Honors College. As an Honors student, Mary Beth completed projects on topics ranging from Hitler Youth to American women during World War II. Her Honors thesis, awarded the department's Richard D. & Janet L. Boynton History Honors Thesis Award, is an examination of Hull House and its impact on the lives of the immigrants it aided.

Mary Beth speaks enthusiastically of her professors at WIU, including Dr. Ginny Boynton, who served as her mentor. She notes, "History faculty here at Western teach more than just History. They instill passion, teach responsibility, provide life lessons, incorporate humor, and so much more. The History professors here at Western truly care about their students, and this is evident through the lengths they go to in order to help each student above and beyond what their job description requires. Dr. Boynton has supported me since my first semester here at Western, and she has continued to do so until now, my last semester here at Western. Anytime I have needed anything during my time here, Dr. Boynton has been there to help me, and I cannot begin to express how thankful I am for her support."

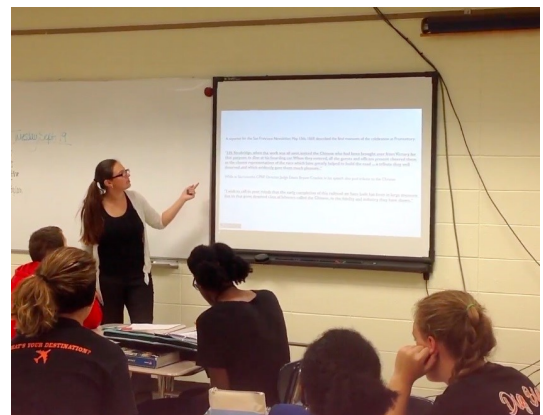
This fall Mary Beth completed her Student Teaching experience at Macomb Junior High, teaching 140 8th-graders over the course of the day. She reports, "My experience has been exciting, educational, and has reaffirmed that education is where I am meant to be." She says, "After I graduate, I plan to obtain a job teaching History in the secondary setting and educate as many students as I can. History helps explain the status of the way things are today, and to begin to fully comprehend today's world, people need to understand yesterday's world. It is essential to educate the current generation of students to avoid mistakes made in the past, and it is my job to help ensure that this generation is capable of making informed decisions with their knowledge of history."

Congratulations on your many achievements, Mary Beth, and best wishes for a successful future!



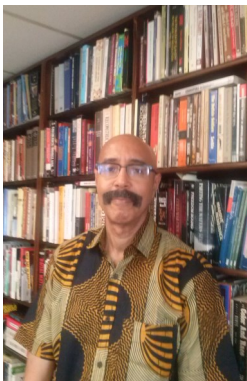
Fall 2017 History Department Scholar and Centennial Honors College Scholar Mary Beth Lane

***"I decided to major in History because of my passion for the subject and the many opportunities a degree in History provides."***



Mary Beth in the classroom with her students at Macomb Junior High during her Fall 2017 Student Teaching experience

## Featured History Alum: Robert Weems (in his own words)



**Dr. Robert Weems**, Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor of Business History at Wichita State University and WIU alumnus

### Question: What have you been doing since your graduation from WIU?

After graduating from Western in August, 1973, I attended Boston University, from September, 1973 to January, 1975, to pursue an M.A. in African American Studies. One of the highlights of this experience was working on an oral history project in Liberia, West African that explored the history of labor unions in that country. Later, I earned an M.A. in History from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in June 1982. At the time, I was also working in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Finally, from September, 1983 to December, 1987, I worked on my Ph.D. in History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My Ph.D. dissertation was on the history of a now-defunct African American-owned insurance company (the Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company).

For the past thirty years, after earning my Ph.D., I have taught full-time at a U.S. institution of higher learning. I started at the University of Iowa, where I worked from 1988-1990. The bulk of my career was spent at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where I was on the faculty from 1990-2011. Two of my personal highlights at Mizzou were winning the Chancellor's Research Award in 1998 and being promoted to Full Professor in 1999. Since August, 2011, I have been the Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor of Business History at Wichita State University.

