



Johannes Moreelse *Clio-Muse of History*

Indiana University of Pennsylvania History Department

Alumni Newsletter

2022

Greetings from the History Department!

This academic year was again unusual, as we transitioned back to face-to-face teaching. This has been a welcome return to nearly normal for our faculty and some of the older students, and yet another change for our younger students. We hope that next year things will be entirely back to normal, and things like students studying abroad, museum and research trips and bringing in speakers and events will again become regular occurrences.

Even with this year's unusual situation, our students and faculty have managed to achieve amazing things. Dr. Wang Xi was named a Distinguished University Professor for research. Dr. Moore is back in Cyprus this summer, our Public History students are working with the Indiana County Historical Society under the direction of Dr. Mazak-Kahne and Dr. Botelho has been doing amazing work with the Big Ideas students. You can read about all of these in this newsletter, along with profiles of alumni and alumni news. As always, we are very pleased that our existing scholarships (the Eric Slebodnik Memorial Scholarship, the John F. Kadlubowski Memorial Scholarship, the Frank and Jean Yosie Scholarship, the Charles Cashdollar Scholarship, and the Irwin Marcus Go and Do Fund) provide invaluable financial assistance to our deserving majors – particularly during these very trying times. We are always looking for assistance in growing these funds and appreciate your support.

Finally, we hope that you will keep us updated on how things are going for you. We certainly appreciate any insight you can provide our current students about the professional world that awaits them after graduation, and any suggestions for us on how we can better prepare them. Feel free to send me an email or give me a telephone call. We look forward to hearing from you.

R. Scott Moore, Department Chair

Dr. Wang Xi has been recognized as a Distinguished University Professor

Dr. Wang has been the department's specialist on African-American history and the history of the U.S. constitution since his arrival at IUP in 1994. He has established a reputation as a leading scholar of American history both in the U.S. and in China, as a key figure in scholarly communication between the two countries, as a public intellectual and as a colleague and teacher.

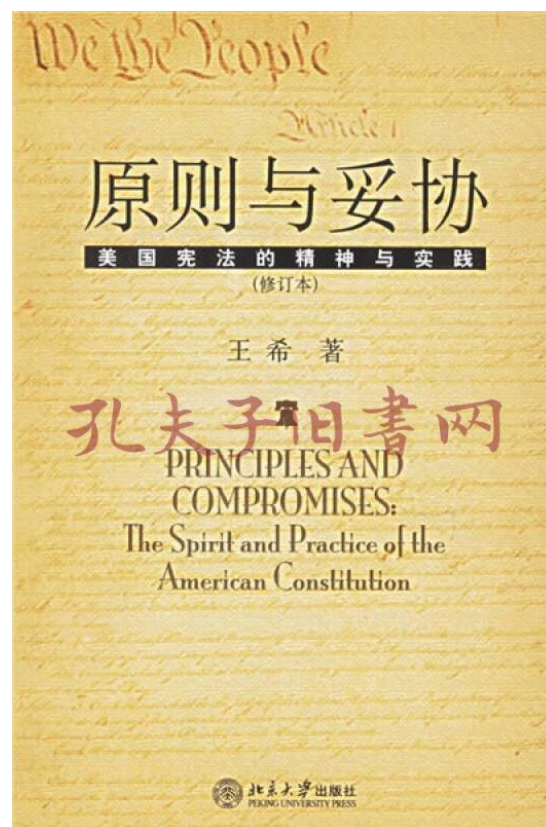
His many research works include *Trial of Democracy: Northern Republicans and Black Suffrage, 1860–1910*, first published in 1997, and *Principles and Compromises: The Spirit and Practice of the American Constitution*, the standard work in Chinese on the American constitutional system, now on its sixth printing. He is currently working on an expanded study (in Chinese) based on *Trial of Democracy*. He describes this as "A new study on the history of Black suffrage, with the same intellectual rigor but a broader coverage, is needed for Chinese readers to truly understand and appreciate the spirit, perseverance, faith, and courage with which African Americans had evolved from enslaved persons to enfranchised citizens."

Besides his own writings, Dr. Wang has been a key figure in scholarly communication between the two countries. He has served as a Changjiang scholar at Peking University, played a leading role in a 6-year scholarly exchange program between China and the U.S. sponsored by the Organization of American Historians and funded by the Ford Foundation. He established a sister school partnership between IUP and Hebei University (HBU), China, in 2014, which has created opportunities for nearly 30 HBU faculty members to come to IUP to study and for eight IUP historians to go to Baoding, China, to attend an international conference. The proceedings of the conference, published under the title "Trans-Pacific Conversions: Doing History in a Global Age," contains 14 articles from IUP historians. He has served on countless dissertation committees, has translated a number of books into Chinese including Eric Foner's *The Story of American Freedom* (2002) and served as editor of *The Chinese Historical Review*.

Dr. Wang is best known to our students as a teacher and mentor. As one of them put it...

