

Spring 1996

## UA68/8/1 History Alumni Newsletter, No. 13

WKU History

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68/8

# A History ALUMNI Newsletter

Spring 1996, Number 13  
James T. Baker, editor  
Jason Thompson,  
Melanie Roides, photographers

December 4, 1995

Dear Dr. Troutman:

Your letter of November 20 was greatly appreciated. I have made several contributions over the years to the Western General Fund and it is a pleasure for me to make this donation to the History Department.

There will always be a fondness in my heart for Western which I owe much. My mother, a teacher in McLean County, pulled up roots and secured a position as a teacher in the Bowling Green City Schools in order that I might receive a college education.

I enrolled at Western in the fall of 1922 at age 16; completed most of my work in residence the next three years; taught school in Simpson County in the school year 1925-26; completed my college work by correspondence and summer schools and graduated in 1926 at the age of twenty. I was able to attend the 50th Reunion of that class in 1976. Twenty-nine attended and I came from the greatest distance.

As you noted, that was the era of H.H. Cherry, Robertson, Stickles, Egbert, Clagett, Frances Richards, "Uncle Billy" Craig and a host of others. I recall Ruth Holeman and the Lawrence Toomey who graduated two years ahead of me. 1922 was also the year Ed Diddle came to Western as Football and basketball coach. I knew many of the athletes in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's: Pitchford, Owen, Hornback, "Pap" Glenn, "Judge" Waddell, Elvis Donaldson, Buford Garner, Cy Pruitt, Homer Neisch, Harry Hardin, and "Peck" Hickman and many others.

Your records will reflect that I was president of the Western Alumni Association in 1932-33 or 1933-34. I am probably the oldest ex-president as all those who preceeded me were older. I will have my ninetieth birthday in April of next year. I still make periodic visits to the cardiologist. While I have some health problems, I have had the good fortune to live my life in almost the entire twentieth century. Who wants to live forever?

In June, 1938, I married a young woman from Sebree, Kentucky. We have two children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

If you are still reading this, it is a tribute to your fortitude and is the penalty you pay for writing a letter to one of the really old-time Westerners!

Please excuse this rambling discourse. As a student, it would probably get me a failing grade. Again, I owe much to Western, and I wish the best of everything to you, your entire staff, and Western.

Sincerely,  
James F. Tanner

Dear History Alumni:

I have the pleasure of greeting you once more from Office 201A on the second floor of Cherry Hall, the office once occupied by my predecessors—A.M. Stickles, James H. Poteet, and J. Crawford Crowe.

The response to our Newsletter last year was most gratifying. Over 200 of you took the time to let us know what you are doing. Thank you for keeping in touch. It was great to hear from you.

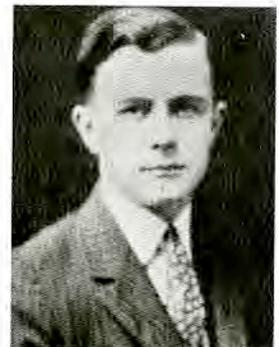
With respect to our history alumni, two things stand out since our last Newsletter. One is a \$25,000 gift from Ms. Virginia McCalister (Class of 1927) of Louisville. By combining this gift with other trust monies we are now able to offer two \$2,000 scholarships to worthy rising seniors each year. We deeply appreciate Ms. McCalister's generous spirit.

The other thing that impresses me is your continuing support through the annual phonathon. Without your gifts we simply could not effectively carry out our educational mission at Western. Please know that my colleagues and I are sincerely grateful. In response to one of my thank you notes, I received a wonderful letter from one our most senior alumni, James F. Tanner (Class of 1926). I know you will enjoy reading it as I did.

Have a great 1996!

Yours sincerely,

*Richard L. Troutman*



James F. Tanner ('26)

While we cannot print in this issue information on all who responded to our last Newsletter, we would like to begin by telling you about our history majors from the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's.

**James F. Tanner (1926)**, whose letter appears on the previous page, taught in Kentucky for 18 years, worked as an F.B.I. agent for 20, and taught in California for 12 more. He lives in Sacramento, California.

**Virginia McCalister (1927)** is responsible for the scholarship described on the previous page. She lives in Louisville.



Virginia McCalister ('27)

**Frances (Tolle)**

**Adair (1930)** is a retired teacher living in Waterloo, Iowa. She is a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother and is said to have been a success with three generations.

**Olga (Lane) Norris**

**(1931)** taught for 33 years at Glasgow Junior High and has now "retired" to work for A.A.R.P., Kentucky Retired Teachers Association, and the Business and Professional Women's Club in Glasgow.

**Lucy McCarley (1933)** taught school until she joined the Signal Corps during World War II and after the war worked for many years in the offices of J.C. Bradford in Nashville, where she now lives.

**John E. Morris (1934)** taught school for \$42.50 a month until he moved to the better pay of an accountant for 38 years. Now that he is retired, living in Union City, Tennessee, he says, "I try to help 'old' folks!"

**John B. Thomas (1934)** retired from the U.S. Navy in 1966 and the U.S. Civil Service in 1980. He has recently published two articles in the Filson Club's *Quarterly* and one in the Kentucky Historical Society's *Register*. He lives in Silver Spring, Maryland.

