Public History

at Middle Tennessee State University

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Rebecca Conard to Retire

Rebecca Conard

As the spring 2016 semester winds down, MTSU will say goodbye to one of its most illustrious professors. For nearly two decades, Dr. Rebecca Conard has been a valued member of MTSU's History Department, where her work as director of the Public History program has earned national attention. Initially hired as an associate professor in 1998, Conard subsequently became director of MTSU's Public History program in 2004. In addition to helping launch the doctorate in Public History in 2005, she championed the digitalization of several James E. Walker Library collections. Furthermore, Conard has helped MTSU develop local and national organizational partnerships designed to promote Tennessee's rich and diverse past. This focus on new methodologies and strong partnerships has bolstered the History Department as a premier institution for the training of young professionals in the history field.

The exemplary care and attention that Conard has brought to MTSU is reflected throughout her career as a historian. She is a noted author of several books, including *Benjamin Shambugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History*, as well as articles for publications such as *The Public Historian* and *Environmental Review*. Conard also has served in several prominent positions as a professional historian, including president of the National Council on Public History and member of the George Wright Society board of directors. Speaking with radio host Gina Logue of *MTSU on the Record*, Conard notes that "Public History also means public service." For over 30 years, she has used this motto to inform her work—work that will continue to shape MTSU long into the future.

News from the Centers

Albert Gore Research Center

The Albert Gore Research Center made important acquisitions and spearheaded new projects in the spring of 2016.

January saw the acquisition of the video new archive of Nashville's WKRN-TV News2. The collection is massive, consisting of over five thousand commercial video cassettes preserving news broadcasts from 1979 to 1999. The entire collection is indexed by a forty thousand entry card file. Archives and libraries have long been well-equipped to preserve local historical newspapers, but preservation of local video news broadcasts are rare. National news broadcasts have been archived by the Vanderbilt Television News Archive since 1968, and the Internet Archive is developing local news database. Once processed, the Gore Center's WKRN-TV News2 collection will be the only publically available video news research collection documenting the history of Nashville and Middle Tennessee. The collection is richly documents local and regional politics,

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Incoming Students

Adam Glass
Transylvania University, B.A. in History

Dylan Hinton
Middle Tennessee State University, B.A. in History

Danielle Jackson
Washington State University, B.A. in Anthropology

Stephen Register
Belmont University, B.A. in Religion and the Arts (2008); Yale Divinity School, M.Div. (2011)

Elizabeth Rivera
Lipscomb University, B.A. in Psychology (2006); University of Southern Mississippi, M.L.I.S. (2009)

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Albert Gore Research Center (continued)

development issues, the entertainment industry, local sports, and Nashville political and development issues under the administrations of mayors Richard Fulton, Bill Boner, and Phil Bredesen. The WKRN-TV News2 will also allow Albert Gore Research Center graduate students hands-on experience working with the digitization and processing of a multimedia archive.

Albert Gore Research Center staff and students have been active making presentations and attending professional meetings. January saw Prof. Louis M. Kyriakoudes travel to The Netherlands and Germany to present his research on the history of cigarettes and the cigarette industry. In Amsterdam, he presented "Nicotine Addiction, Smoking, and Disease: Who is to Blame?" before the Netherlands Cancer Institute's 18th Annual Lung Cancer Symposium. He then traveled to Berlin, where he presented "Cigarette-Delivered Nicotine and Addiction: Historical Perspectives; Contemporary Challenges" at the Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung (Human Development). In March, he presented a workshop on oral history podcasting at MTSU's Digital Humanities Seminar, "It's All about the Story: Oral History Podcasting with Limited Equipment and Open Source Software." Prof. Kyriakoudes also participated as a discussant on a panel at the Nation Council on Public History's annual meeting in Baltimore,"Europe at the Crossroads? Negotiating History and Memory at the 'Sharp Edge' of Policymaking."

Donna Baker, University Archivist, held workshops on electronic records management for MTSU's student chapter of the Society of American Archivists. Prof. Kent Syler, research associate at the Gore Center and member of the Political Science faculty, has appeared frequently on WSM-TV News as their principal political expert during this presidential primary election season. Kent's many appearances on the local news offered him the opportunity to share on air a prized artifact from the Gore Center's collection: the game ball from MTSU's defeat of the University of Kentucky in the 1982 NCAA basketball tournament. Two days after the display of the 1982 game ball, MTSU would reprise its role as David to basketball's Goliaths by defeating Michigan State in the first round of this year's NCAA basketball tournament. The Gore Center looks forward to adding this game ball to its collections in the near future.