"Dr. Wang Xi's knowledge and guidance have made me a better researcher and writer. His classes challenged me to the point that I longed for graduation, but he kept me motivated to face the fiery trial of his classwork so that I would become a better scholar of history. Lastly, Dr. Wang Xi believes that all of his students are capable of great things, and subsequently, he will put his students first before anything else."

Along with his career as an academic, Dr. Wang is also a public intellectual (in the American usage) or a *zhishifenzi* (in Chinese usage), a person whose ideas and writings go beyond the academy into the broader society. His work has been discussed in the *New York Times*, and he has published in *Dushu* and *Zhishifenzi*, among other leading Chinese thought journals. As his students and colleagues know, there is no topic that Wang Xi is not interested in, and no topic on which his insights are not enlightening.



Dr. Lynn Botelho created and is director of IUP's Big Ideas Program.

Big Ideas: Transformative Culture and the Professions is a Teagle Foundation – National Endowment for the Humanities funded certificate (over \$200,000) designed for IUP's pre-professional students, but open to all. This 16-credit certificate employs a 2-semester Transformative Text/Gateway series (ARHU 122 & 123) that is designed for first-year students and organized around 'Big Ideas' and transformative texts to address questions such as 'what is human?' Big Ideas has taken a curiosity- and creativity-first approach. Their creative mid-term, for example, is a collaborative project that can be anything but a paper or a PowerPoint. Instead, students have offered everything from poetry to fine art, from videos to chapbooks, and even a full meal! Big Ideas students visit the IUP art museum and attend theatrical and music performances as a group and in support of curiosity-based education. In the same vein, students are not required to have college writing, but instead they work closely with and are supported by the Writing Center.

Another feature of ARHU 122 and 123 are small modules of 'Adulthood 101' and research methods. These are designed to introduce and model to students the skills of university and adult life, such as how to email your professor or boss, how to use a planning calendar, and how to read and build graphs. Big Ideas seeks to reinforce the skills and habits of success in both university and life. Finally, ARHU 122 and 123 students earn Liberal Studies Humanities Literature and Global and Multicultural Awareness credits in an interwoven approach to literature, diversity, and humanistic approaches to the world.

The student response has been inspiring. Graduating senior, Jordan Buchinach, wrote: "Big ideas taught me how to think in ways that I never knew I wanted or could". Jordan is not alone in his response; student evaluations reinforce the effectiveness of exploring Big Ideas, the value of Transformative Texts, and an approach that is deeply personal. In fact, student demand for these courses has been impressive. Starting with one offering of ARHU 122 in the Fall 2021, we are on trend to offer five sections in Fall 2022.



After a two-year break, Dr. Moore has resumed his work on Cyprus. You can read about his research at [Ancient History Ramblings](#)

After two years of COVID halting my archaeological work on Cyprus, I will finally get the opportunity this summer to resume my research. My primary research focus is on trade and commerce in the Late Roman Period (300-700 AD) in the eastern Mediterranean.

As a result, my work is conducted a bit differently from my colleagues in the History Department, who spend time at archives examining a wide range of documents to gather the evidence they need for their research. The limited number of texts from the period I study means that if I am interested in learning more about trade and commerce in this era, I need to make use of a different type of evidence, ceramics. There are millions of pieces of broken ceramics, known as sherds, scattered throughout the Mediterranean. My research involves analyzing the sherds collected systematically during an archaeological project in order to determine where and when they were manufactured. This means that my summers are spent in hot, dusty storerooms going through box after box of sherds – not, as my colleagues often remark, sitting on a Mediterranean beach enjoying the view. We save that for the evening when we are eating dinner.

My primary plans for this summer are focused analyzing ceramics for four different archaeological projects on Cyprus. While this research is for projects in their final phases of publishing their results, I am excited that I am also going to be meeting with colleagues to discuss possible plans for two new projects, including one that would be a multi-year project that would involve both excavation and field survey. If this project can be established, this would allow me the opportunity to bring interested IUP students with me to Cyprus to participate in summer fieldwork.



Dr. Mazak-Kahne's Spring 2022 HIST 421 (Archival Studies) course was fortunate enough to partner up once again with the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County.

The HGSIC loaned the History Department a raw accession, predominately of correspondence, which documented the lives and relationship of mother and daughter Virginia and Jean Smith, of Indiana County.

Over the course of the term, the fourteen students in the course processed this collection, which became known as the Virginia Smith Collection. They organized hundreds of letters, and other types of materials into multiple series, and created individual scope and content notes which were then integrated by the instructor into a single finding aid. Students researched in the HGSIC's genealogical library documents, as well as drew on IUP library databases to corroborate what they discovered through their engagement of the collection.

The public history program has partnered with the HGSIC since 2009, and it has been a relationship quite beneficial to both parties. The HGSIC benefits from the supervised person power to gain ground with their collection backlog, and our students gain practical skills applied in a professional setting. We're very fortunate to have such a partnership.



Students Brayden Gwilliam and Adam Bleggi-Prugh assist with the final arrangement of the collection. Photo courtesy of Dr. Erin Conlin.

