

# HISTORY FROM THE HILL

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## FROM THE CHAIR

BY VIRGINIA DRACHMAN



Virginia Drachman

Welcome back to Tufts. I hope you each had a restful and productive summer.

As we begin our fall semester, I would like to mention a few new developments in the department.

First, I am delighted to welcome our newest faculty member, Professor Benjamin Carp, who will teach courses in Early American History.

Prof. Carp received his B.A. at Yale in 1998 and his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia in 2004. His dissertation was entitled "Cityscapes and Revolution: Political Mobilization and Urban Spaces in North America, 1740-1783." He comes to us most recently from the University of Edinburgh, where he taught courses in American History. This year he will teach Early America (History 88) in the fall and Colonial North America (History 82) in the spring. We heartily welcome him to Tufts.

I congratulate Prof. Martin Sherwin, whose biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer, American Prometheus (co-authored with Kai Bird) has garnered numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize in biography and the National Book Critics Circle Prize for best non-

fiction. I wish the best to him as well as to Profs. Leila Fawaz, Steve Marrone, Ya Pei Kuo and Shruti Kapila as they embark on their leaves this fall and Prof. Felipe Fernández-Armesto who will be on leave this spring. I send my very best wishes to our dear colleague and friend Prof. George Marcopoulos, who retired this summer. I am delighted to welcome Professor Ayesha Jalal back from her leave. And I offer a warm welcome to our new group of graduate students.

When you enter the ground floor of East Hall you will notice a few changes. Because of leaks over the summer as well as the discovery of a mold problem, the water fountain and sink were removed from the hallway,

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## WHAT'S NEWS IN EAST HALL

Professor **Gerald Gill** gave several public presentations last year, including "The American Homefront During World War II" at Lexington in November 2005, "American Racial and Ethnic Minorities" at the Boston American History Group Program at Boston University in January 2006, "African Americans and Employment Discrimination in

Boston During the 1920's" at the William Monroe Trotter Institute at U-Mass Boston in April 2006; and this past June, a presentation to Brookline teachers enrolled in an American History Group Program sponsored by Primary Source, the Watertown-based company that calls for more racially and culturally inclusive programs for teachers and students.

He is a member of the steering committee for the symposium "Power and Protest: The Civil Rights Movement in Boston, 1960-1968," to be held at the John F. Kennedy Library, November 3rd and 4th, 2006. He will be delivering the opening night keynote presentation.

Professor **Gary Leupp's** widely acclaimed book, Male Colors: The Con-

struction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan, has been translated into Japanese and will be published in Tokyo by Sakuhinsha in September 2006.

Professor **Reed Ueda** has been reappointed as an Associate of the Center for

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN SHERWIN

*Professor Sherwin (MS) was kind enough this summer to sit down via email with History from the Hill (HH) for an interview about his latest book as well as his career at Tufts.*

*HH: Why did you choose to work on Oppenheimer?*

MS: I became familiar with Oppenheimer's personal papers at the Library of Congress while working on A World Destroyed, which was published in 1975. It's about the creation of the atomic bomb during World War II and the role that scientists (like Oppenheimer) played in the policy-making process that led to its use against Hiroshima. That book set the course of my career. I was convinced while working on it that the history of the nuclear-arms race should be the focus of my scholarship. A biography of Oppenheimer seemed like the perfect second book. I thought it would reveal a great deal about the origins of the nuclear-arms race and the original rationalization for the American nuclear arsenal: anti-communism.

*HH: What did you set out to achieve when you began this project? What questions about Oppenheimer did you hope to answer and did the questions change as your research progressed?*

MS: I began this book a year or two before I arrived at Tufts, in 1980. It was a twenty-five-year project. I don't recall my thoughts at the time, but my proposal to Knopf, my publisher, said that Oppenheimer's life would provide a unique view of three subjects: First, communism in the 1930s, particularly what motivated rank-and-file communists. Secondly, the origins of the nuclear-arms race and the efforts that Oppenheimer made to prevent it. And, third, the impact of McCarthyism on the American science community as viewed through Oppenheimer's life. Those points were like handholds for a long, difficult ascent; as I climbed the Oppenheimer mountain, I became interested in many other things, including his complicated and sometimes tortured personal life. It also became clear that it was not possible to understand his behavior as director of the Manhattan project's Los Alamos laboratory during World War II and his postwar political behavior without a deep understanding of his personal life. So biography and history came together in American Prometheus.