During my career as a historian, I have emerged as one of the country's leading experts on African American business history. My publications include over four dozen journal articles, book chapters, en-

cyclopedia entries, and refereed online website essays. I have also published four books in the realm of African American business history: *Building The Black Metropolis: African American Entrepreneurship in Chicago*, co-edited with Jason P. Chambers, University of Illinois Press (2017); *Business in Black and White: American Presidents and Black Entrepreneurs in the Twentieth Century*, New York University Press (2009); *Desegregating the Dollar: African American Consumerism in the Twentieth Century*, New York University Press (1998); and *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985*, Indiana University Press (1996). Another book project I was involved with was the reference book *The African American Experience: An Historical and Bibliographical Guide*, co-edited with Arvarh E. Strickland, Greenwood Publishers (2001).

As a scholar, I've been concerned about working on projects that have "real world" implications. For instance, during my tenure at Wichita State University, my research on the history of local African American entrepreneurship has resulted in the establishment of a "Wichita Black Business Hall of Fame" (coordinated by the Wichita chapter of the Heartland Black Chamber of Commerce).

Last but not least, my post-WIU undergraduate experience includes three lectures given at Western. In April, 1998 I gave a presentation entitled "WIU and the Black Power Movement." This coincided with my receipt of the "WIU History Department Distinguished Alumni Award" for that year. In February, 2010, I gave a Black History Month presentation, coordinated by the WIU Library, entitled "The Quest For 'Bling' & Other Recent Trends In African American Consumerism." Finally, in October 2017, I gave a presentation, coordinated by the Centennial Honors College, entitled "Thurgood Marshall: A Life in the Law." October 2017 represented the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Marshall's historic ascension to the U.S. Supreme Court as the first African American justice.

### Q: In what ways did your time at WIU prepare you for your post-WIU career?

First and foremost, my undergraduate experience at WIU revealed to me that it was possible to earn a good living as a historian (doing something you really enjoy). As a

first generation college student, when I arrived at Western in August of 1969, I knew absolutely nothing about the nuances of university life. However, as time went along, I had the opportunity to observe how professors were regarded and how they conducted their professional lives. Consequently, by the time I graduated in August of 1973, I had set a personal goal of someday being a university professor myself.

### Q: Do you have any WIU History memories you'd like to share?

When I reflect upon my undergraduate days at Western, three History professors immediately come to mind: George Shadwick; Gil Belles; and Spencer Brown.

I took several classes from Professor Shadwick. One of the things that truly fascinated me about Professor Shadwick's lectures was that they always seemed to perfectly pick up where the previous one left off. It wasn't until I became a professor myself that I figured out how he did that. Among other things, his attention to detail had an apparent subliminal effect on me and my subsequent teaching.

Dr. Gil Belles taught African American history during my undergraduate days at Western. Besides taking the regular course in this area, my most memorable experience working with him was the independent study he did with me in African American history. Among other things, this was a prelude to an important dynamic of graduate study. Also, it demonstrated to me that, in order to be a historian, it takes more than having an "interest" in a particular field of study, it also takes developing a "work ethic" to fully explore that field of study.

Speaking of the importance of developing a "work ethic," that reality was drilled into me when I took Professor Spencer Brown's course in African history. Dr. Brown had a reputation of being a "no nonsense" professor that a lot of students avoided. Yet, because of my interest in the African American experience; I concluded that, to broaden my knowledge base, I had to take the African history course. In his class, I discovered that Dr. Brown's "no nonsense" reputation was not hyperbole. He was very serious about his work and if you weren't serious about your work, it would be a problem. In the end, I earned a "B" in African History. I was/am as proud of that grade as the "A" grade I earned in other courses.

## Associated Students of History Update (by Co-Presidents Rachel Eaton and Harrison Schulte)



ASH has been busy this year! We began by electing a new executive board that has worked well together and has been a huge improvement to our organization. This year we introduce Rachel Eaton and Harrison Schulte as co-presidents, Mia Blankenship as vice president, Elizabeth Swan as secretary, Miranda Taylor as treasurer, Adam Patchik as social media correspond-

ent, and Nick Ebelhack as activities director.

Some highlights from this fall include our field trip to Ft. Madison and Nauvoo where we learned about the local histories of the area. We were welcomed with a personal tour of the Ft. Madison museum and a tour of Nauvoo's historical museum where we discussed the significance of Joseph Smith and his followers, as well as local Native American culture and the French Icarian population.

Also successful this year was ASH's involvement with homecoming for the first time. We participated in "Paint the Town", and our beautiful design (see page 6) was co-designed by Rachel Eaton and Mia Blankenship. It was a hot day, but thanks to our sponsor, Chubby's, we managed to create a beautiful window that was displayed throughout the week.