Alumni Interview

Kristen Walsh earned an M.A. from Johns Hopkins. She has worked for various charities and public history organizations and is now a Development Director for the American Heart Association.



Kristen Walsh '09 Development Director, American Heart Association.

What do you do for a living?

I'm the Development Director for the Lehigh Valley Berks American Heart Association. I build relationships with area businesses, organizations, and individuals to connect the business or donor to a custom funding opportunity that they will find rewarding. Three times a year, we highlight these fundraising successes at key events: Heart Ball, Go Red for Women Luncheon, and Heart Walk. In nearly every meeting I have, I meet someone who's life has been impacted by cardiovascular disease or stroke and I'm reminded why the work I do is so important. Knowing my work has such a profound impact on my community is the best possible compensation.

How did you get from IUP to the career you have now?

I started my career in the museum field (an area I still care deeply about). I was hired at Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites after graduation and managed the Moravian Museum of Bethlehem for several years. I also completed a master's in museum studies at Johns Hopkins. I was then hired by Feed the Children to get their volunteer programs up and running at their new Northeast US Distribution Center. I was then Director of Visitor Services and Community Outreach at Historic Bethlehem for almost 2 years before my supervisor approached me to consider taking on the newly created Director of Development role. Development was a relatively foreign field to me, but I found that I indeed had the qualities necessary to succeed – strategic relationship building, networking, ability to identify alignments in values, customer relations, etc. I found the ideal opportunity at the AHA this past summer and jumped on it.

Looking back, what do you find most rewarding about your time at IUP?

The opportunity to study abroad. It has completely expanded my world view and afforded me the opportunity to experience something that few have. It was utterly enjoyable, I made life-long friends around the world, and in the process, I learned so much and became a stronger person for it.

How has your background in history helped you?

Most people are outright shocked to find I was a history major, but my experiences in the History Department at IUP have really helped to prepare me in various ways. History isn't about memorizing dates or the names of leaders and the outcome of wars. It's about understanding why something happened so we can either encourage or discourage it from happening again. How can we learn from history to influence our future? I approach every new donor as a learning opportunity, and I read between the lines to know what they aren't telling me that is important for me to know.

I research their backgrounds and capacity to give before I meet them. I evaluate what they told me in our meeting to identify areas of alignment to propose an ideal funding opportunity. I present these details to them and make "the ask". If you're a history major now, you know this is exactly what you need to do with every reading you receive. I learned these skills from my history professors and I'm eternally grateful for their guidance and insight in helping me to piece together details to create an informed picture of the whole.

What are the most important skills (hard or soft) that you use in your job?

As a freshman, we had to take Intro to History. It was actually more of an intensive course on HOW to be a history major. I learned important skills in that course, and the biggest skill I came away from IUP with was the ability to analyze based on my observations, my understanding of the subject material, the time it was written and what was known at that time, and my own research. This analysis skill is one I use constantly in my day-to-day work. I have to be able to decipher what a donor wants most out of their philanthropic giving based on what they're telling me and, most importantly, what they're not telling me. If I don't analyze correctly, I could risk the relationship and the potential funding.

Have you read any good books lately?

I'm a sucker for everything Bill Bryson writes. I can highly recommend *At Home: A Short History of Private Life* to every single history major 😊

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn if you are interested in museums or fundraising. I'm very happy to chat with any student wishing to advance their careers in either field and do what I can to help you.

Alumni Interview

John Lepley works in the Department of Education and Membership Development of the United Steelworkers (USW).

What do you do?

My official title is “technician” but I describe myself as a “facilitator.” The USW is an international union that represents workers in Canada and the U.S. in every sector of the economy. USW members make paper, mine iron ore and make steel; they deliver health care and make aircraft carriers, among other things. We teach USW members how to bargain contracts, represent their coworkers as stewards, and perform their roles as local union officers. We also teach labor history and even teach members how to educate in their local unions.

What do you find most rewarding or challenging about your career?

No educational session is the same. It’s a balancing act to achieve my learning objectives. I want to get the content across, but lecture is not an effective method when you also want engage members in discussion and build solidarity in the classroom. One of my goals in every class is that members not only walk away feeling that they’ve learned a lot, but also that they’ve exchanged information with other workers and contributed to a good discussion. Our teaching philosophy is inspired by the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Friere who wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. We also take inspiration from the Highlander Center in Tennessee and the Brookwood Labor College in New York, which were important for the labor and civil rights movements ([Highlander is still doing good work](#)).

How did you get from IUP to the career you have now?

It was a circuitous path. After completing my undergraduate degree in 2004, I entered the MA Program in Industrial and Labor Relations at IUP. I didn’t have a clear idea of what I wanted to do, but classes with Dr. Ricketts and Dr. Marcus made me curious about the world of work and the mechanics of labor relations. I’m from a blue-collar family and I started asking questions about why things were the way they were.