*HH: Your work on Oppenheimer has extended over a significant portion of your academic career, why do you feel that is the case? In other words, what is it about Oppenheimer, his life and work, that kept you interested, motivated, excited, intellectually stimulated over these years?*

MS: I wish your assumption (that I was continually "motivated and excited") were correct. I worked diligently on the book from 1979-1985. But in 1986 I had the opportunity to begin a program at Tufts that also excited me, and it was a now or never thing. With President Mayer's support I started the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center. I had no idea how much work it would be to get the center on a solid intellectual and financial footing, and I had no idea that it would overwhelm my ability to work on my biography. A year later, I developed the Global Classroom Project. Readers who were at Tufts between 1988-1992 will recall that the GCP linked Soviet university students in Moscow with my classes on the nuclear-arms race (and later on the environment) via satellite television at least once, and usually twice, each semester. Simultaneous interpreters from the United Nations facilitated the exchanges. Those programs played on selected PBS stations and all across the Soviet Union. I was back and forth to Moscow negotiating details at least 4 times each academic year. In addition, during spring vacation my teaching assistants and I took from 30-60 students from our class to Moscow to live in dorms with students at Moscow State University and Mendeleyev University. Then there was the fundraising—each broadcast cost \$50,000-\$70,000, and I was responsible for raising all the money. Then from 1993-1995 I took leave to run the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding at my alma mater, Dartmouth College. I am recounting all this to make it clear that my Oppenheimer biography took a decade-long sabbatical from the center of my intellectual life. When I returned to Tufts in the fall of 1995, I was determined to get Oppenheimer written. But getting back into the project was not easy.

*HH: What challenges did you encounter as you worked on this book as both a writer and an historian? Was there ever a point where you felt that project was so vast that you were tempted to stop work on it?*

MS: I think the worst period was between 1996-1998. I worked on it, but it wasn't engaging me as it had when I started the project. I taught some foundation and research seminars on Oppenheimer, hoping that student interest would jump-start my own interest. They helped. But the real boost came in a conversation with my friend, Kai Bird, with whom I had written many articles during the 1994-1995 Enola Gay controversy at the National Air and Space Museum. (I had been a member of the so-called advisory board.) Kai had finished his biography of McGeorge and William Bundy, The Color of Truth, and he couldn't find another topic that interested him. "I have one," I said.

*HH: The number of personal interviews you conducted with relevant individuals is staggering--there must have been times when various interviews conflicted with each other and/or with documentary evidence you had collected. How did you go about reconciling the inconsistencies and what do you need to be on guard against when using one-on-one interviews as sources? Is there any one example that sticks*

*See Shewin  
continued on page 7*

## THE NEW FACES OF HISTORY

### **Assistant Professor Benjamin Carp**

Professor Benjamin Carp comes to Tufts from the University of Edinburgh, where he has held the position of Lecturer at the School of History and Classics since 2004. He received his Bachelor's Degree in History from Yale University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Virginia. His research interests encompass the history of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary America. He is cur-

rently revising his doctoral thesis for publication in the form of a book entitled Cityscapes and Revolution: Political Mobilization and Urban Spaces in Anglo-America, 1740-1783. In addition, with a Leverhulme Research Fellowship, he is researching pyromachy (the use of fire in warfare) during the American Revolution. He has experience teaching a variety of courses on American History. The Department of History welcomes him as Assistant Professor.

## A VIEW FROM THE HILL—EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Editor's Note: The *History from the Hill* is looking for new graduate and undergraduate editors! If you are interested, please contact David Proctor at david.proctor@tufts.edu or by phone at x73213.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to this edition of the newsletter: Professors Drachman, Marcopoulos, Penvenne, Sherwin and Ueda and department alum Molly Blank, (LA'98). Thank you as well to Professor Gerald Gill for supplying the bulk of our alumni updates and to Professors Sherwin and Fernández-Armesto for their time and contributions. I also want to offer a very special thanks to all of the former students of George Marcopoulos who were generous enough to share their thoughts and memories with us.

As always, the production of the newsletter would not be possible without the able assistance of History Department Secretary and Newsletter Copy Editor, Mary-Ann Hagopian.

