30th Anniversary Awards Banquet: Fun, Food, Friends

1999-2000 Student Award Winners: (l-r) Elizabeth Lane, Sarah Andresen, Brenda Weatherby and Brett Dodson. Not shown: Anne Lescoulie.

It was a beautiful location overlooking the golf course. The tables were decorated with bouquets of flowers. The food was as good as the conversation. The occasion was the celebration of our 30th Anniversary as a degree-granting department.

The event was hosted by the Cal Poly Historical Society and attended by more than 80 alums, history students, faculty, and friends. Former Cal Poly history professor and nationally recognized historian Dr. Quintard Taylor was the featured speaker. Professor Taylor, Scott and Dorothy Bullitt Professor of American History at the University of Washington, described and praised the quality of our undergraduates and the many accomplishments of our department over the past three decades.

Many awards for excellence were announced at the banquet:
* Sarah Andresen was selected for the Jeri Ewy Thiel Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship recognizes an outstanding student based on grade point average, community service, and application letter.
* Brett Dodson was the J. Irving Snetsinger Memorial Award winner for writing excellence.
* Elizabeth Lane was awarded the J. Irving Snetsinger Memorial Award for Academic Achievement in Diplomatic or Political History.
* Anne Lescoulie earned the first Dan Krieger Award for an outstanding student in the field of the history of California, the Spanish Borderlands, and/or Spain.
* Brenda Weatherby was the History Department's 1999/2000 Senior of the Year, for the highest G.P.A.

In addition, two part-time history professors were honored this year: Anthony Koeninger was selected as the “History Professor of the Year” while Robert Detweiler received a plaque and recognition for his outstanding contributions to the department.

Anthony Koeninger was named "History Teacher of the Year" by the Historical Society.

From the Department Chair

I have just returned from a glorious quarter in England, where I served as Resident Director of Cal Poly's London Study Program. One hundred students from across the university—including History majors—spent the Spring studying at the University of London, attending numerous cultural events, and touring Europe.

In my absence, Max Riedlinger, who served as Interim Chair, presided over our 30th anniversary celebration. The department also bid a fond farewell to Max and to Edward Mayo at a special retirement dinner. Two new faculty have joined our ranks.

Anthony Koeninger began teaching last Fall as a part-time lecturer in U.S. history. Andrew Morris, a new tenure-track faculty member in modern Asian history, assumed his teaching duties over the Summer.

The History Department will spend the current academic year planning for the best ways to prepare our graduates for the world of work and lifelong learning in the twenty-first century. We welcome your ideas!

Best wishes,

Carolyn J. Stefanski

Tevis Funds New Award in Krieger’s Honor

In honor of history professor Dan Krieger, who has taught at Cal Poly since 1971, Mrs. Grace Tevis of Los Osos has sponsored a new scholarship: the Dan Krieger History Award. This award will be given every Spring to a graduating history student whose work has demonstrable relevance to the history of California, Spain, and/or the former Spanish borderlands.

Dr. Krieger's doctoral studies were in African, European, British, and Early American History. During his career to date, he has received fellowships and awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Newberry Library, where he was a fellow in State, Regional, and Family History. Since January, 1994, he has written a weekly column on historical subjects titled "Times Past" for the San Luis Obispo County Tribune. In 1998, Dan was a co-recipient of the "Professor of the Year" award from the Cal Poly Historical Society.
Meet our new faculty

ANTHONY KOENINGER:

Am continuing a long family tradition of teaching. My mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother were teachers. My grandmother, Mae C. Silverberg, who taught in New York City from 1927 to 1970, was most influential in my life. She inspired me to study American history and literature and to enter the teaching profession. With her guidance and love, I was able to receive my Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1988.

My doctoral dissertation focused on the Catholic social gospel and immigration in the United States during the industrial revolution and progressive era. I have co-authored two American history textbooks, An Overview of America [1995] and A People’s Heritage [2000]. I am currently working on a solo project tracing America’s multiracial and multiethnic heritage from the early Spanish settlers to immigrants in the early twentieth century. In addition, I have published several volumes of poetry, focusing mainly on Chumash native culture, African-American history, and the struggles of Chicanas and Chicanos.