After completing my coursework for that program, I did a six-month internship with the National Labor Relations Board in Denver, CO. It was an eye-opening experience, and I learned a lot. I resumed my history education in the MA Program in labor and reform movement history at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, IN (the home of Eugene V. Debs). My dream was to earn a PhD in history and become a professor, but the 2007-2008 financial crisis really affected me, politically and financially. I was broke, angry, and wanted to change things. I went into a union organizing position that took me to New England and I did stints with unions in Alaska and Colorado before landing with the USW in 2010.



John Lepley B.A. '04
Labor Educator, United Steelworkers

Looking back, what do you find most rewarding about your time at IUP?

I really came to love learning. When I first went to college, it was because I didn’t know what else to do with myself. High school bored me. My time at IUP transformed how I felt about learning. I loved the readings, the lectures, and the discussions. In four years as an undergrad I only ever missed three classes.

How has your background in history helped you in your career or life?

The USW has a deep institutional history. Its “family tree” goes as far back to the late 1800s with the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the Western Federation of Miners, and numerous other industrial unions that formed in the 1930s. Knowing this has really helped with teaching our history. In more practical terms, Dr. Botelho’s lesson on how to “read” a book has really helped me analyze documents: read the table of contents, scrutinize the footnotes, pay attention to sources that are cited, etc. These skills in close reading are really applicable to reading arbitration, court decisions, collective bargaining agreements, and bylaws.

My biggest regret is not pursuing a second language beyond the required credits. I’ve lived in Connecticut, Colorado, Indiana, Alaska, and Pennsylvania. Spanish is spoken in all of those states and I’m amazed at people who can speak second languages.

Read any good books lately?

We’re Still Here by Jennifer Silva is a devastating look at why poor and working-class people in northeastern Pennsylvania do not participate in the political process. What makes it so effective is that its source basis are interviews that Silva conducted in 2016. It takes a lot of clichés about the “white working class” and deconstructs them.

Alumni Interview

William J. Shepherd earned both his BA and his MA at IUP. He is currently an archivist, librarian and a free-lance historical writer.

What do I do? I am the University Archivist and Head of Special Collections at The Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, D.C. This means that I am in charge of the cultural treasures of my institution, including archives, rare books, manuscripts, and the museum. A good overview is available in my short blog post at

<https://www.lib.cua.edu/wordpress/newsevents/13300/>

As part of this job I publish many articles and book reviews. I also do this work on a free-lance basis for several history related magazine and web sites.

What do I find most rewarding or challenging about my career?

The answer is bringing order out of chaos, by this I mean taking a collection of jumbled documents and artifacts and organizing them with a collection guide (finding aid or inventory) as well as doing preservation work in addition to providing wider access via digitization whenever possible

How did I get from IUP to CUA?

I studied History at IUP, both undergraduate and graduate and moved to the DC area to have a better chance at a history related job. I interned at the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis for a year and then got an entry level archivist job at CUA, where I have been ever since, working my way up to the top.

What was most rewarding about my time at IUP?

I loved my time at IUP where I learned from a great assemblage of History professors. Most of them were great sources of knowledge and generally nice people who made time for me when needed. Another rewarding thing was that I met my late wife, Marie, in an IUP history class: Dale Landon's Medieval Europe I in the fall of 1985. Marie's research paper was about the family life of serfs on a medieval manor and mine was about killing Vikings in 9th century England, which sums up our respective personalities quite well!!

What is my advice to IUP History students?

My best advice to be a tireless seeker of knowledge, and to always be excited to add in new bits of information. The more you learn about the past and present the more you are prepared for the future and whatever opportunities and challenges it may bring. You will also never lack for entertainment as history is never tapped out for stories to fit all situations. I also advise getting as much hands-on experience as you can. Work or volunteer for any library, museum, or archives that you can. As an employer, experience is one of the things I look most closely at when trying to select the best candidates for any job



**William J. Shepherd B.A. '84, M.A. '86
University Archivist and Head of Special
Collections, The Catholic University of America**

How has my background helped me in career and life?

History is my life, and has been since I was a child. My parents separated and later divorced when I was young. My mother and I lived with her parents and they constantly regaled me with stories and memories of the Depression and World War II. I became fascinated with History and Churchill became a role model on dealing with conflict and challenges. I read a vast amount of history books even before going to IUP and, once there, was given more formal historical instruction by several excellent professors. Among my favorites were George Wiley, Edgar Moore, J. F. Kadlubowski, Wayne Smith, and Merle Rife. After leaving IUP and moving to the DC area my background in History was perfect for my chosen career as an archivist dealing with original documents, the evidence of history. On a more personal level, no matter how bad the national or international news can be, I believe that I have a great contextual knowledge base to say, this will get better, or this is current crisis in not especially new.

Have I read any good books recently?

That is a loaded question for me. I am a great reader of historical fiction, including the works of Bernard Cornwell, Arthur Conan Doyle, Ian Fleming, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson. Professionally, I have over 125 published book reviews, usually churning out ten or more a year, in academic journals such as *The Historian* and *Pennsylvania History*, popular magazines such as *Military History* and *Civil War Times*, and the Hillside College web site on Churchill. I also have a great gig for *Military History* magazine where I read about and visit battle sites, for which I then contribute to their 'Hallowed Ground' series.