## A HISTORY WEDDING

In a beautiful ceremony held on Sunday, May 7, 2006 at the St. James Armenian Church in Watertown, Massachusetts, History Department Secretary and *History from the Hill* Copy Editor **Mary-Ann Kazanjian** married Mr. Henry Hagopian. The wedding was a traditional Armenian ceremony with Mary-Ann being given away by her brother, Benjamin Kelerjian. The maid of honor was Mary-Ann's dear friend, Anna Bedirian and her two bridesmaids were her daughters-in-law, Tamar and Maria Kazanjian. Henry's groomsmen included his two sons Bruce and Kenneth Hagopian and Mary-Ann's two sons, Paul and David Kazanjian. The best man was the groom's brother, Richard Hagopian. The wedding party also included Mary-Ann's two grandchildren, Allyson and Gregory Kazanjian, who served as flower girl and ring bearer, respectively. Guests included family and friends as well as some members of the department. The reception was held in the Saint James parish hall.

*History from the Hill* wishes Mary-Ann and Henry Hagopian all the best in their life together.



**Mary-Ann and Henry Hagopian share their first dance as husband and wife**

***Congratulations***

***Mary-Ann and Henry!***

## 2006 HISTORY AWARDS

Each year, the Department of History awards a series of prizes to deserving Tufts undergraduates. Here are the prizes that were awarded in spring 2006 and their recipients.

The **Albert H. Imlah European History Prize** is presented for distinguished work in the history of Western civilization. The History Department awarded the 2006 Imlah European History Prize to **Marc A. Bouffard**, (LA'09), and **Maria Cecelia Rodriguez Alcala**, (LA'07).

The **Albert H. Imlah Excellence in History Prize** is awarded to a senior

by the History Department in recognition of outstanding achievement in History. This year's recipient of the Imlah Excellence in History Prize was **Elizabeth Herman**, (LA'06).

The **Russell E. Miller History Prize** is awarded to an undergraduate of exceptional ability whose participation in advanced history courses has demonstrated an eagerness to explore problems of historical analysis and interpretation. The History Department presented the 2006 Miller History Prize to **Max Felker-Kantor**, (LA'06).

The **Prospect Hill**

**Chapter, Daughters of the Revolution Prize Scholarship** is awarded on recommendation of the History Department to a student demonstrating marked interest in American colonial history as well as excellence in scholarship. This year's Daughter of the Revolution Prize Scholarship was awarded to **Kristin Manzillo**, (LA'07)

The **Vida H. Allen Prize** is awarded annually to the undergraduate History major who is judged to have written the best honors thesis during that academic year. The recipient of the 2006 Vida H. Allen Prize was

**Max Felker-Kantor**, (LA'06).

His thesis, "Freedom Means a House to Live In: The Black Struggle for Equal Housing Opportunities in Greater Boston, 1948-1968," was an examination of the protest strategies, litigation, the push for legislation, boycotts and rent strikes used by African Americans and their allies to increase equal housing opportunities for blacks in the Greater Boston Area from the end of World War II through the enactment of federal Fair Housing legislation in 1968.

*Well done!*

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Jillian Harrison**, (LA'06), is working as a paralegal in the Boston law firm Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane, LLP.

**Phillip Hummel**, (LA'05), is entering his second year at the University of Maryland Law School in Baltimore. Combining his interests in American History and Constitutional Law, he spent this current summer as a research assistant to a law-school professor who is writing a biography of former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall's early career as a civil rights and criminal lawyer in Baltimore from 1933-1937. In addition, Phillip was offered a position as an editor on the *University of Maryland Law Journal on Race, Religion, Gender and Class*.

**Kit Stanton**,

(LA'04), spent fall 2005 working in southeast Louisiana with the American Red Cross in response to Hurricane Katrina. While she was volunteering, the soup kitchen that she was working out of in New Orleans served over 1 million meals to the local community.

**Josh Cohen**, (LA'03), has enrolled in the law school at the University of Cincinnati. He is a recipient of a scholarship and a fellowship at the Urban Morgan Institute of Human Rights at the Law School.

**Adam Goodman**, (LA'03), spent three years as an Admissions Officer at Tufts. He is now an AP United States History and World Geography teacher at the IDEA College Prep, a public charter school in McAllen, Texas.

**David Michaels**,

(LA'03), taught English in Thailand for almost two years. He is now an entering student in the M.A. program in the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C. His proposed area of focus will be South East Asian Studies and Security Issues.