Before coming to Cal Poly, I taught United States history at Santa Barbara City College for seventeen years. Here at Cal Poly, I teach a number of sections of History 204, a course which surveys U.S. history from the early national period to the present. I am very passionate about teaching; I cannot imagine doing anything more valuable and rewarding. How wonderful it is to hear from a student that he or she has cultivated a new interest in the past!

I have three areas of special interest: Spanish exploration and settlement of North America, the American industrial revolution, and nineteenth and early twentieth century American immigration. In my spare time, I enjoy playing baseball and racquetball, gardening, reading, and just plain relaxing with my five (!) cats: Felix tess III, Felix tess IV, Grapes I, Kelly, and Sunshine.

ANDREW MORRIS:

I am a native Californian who grew up in the Bay Area, studied physics and history at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, and got my Ph.D. in Chinese history at UC-San Diego. Over the last decade, I was lucky enough to spend several years studying, researching and teaching in Taiwan, China, Oregon, and New York. But my wife Ricky and I feel even luckier to be returning to California, and to Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo in particular.

Yes, that first line did say “physics and history”; I was almost finished with my undergraduate physics major when I realized that history was what really moved me. It has been fun as a teacher to see my students come to similar realizations about their own interest in the past, and in how people have lived in very different times and places.

I will be teaching many courses in Asian history here at Cal Poly. My area of specialization is modern China and Taiwan, and most of my own research and writing focuses on issues of popular culture (namely sports) in modern Chinese and Taiwanese society and politics.

Nowadays, most of my spare time is spent with my baby daughter, Shaina, who has proven very good at getting her daddy’s head out of the history books and back into our present and future here in San Luis Obispo.

Mayo and Riedlsperger Retire

By Tim Barnes

I t will not be possible to fill the gap left in the department by the simultaneous retirements of Edward Mayo and Max Riedlsperger. The reputation of the department as possessing the finest teachers and faculty governors in the University, was heavily based on their work. Within the department, we relied greatly on their calm advice in both moments of opportunity and difficulty. Their wisdom came from over sixty years of combined experience at Cal Poly.

Ed Mayo, as many of you know, taught American history. Although he was trained in the Jacksonian era, his great love was the American Revolution and New Nation. They were areas that pre-occupied both his teaching and scholarly interests. His work on, and great love for, Thomas Jefferson naturally led to his wonderful seminars on this endlessly fascinating revolutionary and third president. Visiting former students frequently remind us that Ed conducted some of these seminars in the Jeffersonian setting of his beautiful home and garden.

Ed was the perfect colleague, especially to his fellow American historians. He read so voraciously that he could always be relied upon to have, on a moment’s notice, a quick book review of a work that long ago should have been read or a clear interpretation of a confusing critical moment in the New Nation.

Again, as all of you know, Max Riedlsperger taught European history. Among upper-division courses, his Nazi Germany course has been famous at the University for over twenty years. The course pioneered the “role playing and simulation” teaching technique.

Max’s scholarship was devoted to Eastern Europe. Post war Austrian politics was his particular interest, and it was a subject that brought him and the University international recognition. Max is an indefatigable worker, and even in retirement he is well along in a new writing project on Austria.

In 1985 Max was selected as the University’s distinguished teacher. It is the highest honor given to a teacher and confirmed his three-decade reputation as one of the best teachers in the University. Never one to rest on achievements, over the last seven years he has plunged himself into an effort to integrate computerized learning into his courses. His twentieth-century world history course is an extraordinary model of the uses of the Internet to enhance teaching.

Max served as chair of the History Department for six years, was a two-time chair of the Academic Senate, and a longtime member of the State Academic Senate. No one in the department knew better the complex workings of both Cal Poly and the State University system. The department will sorely miss the sound advice that flowed from this kind of experience.
Thank You, Donors!

The History Department is very grateful to those of you who helped support a wide range of activities within our department. The following alumni, faculty, and friends have provided generous support over the past year. (Note: Donations received after May 2000 will be listed in the next edition.)

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Alumni Update

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
Phone ( ) ________________________ E-mail address ____________________________
Year Graduated ______

YOUR NEWS: What's happening? We'd like to hear about your career, family, accomplishments, or hobbies. Photos are welcomed and will be returned if clearly labeled with your name and address. Please complete and return this form or e-mail: lway@calpoly.edu

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(Your employer may match this contribution. Please check with your Human Resources Representative.)

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