Alumni Interview

Andrew Palmer works at Kent State University as an Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator and is currently completing his Ph.D.

What do you do?

I am the Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator for Kent State University's College of Education, Health and Human Services. Mainly, I assist in the assessment, accreditation, state authorization, and compliance functions of the College. What does that jumble of words mean? Good question! To do all the things we need to do (academically) as a university, we often need approval or recognition from third-party organizations. We need approval from the state to offer programs that lead to licensure (think teacher education or professional counseling); approval by various accrediting bodies to maintain access to federal and state funds (grants student financial aid, etc), demonstrate alignment to national standards, and show we are engaging in continuous self-reflection; and we need to ensure we are compliant with relevant state and federal laws and policies.

My job is to stand in the middle of that chaos and act as mediator. Inevitably when we're working to demonstrate compliance or show that our students are learning, sometimes we discover we *aren't* fully in compliance or students aren't learning as much as we had hoped. When this is the case, I get to 'rally the troops' and work with others in the college to develop a fix. Sometimes this is a problem of a dysfunctional process, sometimes it's bad data, sometimes we have a software bug, sometimes the state wasn't clear on what they wanted, and sometimes it's just a new employee that simply didn't know they were supposed to do something. I love getting to be a part of fixing things that could help us be better as a college.

How did you get from IUP to the career you have now?

Since leaving IUP, I've worked at six institutions of higher education through various full-time positions and professional internships. Additionally, in 2019, I completed two programs of study at Kent State 1) a Master of Education in Higher Education, and 2) a Graduate Certificate in Institutional Research and Assessment. After finishing those programs, I worked in DC at American University in general education curriculum development. I'm now back at Kent State to work and will hopefully soon be beginning a PhD program in Higher Education Administration with a focus in Knowledge Management.



Andrew Palmer B.A. '16
Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator
Kent State University

Looking back, what do you find most rewarding about your time at IUP?

I really enjoyed how close everyone in the department was. It was great making connections with the other students and the faculty (especially at History Happy Hour). It made me realize that research and schoolwork don't have to be isolating, they can be collaborative efforts, which definitely helped me approach graduate school with a positive mindset.

How has your background in history helped you in your career or life?

Having a background in history has helped immensely in my job. I use the skills I learned every day. Doing my job involves a lot of research and writing. The history program helped me learn to gather and synthesize information, deal with conflicting sources, and develop an argument that is both clear and well-supported. At the same time, my writing skills markedly improved and really prepared me to take on graduate coursework.

Through the program you are gaining valuable and immutable skills that can help you in any field. You have to learn to sell those skills and help others understand them, though. They won't as readily make the connection between study of history and their work. There's an old marketing adage "Don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle" (Wheeler, 1937). The skills you gain through this program are your sizzle; get out there and sell it.

Read any good books lately?

I'm currently reading *A Place for Everything: The Curious History of Alphabetical Order* by Judith Flanders. (At one point I thought I was going to be a lexicographer and professional dictionary editor. I may still dabble on occasion. 😊)

Alumni Interview

Mike Vuckovich has had a varied career in education, and is currently Superintendent of Schools for Indiana Area School district.



Mike Vuckovich BSED '00 Superintendent of Schools for Indiana Area School district

What do you do?

I am the Superintendent of Schools for the Indiana Area School District. I am also an adjunct professor at the University of Pittsburgh in the Education Division. Prior to my role at Indiana, I spent 17 years in the Greater Johnstown School District as a teacher and administrator. As part of my current responsibilities, I have oversight of approximately 2,800 students, over 230 professional employees, over 150 support staff employees, and a nearly \$60 million dollar budget.

One of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of my career is navigating the unknown. IUP has undoubtedly prepared me for the challenges we are facing in today's society. There are two things people hate: change and the way things are. My goal is to work collaboratively with our stakeholders to continue to move the organization forward and prepare our students for the task of creating a better world for all.

How did you get from IUP to the career you have now?

After graduating from IUP, I moved to Ohio and taught for one year in Ohio before moving back to Pennsylvania. I earned my Master's Degree from the University of Akron, my Principal's certificate from IUP, and my Superintendent Letter of Eligibility from The Pennsylvania State University. I was an educator in the Greater Johnstown School District for 17 years before transitioning to the Indiana Area School District for the past 4 years as the Superintendent of Schools. I am fortunate to have been recognized by National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) as one of 24 superintendents across the country as "Superintendents to Watch," selected for demonstrating dynamic, fast-paced leadership with strong communication at its core. I have also led reform efforts in the Indiana Area School District that resulted in Eisenhower Elementary School being recognized as an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools National Blue Ribbon School for 2019. I am a recipient of the 2018 PASA Award for Instructional Leadership and recipient of the William E. Caldwell Award issued by The Pennsylvania School Study Council for Excellence in Administration and Supervision. During my time at Greater Johnstown School District, I was named the recipient of the NAACP Freedom Citation Award for giving students an opportunity to access higher education through the dual enrollment program and the recipient of the Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Teacher Excellence Award for development and coordination of materials and activities both in and out of the classroom. Undoubtedly, my time at IUP helped prepare me for all of these opportunities.