This fall the Western Illinois Museum allowed us to volunteer and help them with organizing their future exhibits. Those who attended participated in a round table discussion about what the public is interested in for the upcoming year. This gave the organization a unique insight to how public history museums function and continue to serve the public.

The E-Board has already begun work on creating our schedule for the spring semester, including volunteering and field trip opportunities. ASH welcomes all students and friends of history to our meetings. We meet every other Wednesday at 4:30 in Morgan 304 for those who wish to attend. Thank you to those who continue to sponsor and support us. We look forward to what spring 2018 brings!



The 2017-2018 ASH Executive Board



Members of the Associated Students of History (with faculty co-advisor Dr. Ute Chamberlin) on their fall field trip

**Refer a student! Do you know a high school student considering the next step of his or her education? Encourage him or her to Think Purple! Email [JL-Mcnabb@wiu.edu](mailto:JL-Mcnabb@wiu.edu) with names and contact information to help with History's recruitment efforts.**

## Phi Alpha Theta Update (by President Mikayla Kitchen)

The fall semester of 2017 was a successful one for the Omicron Omicron Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta at WIU. Phi Alpha Theta welcomed a new Executive Board, consisting of Mikayla Kitchen (President), Luke Josey (Vice President), and Allissa Knuffman (Secretary/Treasurer).

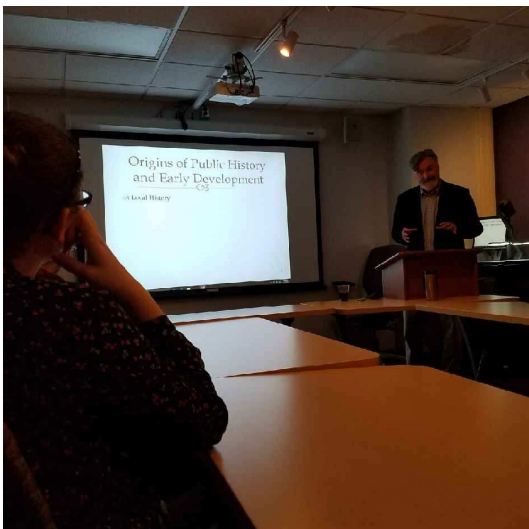
Phi Alpha Theta held a dual activity this semester, in which we combined both Fall Initiation and our Fall Event talk. Phi Alpha Theta is proud to announce the induction of three new members: Allissa Knuffman, Harrison Schulte, and Spencer Williams. Congratulations to them on their hard

work and achievements! In addition to the Fall Initiation, Dr. Greg Hall also presented his lecture on Public History, which included details about his research interests and potential curriculum developments. We thank him for his time and informative presentation! In the spring, Phi Alpha Theta is planning an exciting venture: more details will follow!

If you are interested or have any questions about Phi Alpha Theta, please email Mikayla Kitchen ([ma-kitchen@wiu.edu](mailto:ma-kitchen@wiu.edu)) or Dr. Greg Hall ([g-hall@wiu.edu](mailto:g-hall@wiu.edu)) for additional infor-

mation.

Phi Alpha Theta would like to congratulate all history majors and minors on their graduation for Fall 2017! Good luck on your new, bright futures!



History professor and Phi Alpha Theta faculty advisor Greg Hall, speaking to new Phi Alpha Theta inductees and guests at the fall initiation event

## Fall 2017 List of History Graduates

Micah John Bowton (Quincy, IL)

Thurgood M. A. Brooks I (Rock Island, IL)

Valery Marie Clayton (Virginia, IL)

Casey Davis (Markham, IL)

Christian Robert Kennedy (Mount Sterling, IL)

Mary Beth Marie Lane (Maryville, TN)

Olivia Charlene Reuter (Elgin, IL)

Spencer T. Williams (Aurora, IL)

**CONGRATULATIONS,  
GRADUATES!**



# History on Campus



## Making Sense of Charlottesville: When Social Responsibility & Historical Memory Collide

Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2017 • 4 p.m.  
University Union Sandburg Theatre

A Panel Discussion featuring:  
Eric Brooks, WIU Centennial Honors College  
Jill Myers, School of Law Enforcement & Justice Administration  
Tim Roberts, Department of History

Sponsored by the Western Illinois University Department of History  
For more information, call (800) 298-1093 or visit [facebook.com/wiuhistory](http://facebook.com/wiuhistory)



## Understanding Syria Through Refugees' Stories

How have Syrians lived the revolution and war transforming their country? What can their personal stories teach us about both tragedy and resilience? **Wendy Pearlman**, the Martin and Patricia Koldyke Outstanding Teaching Associate Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University, will explore these questions in this presentation of her acclaimed new book, *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria* (HarperCollins 2017). Based on interviews that Pearlman conducted with more than 300 Syrian refugees across the Middle East and Europe since 2012, the book is a mosaic of first-hand stories and reflections that chronicle the Syrian conflict exclusively through the words of people who have lived it.

