The Department of History celebrated the recipients of almost $200,000 in departmental scholarships and prizes at our annual awards ceremony on May 15th. Department Chair Lynn Thomas, welcomed attendees to what she described as "one of the true highlights of our departmental calendar" by acknowledging the family members and friends who have supported and nurtured our awardees over the years, as well as the generous donors that make the awards possible.

In supporting undergraduate and graduate study of history, these awards enable students to engage their deep curiosity about the world and to gain a fuller understanding of the diversity and ever-shifting nature of human existence. As historians we recognize that by studying the past, we gain knowledge and skills that contribute to a better future. Professor Thomas reflected, "Historical study teaches us to critically analyze diverse perspectives and sources, and to communicate - in both speech and print - our analyses in an effective and compelling manner. Such skills are vitally needed in our increasingly inter-connected and complex world, and in our ever-changing workplaces. Simply put, history makes us better thinkers, writers, and communicators."

Director of Undergraduate Studies Professor Adam Warren, a specialist in Latin American history and chair of the committee that selected award winners, presented the awards for undergraduate students as well as an outstanding Washington high school history teacher.

The Pressly Prize for Excellence in Secondary Education

The Pressly Prize, named after University of Washington emeritus professor of History Thomas Pressly and his wife, Cameron, recognizes outstanding teaching of history at the high school level in the state of Washington. This year this prize was awarded to Pam Spitzer Olson, who has taught history and government at Washington High School in Tacoma for over thirty years. She was nominated by her former student, UW History major Sarah Kendall, who noted her dedication to the students in her district who face poverty and other hardships, despite having the opportunity to leave for wealthier school districts. Her principal and former student, James Hester, describes her as a brilliant teacher and a “warm demander,” someone who is tough but widely loved, known for very
high standards but also for her warmth, compassion, and caring. He praises credits her as being instrumental in recent successes the school has had with achieving higher graduation rates and higher reading levels than many of the wealthier schools in the Tacoma area, and receiving this year an award for progress from the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The University of Washington History Department is grateful for Ms. Olson's commitment to teaching history at the secondary level and for sending her students our way.

Undergraduate Awards

Dr. Frances K. Millican Fund for Undergraduate Research Projects in History

This fund supports multiple stipends to undergraduate history majors interested in pursuing multi-quarter, sustained, and in-depth research and writing projects. It is intended to help defray the costs of such expenses as traveling to conduct research in archival collections, photocopying documentary materials, and making copies of illustrations for projects. This year research funds were awarded to Stephanie Jackson to cover travel to the Philadelphia Historical Society for research on an honors thesis on Acadian populations in Pennsylvania and to Tom Parkin to cover travel to University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, for research on an honors thesis entitled “The politics of evangelization, idolatry, and resistance among indigenous peoples and Spanish friars in seventeenth-century New Mexico.”

Bicknell Fund for Academic Travel

Established by Professor Emeritus Daniel C. Waugh, this fund provides travel aid for students who intend to study the languages and cultures of Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Near and Middle East, and North Africa. This year’s Bicknell funds were awarded to Kelsie Haakenson, to fund travel to Nantes, France; to Richard Ruoff, to travel to Istanbul, Turkey; and to Sierra Van Burkleo, to travel to Sochi, Russia.

Merrell "Head of Logos" International Study Grant

This award was created by Douglass Merrell, an alumnus of the UW Department of History, to help support students to study abroad on UW or affiliated programs. This year’s international study grants were awarded to Todd Albertson, to fund travel to Norway, and to Amanda Sendele, to fund travel to Iceland.

Denison-Kernaghan Textbook Scholarship

This award celebrates a friendship of more than 20 years between Mark Kernaghan and Virginia Brandeberry Denison. It is the donor’s hope that this endowment fund will be an enduring legacy to help students gain rich experiences through their education. Nicole Dodge, Georgia Gilbert, and Zachariah Jett were all awarded Denison-Kernaghan textbook scholarships this year.

Meder-Montgomery Textbook Scholarship

This award was established by Marilyn Montgomery, an alumnus of the UW Department of History, to be used to support undergraduate history majors and their studies. Nora Gunning and Charles Parfet were awarded Meder-Montgomery textbook scholarships this year.

Faye Wilson Award

The Faye Wilson scholarship is made possible through the generosity of Faye Wilson, who directed that a portion of her estate be used by the University of Washington History Department to assist outstanding undergraduates with tuition costs. It is awarded on the basis of academic excellence, among other criteria. The outstanding undergraduate history majors who were awarded Faye Wilson Awards this year are: Max Churaisin, Sara Leonetti, Mayra Mendoza, Anna Nguyen, and Eleanor Young.
Schwartz Award
The Schwartz scholarship is made possible through the generosity of Maurice and Lois Schwartz, who endowed a scholarship fund in 1977 to support the study of non-western history at the University of Washington. It is awarded on the basis of academic excellence and commitment to the study of non-western history. This year's award recipients are: Kelsie Haakenson, Sarah Johnson, Annmarie Morro, and Richard Ruo.