After spending a year in Mexico, **Kim Fox**, (LA'02), has enrolled at the Boalt Hall Law School at the University of California-Berkeley.

**John Bennett**, (LA'01), is a second-year student at the Columbia University Law School.

**Rachel Peck**, (LA'01), is a first-year law student at the George Washington Law School in Washington, D.C.

Captain **Ethan Steward**, (LA'99), spent four months in Iraq as a lawyer in the Judge Advocate General's

Office in the United States Marine Corps.

**Molly Blank**, (LA'98), is a 1998 cum laude Tufts graduate with a major in History and a minor in Drama. Her senior thesis, "Birth of Consciousness," was on the politicization of students at Spelman College during the Civil Rights Movement. After college she spent a few years teaching elementary school in Washington, DC as part of Teach for America and then moved into documentary film. She completed a Master's in journalism at UC Berkeley in 2004 and won a Fulbright to South Africa for the 2004-2005 year. While in South Africa, she taught a theater arts class for high school students in one township, taught some grade 12 English, and produced a documentary on

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## MEET FELIPE FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO—FACULTY PROFILE

*Editor's Note: In the style of newsletters past, **History from the Hill** has opted to run a faculty profile of Professor Fernández-Armesto. What follows is the traditional summation of his recent activities since joining us as well as a new wrinkle of sorts. We asked Professor Fernández-Armesto to describe to us why he chose to come to Tufts and how his first year has been. The result is the first part of this profile.*

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I felt like Christ on Tibidabo, as I gazed down at Boston from the roof of Tisch. 'All this will I give thee,' said Mammon at my elbow, 'if thou wilt bow down and worship me.' It wasn't just the lure of Mammon. From Tufts, I can enjoy the thrill of looking down on Bostonians. 'Shakespeare, Sir, was a very great man,' said a local to Dickens when the novelist visited America in 1842. 'Why, I doubt there are fifty his equal in the whole of Boston.' I couldn't resist the prospect of elevation above this occidental Athens.

Tufts' self-projection as a globally minded place attracted me. I'm globally minded. Before joining Tufts I occupied the only chair of global environmental history in the UK. I have just written a global history textbook for US undergraduates. I run a global history seminar and am on the board of the *Journal of Global History*. I suspect global-mindedness is what America most needs right now, and what the world most needs from America. Tufts' ethos seems to me to combine two rarely congruent virtues: both right and expedient – aimed at a real need and an exploitable niche.

I also liked Tufts' educational priorities. My vocation is as a teacher. Even my books are teaching in print. When I work as a journalist and broadcaster I try to stimulate and provoke – the same objectives as when I lecture or chat in the classroom. I don't believe there's any successful teaching uninformed by research or any worthwhile research uncomplemented by teaching. I wouldn't be interested in a job that didn't keep me in the company of students and under their mild goad.

I was afraid, of course, that all Tufts' inspiring language might be rhetoric, like an American dream that dissolves in wakefulness. But the university top brass are genuinely visionary and absolutely serious about educating global citizens and leaders. I've been happy to find I was right to take a chance on being able to take part in a project I applaud. My other great fear was that the History Department would be like so many campuses I had visited in the USA – riven by factionalism, *odium theologicum* and personal animosity. But, when I came for interview, I saw evidence only of an exceptionally kindly, rational and collegial bunch of prospective colleagues. Now that I'm part of the department, I feel truly happy and proud to have joined them.

I saw at once two irresistible opportunities: first, to help mobilize the department's strengths and contribute to Tufts' distinctive trajectory by launching a graduate program in global history – a plan which the University top brass have welcomed and which I hope to see come to fruition soon. I also saw it as an almost sacred obligation to take – if offered – the chance of a chair with a brief to teach Spanish culture. I have an exile's passion for Spain and a huge backlog of unfinished work on Spanish history, from which avocations in Oxford, the Netherlands, and London drew me in recent years. I'm deeply committed to global and environmental subjects, but I relish the chance to get back to specifically Spanish ones, too. The Prince of Asturias, for whom my chair is named, and Plácido Arango, the entrepreneur and Tufts trustee who endowed it, are both dedicated and effective ambassadors for Spain's image in the world. I share their ardour. I've put a lot of effort into helping to improve knowledge and understanding of Spain in the UK and would like to do the same in the States.

