History Department Welcomes Muzorewa

The History Department is pleased to welcome Dr. Gwyn-yai P. Muzorewa as our newest tenure-track assistant professor.

He earned his bachelor’s from Lincoln University, his M.A. from Temple University, and his Ph.D. from Morgan State University. Dr. Muzorewa specializes in the study of African and African-American history.

He will teach U.S. history surveys and various upper-level courses in African and African-American history for the department.

Dr. Muzorewa has a rigorous and ambitious research agenda. His research interests lie in southern African political, religious, and economic history. His current projects include The Contributions of Religious Thought to the Formation of African Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Nation Building; African Nationalism in the 21st Century: From Liberation to Governance in Southern Africa; Early Pan-Africanists in the Making of African Nationalism: Intellectual Convergence and Political Discord in Pan-African Theory and Discourse; and From the Cold War to the 21st Century: The United States and China in Economic and Political Developments of Modern African States.

Wooster Honored with Brick

Ralph A. Wooster, Professor Emeritus, was honored by former colleagues and students with a brick on Lamar University’s Cardinal Walk of Honor for his commitment to the university, the historical profession, and the History Department.

Author of 9 books and over 70 scholarly journal articles, Wooster served Lamar University for over 50 years before retiring in December 2006. During his career he served as department chair, dean of graduate studies, dean of faculties, and associate vice president for academic affairs. He also served as president of the Texas State Historical Association and East Texas Historical Association.
The History Department created the “History Student of the Month” program to recognize dedicated and hardworking history majors who exhibit their passion and abilities in classroom participation, club and department activities, and historical research.

The selection committee chose Adrian G. Morgan, who grew up in Vidor, TX, and attended Bridge City High School, as the September Student of the Month. He graduated *cum laude* and entered Lamar University in the Fall of 2012. As a history major, Mr. Morgan’s research interest includes Christianity in early modern Europe, which he studied in great detail during his Summer 2014 study abroad trip to Italy. He also has an interest in Russian history. In his spare time, Mr. Morgan enjoys singing, traveling, and reading philosophical treatises.

In the Fall of 2015, Adrian G. Morgan will be enrolling into the Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY, to earn a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in Christian Discipleship and a Master of Arts with a specialization in Biblical Studies. Upon graduation, Mr. Morgan hopes to begin a long spiritual life as a United Methodist Pastor.

Zachary Defrancis, selected as October’s award recipient, becomes the first, two-time honoree as the History Student of the Month, having received that recognition in December 2013. He graduated from Sabine Pass High School in 2012 and currently majors in both History and Political Science.

He works as a Community Leader for the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities and enjoys membership in the Honors Student Association, Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society, Alpha Lambda Delta National Honors Society, Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society, Rotaract, the Walter P. Webb Historical Society, and the Newman Catholic Student Center. Mr. Defrancis serves as president of the Lamar Tennis Club and received scholarships as a Mirabeau finalist and from the McMaster Honors and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

In the summer of 2014, he participated in the Renaissance and Reformation study abroad course in Italy. Regarding his “love for history,” Defrancis writes, “I greatly enjoy talking about history with others and sharing my knowledge while at the same time gaining more. No matter what, I will never learn everything about history, which is what makes it so interesting.” While looking forward to a teaching career, he also hopes to continue his studies as a graduate student in public history so that he might one day work in a museum.

November’s award went to Tyler Linder. Mr. Linder currently serves as Vice President of the Walter Prescott Webb Historical Society. He also received the Ralph and Edna Wooster Scholarship awarded by the History Department. In October, Linder presented a paper titled, “Jefferson County: Decade of Change, 1850-1861,” at the East Texas Historical Association Meeting in Nacogdoches. He hopes to finish with a second bachelor’s degree in Political Science and then attend graduate school to study political history.

Emma Nelson graduated from GRACE Homeschool Academy in 2012 and earned History Student of the Month honors for December/January. She is majoring in history with a minor in Spanish and continues to work on her research project, “No Place for Propaganda: The Story of Beaumont Women during World War II.” Ms. Nelson continues to volunteer in history and Latin classes at GRACE and hopes to one day create resources for homeschooling.

Congratulations to these students. They inspire their colleagues as well as professors with their passion for history and life.
Other Student News

Several history majors traveled to the recent East Texas Historical Association meeting held at Stephen F. Austin University.

Representing Lamar’s History Department on paper panels were Tyler Linder who presented “Jefferson County: Decade of Change, 1850-1861;” Tyler Quibodeaux, with “Pilgrimage of Perseverance: The Story of Anthony Lucas;” and Jordin Fenner, who presented “Mary Fenner: A Rural Woman’s Life.” Each received a cash award from the East Texas Historical Association for their impressive papers.

Congratulations to our young scholars!

Faculty News


Robertson also recently presented “The Summer-Fall of 1956 in Beaumont, Texas -- Civil Rights v. States’ Rights,” at the East Texas Historical Association meeting in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Dr. Jeff Forret recently acquired an agent for his fifth book. He will be represented by Dan Green of Pom, Inc. Green was the former president of famed publisher Simon & Schuster.

Williams’ Gang: A Slave Trader, His Cargo, and Justice in the Old South will detail the career and legal battles over William H. Williams’ scheme to buy 27 slaves in 1840 from the Virginia State Penitentiary and his attempt to sell them illegally in New Orleans. During his career as a Washington, D.C. slave trader, Williams found himself involved in no fewer than a dozen lawsuits over his slave trading business, the last of which concluded in a Supreme Court decision in 1869.

Instructor Ken Poston represented the Lamar University History Department, presenting a paper about the “league winning years” of the Beaumont Exporters, a minor league baseball team whose championship exploits during the depths of the Great Depression in the 1930s helped to combat much of the negativism of the time.

Also representing Lamar University was Penny Clark of the Lamar University Library, who spoke to the assemblage on “Glory Days: The Second Spindletop and its Architecture-The Oil Mansions of Beaumont.”

Congratulations to our distinguished faculty members for their continued high-quality scholarship.
Hi! My name is Franklin Eli Delano Fursovelt. I’m the newest rambunctious kitten of Mark Mengerink and Michelle Richer-Mengerink.

I wanted to come live with Michelle and Mark because I heard they take good care of cats. I was very sick and just a tiny baby when I decided I was going to live with them. My furry momma couldn’t take care of me anymore, so she helped me find a home. You see, I decided to hang out in their carport and wait for them to leave for work...They’re suckers for a sick kitten.

My eyes were so infected they were matted shut. I could hardly see anything! I was also really skinny. When they saw me, they couldn’t resist. I was inside in no time. They kept calling me a ragamuffin or something like that. I don’t know what that means, but I didn’t care. I had a new home!

But, I then had to visit the doctor and he performed surgery on my eyes. My eyelids had partially fused shut. After the surgery, it was back to my new home for lots of TLC, including bottle feedings every few hours. Now I don’t need bottle feedings. I’m growing into a big, strong, handsome boy.

I like playing with my adopted siblings, taking long naps, cuddling with mommy, and sitting on daddy’s shoulder while we watch football games. Oh, and I love climbing this thing mom and dad call a “Christmas tree.” I don’t know why they’re always hollering at me though...