Looking back, what do you find most rewarding about your time at IUP?

The opportunity to grow, learn and succeed. IUP gave me direction and inspiration. I had a bevy of amazing professors who helped shape me into the person I am today. To study history is to study change; historians are experts in examining and interpreting human identities and transformations of societies and civilizations over time. My background in history helped me navigate the "new normal" that we have all faced over the past three years as a result of the pandemic. Studying history helps us understand and grapple with complex questions and dilemmas by examining how the past has shaped (and continues to shape) global, national, and local relationships between societies and people.

What advice would you give to IUP history students?

The best advice I can give is to always be a learner! Don't be afraid to make mistakes - learn and grow from them. Failure is part of the learning process. Grit and resiliency are needed more than ever in today's society. As history teachers, we get to study a wide range of topics that are simply fascinating. This includes studying the diversity of human experience; which helps us appreciate different cultures, ideas, and traditions that are not our own and to recognize them as meaningful products of specific times and places. History helps us realize how different our lived experience is from that of others, past and present, yet how similar we are in our goals and values.

Read any good books lately?

I am currently reading "*The Knowledge Gap*" by Natalie Wexler. This incredible book focuses on the cause of America's education system and how to improve it. In my role, this book has been incredibly helpful and rewarding.

Alumni Interview

Samuel J. Richards has taught in the USA, Brazil, Switzerland, and China. He is currently a history and politics teacher in Shanghai.

What do you do?

I teach history and politics at Shanghai American School in China.

What do you find most rewarding or challenging about your career?

I absolutely love teaching. It isn't just a job. It's a vocation. I thrive when students have those lightbulb moments, when they make connections, when they think more deeply about texts and sources! I love helping students sharpen their thinking and working to become more clear, concise writers. I'm thankful to love what I do.

How did you get from IUP to the career you have now?

My career path was conventional at first. I graduated with a teaching license. I spent that summer mixing mortar and carrying bricks while completing countless teaching applications every night. That September, I moved to the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I taught in a small public school surrounded by poultry farms. I also wanted a history master's degree. Nearby Salisbury University (SU) offered a perfect program and they later hired me as an adjunct lecturer.

After five years, I was ready for a change. One Friday in late January, I flew to northern Iowa for a job fair. On a bitterly cold Sunday morning, I signed a contract for the warm weather of Brazil. I moved to the American School of Brasília for 2 years. I taught IB and AP curricula and explored South America and began working on a master's in curriculum. After Brazil I took a job in western Maryland at Boonsboro High School, not far from Antietam Battlefield. However, the overseas bug had bitten. I was lucky to participate in summer educational programs in Japan and South Africa but missed the freedom of independent schools and dynamics of new cultures and languages. I returned overseas and taught in Switzerland for five years.

Looking back, Switzerland was a busy place for me. I did a lot of research writing and also led curriculum work. I contributed articles and reviews to *Pennsylvania History*, *West Virginia History*, and *Appalachian Journal* among others. Zentralbibliothek Zürich has more sources about West Virginia than one might expect! I'm also probably the only person to sit on the French Riviera reading minutes of the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830. At Zurich International School, I taught humanities and led curriculum improvements for English courses and middle school literacy learning while enjoying the mountains and traveling Europe. One highlight was having time offline while hiking in Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro. I moved to China in August 2019 a few months before a mysterious pneumonia was first reported in Wuhan.



Samuel J. Richards BSEd '04
Teacher at Shanghai American School in China

Looking back, what do you find most rewarding about your time at IUP?

IUP opened my world. I grew up in a small coal town with one stoplight. Student teaching in the UK was my first time using a passport. I still remember sitting atop Arthur's Seat, the extinct volcano in Edinburgh, and looking toward the Port of Leith thinking: I want to see more.

Studying history at IUP taught me to research effectively, think critically, and to write clearly. I am especially thankful for ways Dr. Royce Walters mentored while he also demanded critical thinking and evidence. Dr. Charles Cashdollar similarly pushed for clear writing. And, of course, there was Dr. Irwin Marcus' favorite answer to a question. Even now, I can picture him sitting on the edge of a wooden table, legs dangling, saying "Well..." the answer to a question was "Yes... and... No." with a glimmer in his eye before going on to explain.

What advice would you give to IUP students?

Being curious, being adaptable, networking, and having transferable skills matter more than grades. Skills from the social studies education program that have mattered most to me are: (1) research and critical thinking skills and (2) ability to communicate clearly and concisely.

Read any good books lately?

Yes, two recent books I'd recommend are Yuen Yuen Ang's *China's Gilded Age: The Paradox of Economic Boom and Vast Corruption* (2020) and *Shanghai Boy, Shanghai Girl* (2002) by George Wang and Betty Barr Wang. The first is an insightful study on economics, politics, and development. The second is a memoir of growing up in Shanghai during the 1940s. Betty is a 1949 alumna of Shanghai American School where I teach. In March, she visited my Asian History class and shared memories of 1940s Shanghai, the school, and her years in the Japanese concentration camp in Longhua.