The final, decisive factor in bringing me to Tufts was even more intensely personal. My wife is one of Europe's biggest Americanophiles. She worked on secondment in Boston before we got married and longed to return, thinking Oxford rather a poor berth by comparison. So naturally, I saw the offer of a place at Tufts as an opportunity at last – albeit a trifle late, after twenty-eight years of marriage – to do something to please her. Ironically, because of crises in the lives of our older generation, she's been able to make only a few fleeting visits so far – but they'll get longer and more frequent in time.

My life has been chaotic since my arrival. My first year has coincided with huge, conflicting and taxing commitments in the worlds of lecturing, publishing, journalism, and broadcasting. I struggle to adjust to the strangeness of US culture, marvel at the repellent climate and grapple with the challenges of new courses among exciting and exigent students. It's all an adventure I'm lucky to have and I'm relishing it.

### A YEAR IN THE LIFE

Since joining Tufts in September 2005, Felipe Fernández-Armesto has taught courses on 'Spains' (a Spanish history survey course), 'The World since 1500,' 'Spain and the Atlantic,' and 'Environment and Civilization.' Depending on what the department needs, he is planning more new courses on the history of human attitudes to apes, the history of language, and Native American experiences of conquest, with reference to the whole of the hemisphere.

Recruiting counterparts from BC, BU, Harvard, MIT, and Northeastern, Fernández-Armesto has set up the Boston Area Global History Consortium, which meets at Tufts. With sponsorship from Pearson Education and Prentice Hall and support from the History Department and the Deans' Office, a series of seminars has brought cutting-edge practitioners of global approaches to history to Tufts (including

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FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO  
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David Northrup, Joanna Waley-Cohen, Leonard Blussé, and Lauren Benton) in the spring semester, 2006. The program also included a one-day conference comparing the Spanish and Dutch early modern empires, with visiting scholars from Spain and the Netherlands. The Pearson Prentice Hall Seminar Series will continue in the fall semester, 2006, with visits from a number of leading scholars, including Tony Hopkins, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Bruce Mazlish, and Michael Adas.

Professor Fernández-Armesto arrived at Tufts with a great many outside lecturing obligations to discharge in the interstices of his Tufts classes, including lectures at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (Rome), the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid), LIPI (Jakarta), the Cambridge History Festival, the Fundación Carlos Casares (Mondariz), the Fundación Mapfre (Madrid), the Casa de América (Madrid), the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University (where he gave the inaugural address of the new Research Institute in History), Queen Mary College (University of London, where, jointly with Sir John Elliott, he gave the first of a new series of Witnessed Seminars), Bristol University (The Colston Research Society Lecture), University of Chicago, Penn State University, and Georgetown University. He was a discussant for the Reischauer Lectures at Harvard in 2006. The lectures for the Pontifical Academy and the Real Academia de la Historia are in the press.

A lecture he gave in April, 2006, at the U. of Western Ontario was televised by TVWO and widely syndicated. His other broadcasts in the same period have included a short film for the BBC in a series on lexical problems; a talk for the Voice of America, broadcast in November, 2005; a discussion program on American culture in the world, which he chaired for BBC Radio 4 in July, 2006; and an interview on Radio Nacional de España in May, 2006.

In August, 2006, he gave the Royal Society of Arts Lecture at the Edinburgh Literary Festival and will give the John Kislack Lecture at the Library of Congress in November. He is also due to give lectures in the fall of 2006 at the Institute of Historical Research (London), the Casa de Colón (Las Palmas), the University of Toronto, the Congreso de Historia de Galicia in Baiona, and the Explorers' Club (New York), and will take part in a Fundación Barreiros colloquium in Madrid in November.