The Gore Center's graduate assistants have been successful in winning fellowships and awards. Sarah Calise, Gore Center graduate research assistant, won a highly competitive and prestigious fellowship from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation allowing her to attend the 68th Annual Antiques Forum in Colonial Williamsburg. At the Forum, she learned advanced techniques in material culture analysis, focusing on how furniture styles, dining techniques, and textiles shaped the revolutionary identity of American society. Casey Gymrek won a travel award, which allowed her to attend this year's joint meeting of the Tennessee Association of Museums, Tennessee Preservation Trust, and the Tennessee Society of Archivists.

Current projects in the works include a symposium and traveling exhibit commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Gore Center, in partnership with the Center for Historic Preservation, is planning a one-day symposium for September 23, 2016 to commemorate the local impact of the National Historic Preservation Act. Passed in 1966, the act has played a significant role in providing local preservationists important tools to protect Tennessee's historical structures, sites, and landscapes. Public History graduate students Julie Anne Maresco and Katherine Hatfield have been working with Prof. Kyriakoudes in planning an exhibit to accompany the symposium, focusing on the role of MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation and other local leaders in spearheading the preservation movement in Tennessee.

Donna Baker and Sarah Calise have created an online archive of primary sources relating to the naming of MTSU's Forrest Hall for the use of the Forrest Hall task force, the committee charged with recommending a possible name change for the building. The archive can be accessed at http://digital.mtsu.edu/.

Finally, Gore Center students and staff said a fond farewell to Evan Spencer. For almost three years, the Gore Center has been graced by Evan's good cheer and exceptional skill as an archivist. We all wish him success in his new position with the South Carolina State Archives in Columbia.

Center for Historic Preservation

Some of the photos here are from the Moore Farm in Davidson County, which is the project Dr. West's "Seminar in Historic Preservation" class is working on.

Annabeth Hayes (l), with Kate Hatfield (r) assisting, inventory items in the kitchen at the Moore Farm.

Haley Seger inventories items in the dining room.

Graham Henderson completing a condition assessment of the Moore house.

Jenny Andrews (MA) and Kelsey Lamkin (Undergrad) uncover a gravestone at the Austin Cemetery in Davidson County (Moore Farm located in Davidson County.)

Michael Fletcher (PhD candidate) and Pat Cummins (Native American History Association) explore the old wharf site at Old Jefferson, part of the Trail of Tears.)

Spring 2016 CHP GRAs.

Alumni Spotlight ~ Norman Burns II

Norman Burns II received both a B.A. and M.A. in history from MTSU. After receiving his M.A., Burns went on to serve as executive director of four Tennessee museums, including the Belle Meade Plantation and Sam Davis Historical Site and Museum. Burns spent a further nine years as the executive director of the Maymont Foundation, where he led the Foundation's executive staff and played a crucial role in acquiring 21 million dollars of a 35 million dollar capital program designed to cultivate future improvements for Maymont. This past January, Burns was appointed the new president and CEO of Conner Prairie Interactive History Park in Fishers, Indiana. Attracting over 360,000 tourists annually, Conner Prairie's reputation as Indiana's first Smithsonian Institute affiliate has marked it as a site of innovation and remarkable historical research. Burns is quick to note that his ability to thrive in professional organizations is due to the skills that he learned as a history major at MTSU. Burns states that the research and analytical skills he acquired as a student have proven to be "just as important in the business environment as in the academic." Burns remains deeply proud of the part that MTSU has played in shaping the course that his career has taken in the past 28 years as a working professional. Says Burns, "MTSU afforded me this learning experience that I have adapted to the competitive world of nonprofit management."

Graduating Ph.D. Students

Elizabeth Catte

Dissertation: *No Deed but Memory: The Public History of American Race Riots*
(Chair: Dr. Holloway)

Thomas Flagel

Dissertation: *The Fortress War: Effect of Union Fortifications in the Western Theater of the American Civil War*
(Chair: Dr. West)

Joshua Howard

Dissertation: *Talking Back with Post-it Notes: Informal Data Collection and Museum Visitors*
(Chair: Dr. Conard)

Ph.D. Residency
Torren L. Gaston

This year Torren Gaston is serving a residency at Spelman College in Atlanta. Under the guidance of Spelman College archivist Holly Smith, Gaston will work as project manager for the Spelman College archives located in the Women's Research and Resource Center. As project manager, Gaston will help build a comprehensive audit of the repository's internal collection. In the course of his residency, Gaston will also help design a plan for digitizing Spelman's paper and photograph collection, as well as contribute to the creation of a preservation assessment grant to seek outside aid in evaluating the archives to streamline efficiency. In addition, Gaston's residency will provide research sources for his dissertation, "The Quiet Storm: The Combative Tactics of the NAACP Against Unfair Housing Laws and Practices, a Comparative Study of the Dynamic Changes in Urban and Rural Landscapes 1910–1980."