Scholarship and award winners for AY 2021-22

The Kadlubowski Memorial Scholarship

The Kadlubowski Memorial Scholarship is awarded each year to a student who plans to pursue a career in teaching. The scholarship is given in honor of Dr. Jack Kadlubowski, who taught the history of Russia and Eastern Europe at IUP for 36 years, from 1967 until his death in 1999.

Nicholas Skwarko

The Eric Slebodnik Memorial Scholarship

The Eric Slebodnik Memorial Scholarship is awarded each year to a student who demonstrates a commitment to civic engagement at the local, national, or global level. The scholarship is given in honor of Sergeant Eric Slebodnik, a history major who was called to active duty during his junior year and was killed in action in Ramadi, Iraq on September 29, 2005.

Isaac Evans

Alice Schuster Award for Outstanding Achievement in the B.A. Program in History.

Brendan Reid

Judith McDonough Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Social Studies Education Program.

Jacob Wilt

Charles D. Cashdollar History Scholarship

The Charles D. Cashdollar History Scholarship is given each year given in honor of Charles Cashdollar who taught history at IUP from 1969 to 2005.

Jane Register

Topics paper award

Each year an award is given to the student whose topics paper is selected as the best paper in the topics courses for the academic year. The winning paper is selected on the basis of the strengths of the paper's thesis and research, as well as the quality of writing, arguments and documentation.

Ethan van Gorden

**"Representation of the Sakdal
Movement"**

All of our scholarships and awards are supported by donations from alumni and friends of the History Department. To make a donation please contact the department or contact the Office of Annual Giving at 724-357-5555 or email iup-giving@iup.edu.

News from our alumni



Michele Bendekov '89

Is Director of Diversity & Inclusion at Bass Berry & Sims Plc



Jamie Bogol '10

Day Job is still at the IU1. But I now run, organize historical and educational programs at the Brownsville Historical Society and an adjunct professor at Salem University in Salem WV.

Stephan Cargill '06

In September 2021, I founded Sine Pari LLC, a leadership development firm, along with fellow founders Rob McQueen and Chris Perry and we conducted our official launch on January 4, 2022. Together we have created Sine Pari as a Special Operations-inspired leader development firm to create leaders who drive results from volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous or "VUCA" environments. Sine Pari provides these leaders the rare opportunity to apply and grow their leadership skills and attributes in

penalty-free live training to build resiliency as formal leaders.

Mary Elizabeth Gaspar '07

Is a Budget Analyst at the U.S. Army War College

Mandy (Gromley) Gunn '12

Is Shift Leader at Krevetski Convenience Store

Dale Hall '69

Has been happily retired for the last 15 years.

John Hardesty '04

Is a Social Science teacher at Westmont Hilltop Middle School in Johnstown PA.

Frederick Hayward '99

Is Pastry Chef at the historic Benson Hotel in Portland OR.

Daniel Hedlund

Is Sales Manager for the Martignetti Companies, a leading distributor of wines and spirits in Taunton MA.

Hilary (Krueger) Jebitsch '94

Is a Diversity Researcher/ Consultant for the Lumber Heritage Region of Pennsylvania

Alissa Laney '03

Is Lead Teacher / Infant Toddler Building Supervisor at Stepping Stones Children's Center in Crested Butte, CO.

David Laurent '77

Is Co-Chair Labor Employment Benefits and Immigration at Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney Pc in Pittsburgh.



Mykael Lawrence '13

Is an 8th Grade Civics Teacher at Kissimmee Middle School in Florida.

John Lukehart '70

Is F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighter Program, Physical Security Specialist, Lockheed Martin Corporation, Marietta GA.



Kellie (Brown) Makar '06

I am in the middle of my ninth year of teaching at North Catholic High in Cranberry Twp., PA. I was recently chosen for the second time by the First Lady to decorate the White House for Christmas. I spent 4 days in Washington DC over Thanksgiving weekend. I was previously selected by the Trump Administration in 2019. It was the honor of my life to complete this job and meet Dr. Biden.



Amy Marsella '15

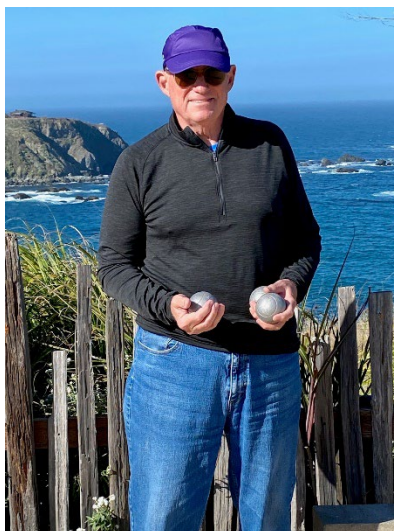
I spent 5 years working for The Hartford as an insurance agent I left the company in September 2021 and started working as a Park Ranger Assistant with the Phoenix Zoo. I recently interviewed with the Zoo to stay on as a permanent park ranger after the season ends.