His three new books (*The World: A History*; *Amerigo: the Man Who Gave his Name to America*; and *Pathfinders: a Global History of Exploration*) all appeared in the fall of 2006. Since he joined Tufts, new editions of earlier books by him have also appeared in Dutch, Spanish, Italian and – for the first time – Chinese, bringing to 24 the number of languages in which his work has been published. Jointly with Andrew David, Carlos Novi and Glyn Williams he edited vol. iii of the Hakluyt Society's edition of *The Voyage of Malspina*, which appeared in the fall of 2005. He has also published a number of new papers since arriving at Tufts, including: one on early modern empires in a collection edited by J. Cañizares Esguerra and E. Seeman; a chapter on 'The Portuguese Empire in Global Context' in a volume edited by F. Bethencourt and D. Curto; and 'Colón y los libros de caballería' in a collection edited by C. Martínez Shaw. His chapter on 'Maps and Exploration' is due to appear any day now in volume iii of the University of Chicago Press's *History of Cartography*, for which he serves on the editorial board. He also continues on the editorial boards of Leiden University Studies in Overseas History and the journals, *Journeys* and *Journal of Global History*. Book reviews by him have appeared since his arrival at Tufts in various journals, including *American Historical Review*, *International Journal of Maritime History*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*. He has continued to write for the press in Spain and the UK, especially for *ABC* (Madrid), and *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (the UK equivalent of *The Chronicle*), for which he writes a regular column (and for which one of his contributions was reprinted in a new collection, H. Swain, ed, *Big Questions in History*). He writes occasional columns in Spain for *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, and *La Voz de Galicia*. These papers and *El País* have also recently published interviews with him. He was awarded, in October, 2005, Spain's Premio Nacional de Gastronomía, for the Spanish version of his history of food. He remains a Professorial Fellow of Queen Mary and an Associate Fellow of the Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London.

He is now working on the Schouler Lectures, which he will give at Johns Hopkins in 2008, on slave creole languages in the early modern New World, and, jointly with Matthew Restall, a book on Spanish conquests for Oxford University Press's Very Short Introductions series.

Thanks to help from the History Department and the Deans' Office, Professor Fernández-Armesto has arranged for Tufts to have Manuel Lucena Giraldo of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Madrid) as a visiting professor of Spanish history during his sabbatical leave in spring, 2007.

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and the carpeting was replaced with tile in both the hallway as well as the graduate lounge. Hopefully, this will take care of the problem.

Finally, as I embark on my third year as Chair of the History Department, I do so with gratitude to four people: Prof. Gerald Gill, Deputy Chair; Annette Lazzara, Department Administrator; Margaret Casey, Staff Assistant; and Mary-Ann Hagopian, Secretary. As the business of the new academic year begins, I would like to express my deep appreciation to them for all their help. Every day I realize how they make each of our lives easier.

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*out in your mind of an interview that really changed your perception of a certain element of Oppenheimer's life, either by what the person said or did not say?*

MS: The interviews were critical to understanding the complexity of Oppenheimer's personality. Of course there were contradictions; not everyone had the same view of Oppenheimer. But those contradictions made it possible to better understand Oppenheimer's personality. Almost all of my interviews were unstructured. Of course there were certain questions I wanted answered, but I never structured the interviews around those questions. I was always more interested in learning the answers to questions I had not known enough to ask. Thus most of the interviews were long, several hours at least. Almost all of them were tape recorded and later transcribed. One other thing: I learned that it was a good idea to interview the spouses of the physicists who worked with Oppenheimer. They often had a different view of him, and of his wife, Kitty, than their husbands had.

*HH: How would you describe your collaboration with Kai Bird?*

MS: A perfect collaboration. Many years ago, when Peter Winn and I were young professors at Princeton, we collaborated on an article on the United States and Cuba for the *Wilson Quarterly*. That was my first collaboration. Because that experience was so terrific, I knew I would enjoy working with Kai, whom I also admired and liked. By 1998, I had the entire book in my head. Kai was very excited about the research and his enthusiasm was contagious. That rekindled my own enthusiasm. We talked about everything. We had many discussions about interpretive issues, but we never had an argument. Since we had worked together before, it did not surprise me that we were such a good team.

*HH: Aside from the obvious, what motivated the title of the book?*

MS: I wish I could claim credit for the title, but I can't. My friend, Ronald Steel, told me that he hated the title that Kai and I had chosen: "Oppie: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer." He said he was sure he could come up with a better one. That was on a Saturday night, about two days before it would have been too late to change it. Early (actually, very early) Sunday morning, Ron called and said: "Prometheus." I added "American," so I guess I get some credit. Curiously, Kai's wife had suggested "Prometheus" to him on Saturday afternoon, so he was primed for the title change when I called him after speaking to Ron.