Thursday, Oct. 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Heritage Room, University Union

A reception and signing will follow the talk; books will be available for purchase.

### Acclaim for the book:

"[Wendy Pearlman] foregrounds the extraordinary heroism of ordinary Syrians, both those who are trapped in the country and those who struggle to make new lives. Her work is an essential addition to the emerging body of literary reportage from Syria in English." *New York Times Book Review*

"A powerful must-read book for anyone wanting to understand what's happening in Syria and why it matters." *Chicago Review of Books*



This event is sponsored by the Department of History with support from the U.S. Department of Education Title VI Grant - "Communities as Agents of Change," Peace Corps Programs, Department of Political Science, Expanding Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP), and University Theme Committee. For additional information, contact Peter Cole (P-Cole@wiu.edu)



## Reformation 500:



Martin Luther and the Origins of the Reformation

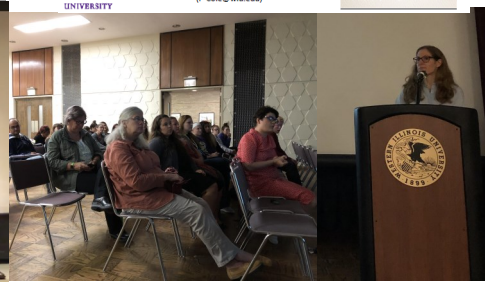


### Roundtable Discussion:

Tuesday, October 31

Time: 6:30 - 8:00 PM

University Union Sandburg Theatre



The Department of History hosted a number of successful campus programs in the fall, including a faculty roundtable on Charlottesville featuring Drs. Peter Cole and Tim Roberts (left), a guest presentation by acclaimed author Dr. Wendy Pearlman (Northwestern) on Syria, organized by Dr. Cole (center), and a discussion on Martin Luther and the 500th anniversary of the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses featuring Drs. Ute Chamberlin and Jennifer McNabb (right).



Above: Dr. Tim Roberts in presentation during Macomb Heritage Day, with history major Kevin Cobban working on an historical exhibit.

## PUBLIC HISTORY HISTORIANS WORKING WITH AND FOR THE PUBLIC

This talk, the first of the 2017-2018 History Faculty Colloquium series, will explain the origins and development of public history. It will introduce several areas of public history endeavors, and it will examine some of the challenges that public historians face.



WIU Department of History Faculty Colloquium

Presenter: Greg Hall

Dr. Hall's research interests involve labor, radicalism, and reform as well as environmental history. His most recent Faculty Summer Stipend was awarded to develop a new course in public history. His colloquium presentation will explore his work on this curriculum project.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27  
Morgan 453  
2:00-3:00  
All are welcome.  
<http://www.wiu.edu/colloquium>

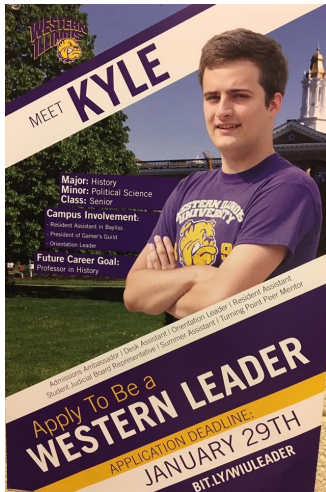
TO LOF IT OR TO LET IT GROW:  
**THE LIBERTY TREE**  
IN PROVINCIAL FRANCE, 1792-1800.  
BY PROFESSOR ED WOELL

A PAPER ABOUT THE FRENCH REVOLUTION'S POLITICAL CULTURE, AND WHAT IT CAN TEACH US ABOUT SAVING A TROUBLED REPUBLIC TODAY.

Tuesday, November 14  
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Morgan Hall 433

During Military Appreciation Week, Dr. Tim Roberts moderated a panel discussion featuring Vietnam War-era veterans who attended WIU (left). Drs. Greg Hall and Ed Woell presented talks in the Department of History Faculty Colloquium Series this fall (center and right).