**Lawrence Hazellip (1935)** is a retired minister living in Pasadena, Texas. The father of two sons, he has been married 58 years.

**John Clay Lovett (1937)** went to Harvard Law School on the advice of Dr. Stickles and received his J.D. in 1940. He rose to the seat of circuit judge. His father had graduated from Western in 1904, his son followed in 1967, and he is working on making his grandson a 'Topper. He lives in Benton.

**Dorine (Hawk) Geeslin (1938)**, who is Professor Emeritus from Western, lives in Upton, where she raises beef cattle on a farm that has been in her family for 75 years.

**O'Leary M. Meece (1938)** has been Superintendent of Schools in Somerset and a member of the State Board of Education, as well as a representative on the National Association of State Boards of Education.

**Ellie Bradley (1939)** went on from Western to Vanderbilt, where he received his M.A. in 1942. He is now retired in Douglas, California.

**Marguerite (Pettus) Bell (1940)** is retired after teaching 42 years in Kentucky public schools, all but one year of it in Christian County. She lives in Hopkinsville.

**Belmont Forsythe (1940)** is retired from the U.S. Army Signal Corps with the rank of Lt. Colonel. For his service on the Korean Armistice Commission he received commendations from the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force. He lives in Seattle, Washington.

**William H. Wroten (1941)** is Professor Emeritus in History from Salisbury State University and lives in Cambridge, Maryland.

**Dee C. Ferguson (1942)** spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar at Manchester University in England before having a career in teaching. He now serves as a volunteer naturalist at Seattle, Washington's Discovery Park.

**Sibyl (Hankins) Plessinger (1942)** is retired from the Battle Creek Junior High School in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she created and for many years served in the office of counseling. She lives in Shoreview, Minnesota.

**Gilbert Wooden (1946)** was for many years a teacher and then principal in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He lives in Louisville.

**W.J. Cannon (1947)** earned a law degree, served in the U.S. Air Force, and then for many years owned, published, and edited three weekly newspapers. He considers himself a professional veteran and lives in Scottsville.

**William Horrell (1947)** went on from Western to the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College and rose to the rank of

Lt. Colonel. He is now retired from The Hartford Insurance Group and lives in Memphis, Tennessee.

**Hugh M. Ayer (1948)** is Professor Emeritus in History from the University of North Texas, where he was among other things an Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He lives in Denton, Texas.

## *History continues to lead Western's campus in academic and intellectual enterprise*

**Professor Jeffrey Williams** of Northern Kentucky University addressed the 1995 Phi Alpha Theta banquet at Bowling Green's new "440 Main" restaurant on the controversial subject of federal aid to disadvantaged Americans. He reminded us that arguments for and against aid programs are as old as the Republic.

**Paul Roides** won the 1995 James Poteet Award, given each year to the student our faculty members believe will make the best history teacher in the future. He was also named Outstanding

Graduate Student for 1995.

**Lena Sweeten** won the 1995 A. M. Stickles Award, given to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average. She also won a coveted national Phi Kappa Phi scholarship, which she will use for graduate study.

**Emory Thomas** will be the department's distinguished lecturer for 1996. On April 1 he will speak on Robert E. Lee, the subject of his recent, highly-acclaimed biography. He is Professor of History at the University of Georgia.



*Professor Jeffrey Williams*



*Paul Roides*



*Lena Sweeten*



*Emory Thomas*

# Department of History

Western Kentucky University

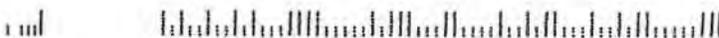
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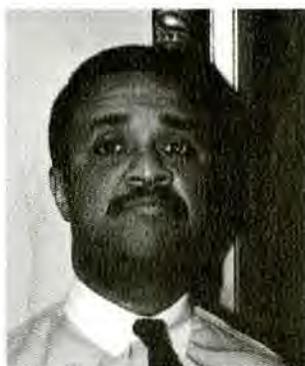
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## *Three New Faces in Western's History Department*



*John Hardin*



*Patricia Minter*



*Robert Dietle*

After many years of stability, Western's history faculty has entered a period of transition. Some teachers familiar to you have retired, and new ones are joining us. In this issue we feature three of our newer faces so that on your next visit you will need no formal introductions.

**John Hardin** teaches our History of Africa course as well as two courses in African-American History. He received his B.A. from Bellarmine College in 1970, his M.A. from Fisk University in 1972, and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1989. He is author of *The Centennial History of Kentucky State University*, where he once taught. His present research is on the history of higher education for African-Americans, especially in Kentucky.

**Patricia Minter** teaches our New South course and two new courses in United States Legal History. She received her B.A. from the University of Tennessee in 1986 and both her M.A. (1988) and her Ph.D. (1994) from the University of Virginia. She is presently revising her dissertation on "The Codification of Jim Crow" for publication as a book.

**Robert Dietle** teaches our courses on the French Revolution and Napoleon, the Enlightenment, and the History of Science. He also teaches in the Humanities Semester. He received his B.A. from the University of Chicago in 1981 and his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1991. His field of research is eighteenth century Paris; and since coming to Western he has developed a particular interest in Kentuckians who were there during that period.