*HH: What important new facts or interpretations do you put forward about Oppenheimer in your book? Are there any specific examples you could share of an area of Oppenheimer's life or work where your research has challenged existing interpretations? What do you feel are the greatest misconceptions about Oppenheimer?*

MS: This is a question that informed reviewers should answer, but for what it's worth here's my view. First of all, American Prometheus is the most complete biography of Oppenheimer. From the beginning, the approach I took was to confront the major issues – communism, the Manhattan Project, the early nuclear-arms race, McCarthyism, among others—as a historian. Dealing with his personality and personal life was a slow learning process. Because I had known biographers who fell in love with their subjects and lost critical perspective, I was on guard not to become Oppenheimer's advocate. I tried to think of myself as an intelligence officer or a shrink responsible for creating a personality profile. I had to understand how he thought about scientific, personal and political issues. Then I worked hard to carefully weave Oppenheimer's personal history with historical events. In my view, the purpose of a biography for a political figure is to connect personality with public behavior. In Oppenheimer's case this connection was very powerful. In every one of the areas I mentioned, American Prometheus either challenges existing interpretations, or redefines or deepens our understanding of the man. (Of course I am not exactly the most objective commentator.)

*HH: In his May 1, 2005 review, Boston Globe staffer Gregg Herken said, "American Prometheus is the first biography to give full due to Oppenheimer's extraordinary complexity, and particularly his difficult and often torturous personal relationships with the women in his life -- Jean Tatlock, his onetime fiancée, and Katherine "Kitty" Puening, whom he married in 1940." Why did you feel this aspect of his personal life was important to an understanding of Oppenheimer?*

MS: Herken is a historian who has written about Oppenheimer in Brotherhood of the Bomb: Oppenheimer, Lawrence and Teller. I think he mentioned this aspect of the book because he understood from his own work that Jean Tatlock and Kitty were critical in shaping Oppenheimer's world view. For example, in 1936, Tatlock was responsible for introducing Oppenheimer to political activism, and to her communist friends, who quickly became his friends. Oppenheimer was deeply in love with Jean, but she refused to marry him. Yet he never fell out of love with her. Kitty, whom he married on the re-bound was the manager of his ambitions. All Oppenheimer's women were intelligent, well educated, and strong-willed, like his mother. There is a lot more to say about their importance, but I hope I have said enough to make the point that Oppenheimer's life and behavior cannot be understood apart from his relationship with Jean and Kitty (and his mother).

*See Shewin*

*HH: Many works about Oppenheimer spend the bulk of their pages focused on his life while* *continued on page 8*

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*working on the development of the atomic bomb, you choose to also focus with as careful an eye on his later years, why? Why do you feel that his life after the Manhattan Project is a story that needs to be told?*

MS: In my view, the post-Manhattan Project years are the most important part of Oppenheimer's biography. Had he returned to U.C. Berkeley after the war I never would have been interested in writing about him. It was his complicated and extraordinary failed struggle to prevent a nuclear-arms race after the war that is the heart of the biography. His opposition to the hydrogen bomb in 1949 and his outspoken advocacy of open debate about our nuclear weapons policies put him in disfavor with the Eisenhower administration. The chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Lewis Strauss, in collusion with the FBI and the Air Force created a conspiracy to assure that he lost his security clearance. The FBI taped his lawyer's telephone during his security hearing and the prosecutor engaged in witness tampering. It is the story of a government unwilling to accept dissent as a legitimate part of the political process. That is a story that needed to be told.

*HH: At what point do you feel Oppenheimer truly understood the ramifications of what he had helped discover?*

MS: Soon after the war ended, when he came to realize that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki might not have been necessary to end the war in the summer of 1945.

*HH: Do you feel we know now the real Robert Oppenheimer, or is there still more to be uncovered?*

MS: There is always more to be uncovered and there are always new ways to view old evidence. There will be other important books about Oppenheimer. In fact, in November, the University of Chicago press is publishing Oppenheimer: The Tragic Intellect by the young sociologist Charles Thorpe. It is a very good book.

*HH: After investing so much of yourself in American Prometheus, what does winning the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award mean to you?*

MS: I am as pleased about those awards as you might imagine. I am not sure that even now, months later, I have fully absorbed what they mean to me. I don't know what else to say.

*HH: You have been the author of two landmark books, American Prometheus and A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and Its Legacies, how would you describe the relationship of one to the other?*

MS: A World Destroyed was the foundation of my career. Writing that book made me believe that the nuclear-arms race was the most important subject I could write about. It also led me straight to Oppenheimer.