Student Presentations, Awards, Papers, etc.

Sarah Calise:

- Scholarship to attend the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's 68th Annual Antiques Forum, February 19–24
- Along with MTSU student Josh Howard, part of the "Public History and the Potential of Sports History Museums" working group held at NCPH in Baltimore during March

Elizabeth Catte:

- Published article, "Manxness': The Uses of Heritage on the Isle of Man," in *Public History Review,* Vol. 22 (2015): 8-22.
- Facilitator for the NCPH working group, "Interpreting the History of Race Riots in the Age of #BlackLivesMatter," along with Aleia Brown of MTSU's Ph.D. program
- Along with Josh Howard, is presenting the paper, "A Secret Fascination: Professional Wrestling, Gender Non-Conformity, and Masculinity," at the North American Society for Sport History 2016 Conference

Charlie B. Dahan:

- Presenting a paper on his research concerning Gennett Records, "The Gennetts on Record," at the 50th annual Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) conference in Bloomington, Indiana, in May
- Found rare Gennett family record pressings made from Richmond, Indiana, recording studio, and had them digitized by Martin Fisher of the Center for Popular Music
- Working on book, Gennett Records and Starr Piano, for Arcadia Press' Images of America series that is due to coincide with both Indiana's 200th anniversary and Gennett Records' 100th anniversary later this year

Casey Gymrek:

- Attending the Tennessee Association of Museums Conference, "Three-Part Harmony: Interpretation, Preservation, Inspiration," held in Nashville in March, as one of three scholarship winners chosen from the state

Noel Harris:

- Along with Tiffany Moman, Graham Henderson, and Dr. Katie Sikes, presented at the Society of Historical Archeology Conference in Washington D.C., in January about their excavation work at Clover Bottom Plantation
- Along with Ginna Foster Cannon and Jean Myers, presented at the National Council for Public History in Baltimore in March on transitional spaces (such as dormitories, hotels, and log dwellings) in history
- Panel discussion at the American Alliance of Museums conference in Baltimore in May, entitled "75 Ideas in 75 Minutes: Boosting Engagement at Small Museums" and also featuring museum professional Linda Norris, Dulce Kersting of Latah County Historical Society, Jaclyn Wood from Tuckerton Seaport and Baymen's Museum, and Jody Crago from Dupage County Historical Museum

Josh Howard:

- Along with Elizabeth Catte, is presenting the paper, "A Secret Fascination: Professional Wrestling, Gender Non-Conformity, and Masculinity," at the North American Society for Sport History 2016 Conference
- Chairing the NCPH working group, "Public History and the Potential of Sports History Museums," of which MTSU student, Sarah Calise, is also a participant

Sherry Teal:

- Awarded the Dorothy Williams Scholarship by the Colonial Dames in January
- Currently working on a project concerning a Cherokee chief, Dragging Canoe, for the Center for Historic Preservation
- Exhibit designer for Dr. Brenden Martin's Old Stone Fort project

Cassie Sade Turnipseed:

- Panelist, "Strategies for a New Public History of Agriculture and Rural Life," Baltimore, in March
- Keynote presenter, Ida B. Wells presentation, Columbus-Lowndes Public Library, Columbus, Mississippi, in February
- Keynote presenter, "The Year of Cotton," at the University of South Carolina in February
- Keynote presenter at Auburn University–Montgomery Conference in Montgomery, Alabama (invited)
- Panelist at the MLK Jr. Commemoration—Empowerment of the Minds/Discussing Civil Rights in America, Mississippi Valley State University, Itta Bena, Mississippi, in January
- Presenter: An Evening of Community Leaders, Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Inverness, Mississippi, in November 2015
- Keynote presenter, "Cotton: The Fabric of Complexity," at Drew University in New Jersey and at the United Nations in New York in November 2015
- Plenary session presenter, 4th annual Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium, MVSU, Itta Bena, November 2015
- Presenter, Humanities Council Symposium, Appalachia University in Charlotte, North Carolina, October 2015
- Moderator and presenter: California Black Chamber of Commerce 20th Annual Ron Brown Symposium-Williams Leadership Forum, Sacramento, California, September 2015
- Presenter, B.B. King Day, "Blues People and the Food They Eat," MVSU, Itta Bena, September 2015