Sleizer Award
The Sleizer scholarship was made possible by the generosity of Herman and Rose Sleizer, who endowed a fund in 1989 in honor of their late son, Larry Lee Sleizer. It is awarded on the basis of academic excellence and commitment to the study of history. This year's awardees are: Dustin Abrahamson, Ruth Apahidean, Rebecca Flores, Georgia Gilbert, Kelsie Haakenson, Jim Maddock, Molly Malone, Annmarie Morro, Michael Moynihan, Josie Rollins, Richard Ruo, Rhoya Selden, Lindsay Swick, Ericka Van Horne, and Lauren Wong.

Freedman Remak Award
This scholarship, named for Nancy Freedman and Ben Remak, was created to support history majors who face the high costs of out-of-state tuition. Nancy Freedman herself had been an out-of-state student at the University and knows first-hand the financial burden such students face. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of non-resident status and academic excellence. This year Allison Roth and Cathleen Buzan received Freedman Remak awards.

Power Prize
This award, named in memory of a former history major at the University of Washington, is given to undergraduates who have produced truly outstanding research papers in a University of Washington History course. It includes a cash award in the amount of $750/$375. Ericka Van Horne was this year's Power Prize winner for her essay, "An Examination of Widows' Status within the Orphan Chamber of New Amsterdam." Richard Ruo received an honorable mention for his paper, "From the Alexiad to Akropolites: The Evolving Byzantine Perspective on the Struggle for Anatolia."

Power Prize for Outstanding Graduating Senior
This award is named in memory of the same former history major at the University of Washington, and it recognizes the outstanding work of undergraduates who are completing the major in our Department and graduating this year. It carries a cash award in the amount of $500. This year's co-winners are Kathleen Noll and Kayhan Nejad.

Ms. Noll will graduate with a double major in History and Classics. She has completed the honors programs in both majors and completed an exemplary senior thesis in medieval history. In addition to excelling in numerous history courses, Kathleen has gained proficiency in French and Latin and has begun studying German, Old French, and Occitan. She has been a model citizen in the History Department, serving as a member of Phi Alpha Theta and participating in many events. She has been accepted for graduate study in medieval history at Northwestern University.

Mr. Nejad's work is likewise nothing short of amazing. He is keenly interested in Middle Eastern and Near Eastern history, especially the history of contact and interaction between imperial Russia and Qajar Iran. He has studied Persian, Arabic, and Kazak. In addition to these specific interests, he has taken a wide range of courses, including graduate courses, and read voraciously on the histories of many other parts of the world. Like Ms. Noll, Mr. Nejad will also graduate with honors in History. He will begin graduate study in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge next fall.
Graduate Awards

Director of Graduate Studies Margaret O’Mara presented the awards for History graduate students.

Power Paper Prize - Graduate

The Thomas Power Prize is given to a graduate research paper written during the 2013-2014 academic year or spring quarter 2013. First prize carries an award of $750; honorable mention carries $375. This year's winner is Patrick Lozar, for his paper, "And the line may be said to cut the tribe in two: Indigenous Plateau People and the US-Canadian Border, 1870s-1890s." Additionally, two honorable mentions were awarded to Britta Anson, for her paper "The Heterotopic Union-Castle Steamship: Conducting the Conduct of South African Settlement, 1871-1902," and to Rachel Taylor, for her paper, "The Bureaucratic Tipping Point: The Bonneville Power Administration and the Northwest Power Act of 1980."

York-Mason Award

This award is given to the best graduate research paper or project on a topic in the History of African Americans in the American West. The winner receives a $1000 cash prize. The York-Mason award is named in honor of two African Americans, both of whom contributed significantly to the History of the American West. York (c. 1770 - c. 1832), the slave of Captain William Clark, accompanied Lewis and Clark in 1804-06 as they became the first United States explorers to journey overland from St. Louis to the Pacific coast. He served as a hunter, explorer, trader and scout, and frequently bartered with Native Americans for the expedition's food and supplies and voted on crucial decisions such as the site of the winter camp when the party reached the Pacific Ocean.

Bridget “Biddy” Mason (born August 1818), was a single mother of three daughters who arrived in one of the earliest groups of Mormon settlers in the Salt Lake Valley. The slave of Robert Marion Smith, Mason was responsible for herding the livestock of the Smith-led emigrant part from Mississippi to Utah. Four years later Smith brought Mason and her family to settle in San Bernardino, California. Here Mason began a four-year campaign to gain freedom for herself and her family. Supported by local abolitionists, Mason's petition for freedom was heard by Los Angeles District Court Judge Benjamin Hayes who ruled in her favor in January, 1856. Ten years later Mason purchased a family homestead between Spring Street and Broadway (in what is now downtown Los Angeles). The value of her property grew with the population of the young city and Mason became wealthy by the 1880s. In 1872 she founded First African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest African American church in the city, and by the 1880s established one of the first homes for orphans and deserted children.

This year's York-Mason prize was awarded to Quin'nita Cobbins, for her paper, "Black Emeralds: African American Women's Activism and Leadership in Postwar Seattle, 1960-2000."

Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant

The award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant is presented annually to one graduate student TA who is nominated by a faculty member and selected by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. It comes with a cash prize of $600. This year's recipient is Emma Hinchcliffe.