## History Students in Action



Left: History major Kyle Sealey, the face of Western Leader recruitment; above, History scholarship students enjoying the fall Department Scholarship Luncheon and writing notes of appreciation to the donors of their named scholarships; right, History Pre-Law major Taylor Runquist (far right), joins Dean Michael Lorenzen and other winners of the 2017-2018 William H. and Eva Little Graham Libraries Student Assistant Scholarship



**Attention History alumni: Do you have exciting news to share about recent awards, scholarships, or employment success stories? Submit professional updates to [JL-Mcnabb@wiu.edu](mailto:JL-Mcnabb@wiu.edu) to be featured in the spring edition of the newsletter!**



Above, left: ASH Paints the Town during Homecoming Week; above, right, Drs. Ginny Boynton and Larry Balsamo with Mary Beth Lane at the 41st Annual WIU Scholarship Luncheon; above, center: Drs. Jennifer McNabb and Keith Boeckelman (Political Science) take students to visit John Marshall Law School with the generous support of the College of Arts and Sciences

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## Department of History

### Donor Profile: Cliff and Susan Haka (by Dr. Jen McNabb)



In 2002 WIU graduates Cliff (History, '71) and Susan (Mathematics, '71) Haka established the Susan and Clifford Haka History Student Opportunity Award to assist student majoring in history. During my years at Western, I've

written many letters of recommendation for History majors applying for the Haka Award, and I know what a tremendous difference it makes for its recipients. When I contacted him earlier in the semester about being the subject of this semester's donor profile, Cliff graciously agreed to respond to my questions, and I'm delighted to present his responses here.

Both of the Hakas have had great career success since their undergraduate programs at Western. Cliff earned a trio of master's degrees (an MA in History from Sangamon State, an MLS in Library Science from the University of Illinois, and an MBA from the University of Kansas) before his appointment as Director of Libraries at Michigan State University in 1997. Susan earned an MS in Accounting from the University of Illinois and a PhD in Business from the University of Kansas before her appointment as the Ernst & Young Professor of Accounting at Michigan State.

When I asked Cliff what motivates him to support History students at WIU, he responded, "Following a very rocky start at another university, I transferred to Western and found an enormously supportive environment that allowed me to regain my academic confidence, without which I would not have had the success and rewarding career that I have enjoyed. This success has been both professional and personal, as I met Susan at Western, and we have now been married for 47 years. Our support, both to the History and Mathematics Departments, is intended to assist students financially so that they can hopefully complete their studies as a foundation to pursuing their careers and dreams."

Cliff also shared his memories of WIU History faculty members from his time as a student: "Gilbert Belles, tragically taken from us earlier this year, was my faculty advisor and took a personal interest in my transition to Western, helping me every step along the way. I credit Dr. Belles, more than any other individual, for helping to get my academic life turned around. I also arrived at Western as a politically naive youth who had given little thought to the world around me. Professor George Hopkins changed this, challenging us to think critically about the historical context of contemporary events. In particular, his Asian History course, taught during the backdrop of the Vietnam War, forced me to reconsider every assumption I had embraced up to that time. I cannot thank him enough for 'waking me up.'"

Cliff continued, "While I could spend forever discussing what an appreciation of history has done to support my subsequent career, I must say that the most important course that I EVER experienced was Philosophical Logic as taught by Dr. Larry Hitterdale. This course, more than any course from any of my degrees, taught me how to THINK . . . how to evaluate and dissect arguments and reasoning to determine if the case being made was valid. This is a skill, however acquired, that will dutifully serve any student for the remainder of their life."

Cliff wished to share the following message for History students, alumni, faculty, and donors: "The primary lesson I took away from my undergraduate degree in History is that things are seldom exactly as they appear in the present, so take some time to reflect, and don't rashly react in the heat of the moment. In overseeing an academic research library with more than 200 employees and a budget exceeding 35 million, this is possibly the most important axiom that I utilize. Your History degree will help you in ways you might not currently envision, but it has unlimited potential. That is why Susan and I support the program, and I encourage others to do so as well. There is nothing more important than the education of our youth, and that is why we are proud to support Western Illinois University, to which we both owe so much."

On behalf of the department and the many students who have benefitted from the Haka History Student Opportunity Award over the years, I thank the Hakas for their generosity!