Edward Martin '73

I am a retired elementary school counselor. I coach girls basketball & am a children's book author with one book already published & many more on the way. I am also trying to get a publisher for an elementary school guidance curriculum i wrote .

John McKivigan '71

I remain the Mary O'Brien Gibson Professor of History at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis as well as the Editor of the Frederick Douglass Papers. I published two books last year on Douglass, the first a collection of his journalistic writings with Yale University Press and the second a study of his three tours of the British Isles in the nineteenth century.



Donald McPherson

B.A '69 M.A. '71

Retired from IUP (Distinguished University Professor, Employment and Labor Relations) in 2004 after 35 years and from the practice of labor arbitration in 2018 after 37 years (with 22 years overlap, he adds). Don recently published an invited review of Ronald W. Schatz, *The Labor Board Crew: Remaking Worker-Employer Relations from Pearl Harbor to the Reagan Era*, University of Illinois Press, 2021 for the National Academy of Arbitrators journal, the NAA Chronicle. He and Schatz were labor history doctoral students under David Montgomery at Pitt and Schatz heavily used the Sylvester Garrett labor arbitration archives collection at IUP including interviews that Don and Garrett did with War Labor Board generation arbitrators while Garrett was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at IUP in the 1980s. Don writes a bi-weekly column on Pétanque for his village newspaper in Sonoma County, California. He and his wife, Linda (IUP '69, M '77), play both recreationally and competitively as doubles teammates in three Pétanque clubs in the NorCal Wine Country region.

Samantha Muir '12

I have been working at IUP for just over three years, and I am now the Director of Campaign Planning and Outreach. In addition to the campaign, I am president of the University Museum's Board of Directors.

I am also active in community organizations, and have chaired Downtown Indiana's Oktoberfest for the last six years.

T. Brice Pearce '04

Is a Training Manager for Wayfair. He reports that 2020 and 2021 were amazing!

Jeffrey Popchock '74

Since we have not been able to travel overseas during the second year of the pandemic, my wife Joan (IUP Class of '74) and I have taken advantage of our extra time at home to write and continue research on our family histories. This has become a decades-long project which has connected us to long-lost cousins in Poland, Slovakia, and Germany. Having specialized in U.S. History, I am now delving into the history of Eastern Europe, Germany, and the former East Prussia. We miss visiting our cousins in in Europe, but we hope to travel again later this year. Closer to home, I look forward to visiting the archives at IUP to research my grandfather, who was involved with the United Mine Workers of America in Indiana County.

I have also nearly completed a book on my father's WWII experiences as a sailor on a destroyer escort. It's based on a number of sources, including extensive excerpts from the ship's log, four hours of videotaped interviews with my father, and 95 letters that he wrote to my mother during his time in the service.

One of our daughters is a middle school English teacher. She and her

husband live nearby, so we enjoy spending time with our two grandchildren, ages eight and four. Our other daughter is now the senior exhibit developer at the National Constitution Center, so we enjoy discussing history, artifacts, and her latest exhibits.

Carole (Korenich) Popchock '73 retired as Director and Vice President of Organization Development at Federated Investors (now Federated Hermes) in July 2017. Since then I have been working on projects that sat on the back burner while I worked full time, including following up on some of my late husband's military history research.



Matthew Pouy '13

I am now teaching ABA Students with Special Needs at an elementary school in Cheshire, CT. I am also simultaneously working towards my private pilots license, with the goal of flying for a corporate or commercial airline.

Barry Rhoads '77

Working in DC during these 22 months of COVID has created numerous hurdles but presented real opportunities. My firm (Cassidy & Associates) has grown to 27 full time government relations personnel. With President Biden's push for renewables, our energy practice has flourished.



Cory Scharbo '2005

Major in the U.S. Army, currently serving on the Army Staff (G3), Pentagon Washington D.C. as the Deputy Division Chief for Strategic Operations Enterprise.

Adam Shaffer '11

Received promotion from Park Ranger to Chief of Interpretation, Education and Visitor Services at Flight 93 National Memorial in June 2020.

Edward Stancombe

Certified Yoga Instructor, Therapeutic Yoga Program Indiana PA, licensed Social Worker through Armstrong Indiana Behavioral and Developmental Health Program.

Sonya Stewart '96

The pandemic has curtailed travel so I have been using the opportunity to document and connect Indiana County families and rehome as many items as I can in order to pursue a simpler life.

Valarie (McDowell) Trimarchi

Assistant to the Chancellor, South University, Pooler GA.

Jed Weisberger '73

Staff Writer, New Jersey Jewish News

Send us a picture of you at a historic site and we will post it to Facebook.



Dr. Whited at Ahu Tongariki, Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

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Are you willing to be interviewed for our Alumni Interview feature? Want to come talk to our students about your career at our Spring conference? Let us know. We welcome any information about what you are up to. Information or queries can be sent to.

Erin Conlin <elconlin@iup.edu>