*HH: Robert J. Lifton, author of Superpower Syndrome and Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima, has said, "American Prometheus is indispensable for any real understanding of our present nuclear weapons dilemmas. Its riveting account of the psychological, political, and scientific struggles involved takes us to a beginning of wisdom." How does American Prometheus help shed light on or provide a lens through which to examine the state of nuclear affairs in today's world?*

MS: Oppenheimer's story appears to be a metaphor for our time. It is about the government's use of fear in stifling dissent, the corruption of democracy, and the debate over how American power should be used internationally. It is about government misbehavior and the role of science and scientists in the creation of weapons of mass destruction. We are living today with the consequences of some very bad political habits and decisions. I believe that is Lifton's point.

*HH: As an historian and a Professor at Tufts, what do you see as your primary responsibility to students who enroll in your classes?*

MS: Encouraging students to think independently while understanding that they need evidence to support their arguments. I therefore assign a lot of writing in my courses. Even some of my lecture courses require a short paper every week. Writing stimulates clear thinking and that is what I want to encourage.

*HH: How do you view the connection between teaching and research at Tufts? As your research on Oppenheimer progressed, what relationship did it have to what you did in the classroom and did your students over the years help to influence aspects of your research?*

MS: This is really a tall question and space requires a short answer. In so far as my research stimulates my interest in my field, it enhances my teaching. As I mentioned earlier, I focused some of my seminars on Oppenheimer. But one does not have to be an active scholar to be a good teacher; one has only to love one's subject and keep up with the scholarship in one's field. In fact, I believe a lot of professors would be better undergraduate classroom teachers if they were not pressured to be active scholars. I therefore think that universities make a big mistake when they create a single scholarship-based standard for promoting professors to tenure. On the other hand, training doctoral students is different. It is difficult to be a successful PhD instructor unless one is an active scholar. So, to generalize,

*See Sherwin  
continued on page 12*



## GEORGE J. MARCOPOULOS RETIRES

As Professor Drachman stated in her welcome back comments, Professor George J. Marcopoulos has retired from Tufts as of this August after a 45-year career. For the last several years, Professor Marcopoulos has been the faculty advisor for *History from the Hill* in addition to his many other contributions to the Tufts History Department and the university. In the spring of 2006, he was the recipient of the Seymour O. Simches Award for Outstanding Teaching and Advising and the Graduate Student Council Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award. He was also, by vote of the History Department and the faculty of Arts and Sciences, Tufts granted George Marcopoulos the title of Professor of History Emeritus. Rather than do a traditional look back at his career at Tufts, we thought it would be better to let former students of Professor Marcopoulos express what he meant, and continues to mean, to them.



Professor of History Emeritus George J. Marcopoulos

***From Alex Bezdek, (LA' 07)***

"I had only one class with Professor Marcopoulos, but it was enough to push my International Relations major toward a European focus and create a deep interest in the Balkans. He was the most prepared, to the point, and clear professor I have ever had. It's too bad that we're going to lose a man with such a wealth of knowledge."

***From Seth Blackburg, (LA'00)***

"After attending Tufts, I went on to attend business school and medical school where, combined, I had a tremendous array of wonderful, talented teachers. Without a doubt, Professor Marcopoulos was the most exceptional of them all, uniquely combining an encyclopedic fund of knowledge with an unwavering heart of gold. He was—and remains—an inspiration to me and a true "mentor." My life has been indelibly enriched by counting myself amongst his many students and I feel privileged to consider him a dear friend."

***From Robert Borny, (LA'06)***

"I came into Tufts without a clue of what I wanted to do with my life and also with no idea of what major to pursue. I gradually came to the conclusion that I was very interested in business, but I couldn't imagine sitting through all those econ courses at Tufts just to have them play such a small role later in my careers. I wanted to major in a subject that I could be passionate about and also one in which I would be eager to attend the classes. After taking History of Europe to 1815 with Professor Marcopoulos, I discovered a new-found interest in history. By taking this course and having Professor Marcopoulos as my major advisor, I achieved a new understanding for how the history of any subject or time period plays an intricate role in the evolution of our world. He showed me that by observing and studying the history of the world, its cultures and events throughout time became much clearer to me in my understanding of them. Professor Marcopoulos also did a wonderful job of assuring me that the assumption of history majors becoming only teachers or lawyers was very much false. Ever since taking that first course with Professor Marcopoulos, my love and interest in history has grown immensely. Through his advice and lessons, my college experience was one in which I can honestly say helped me understand what type of person I am and which also reshaped my vision of the world as a whole."

***From Michael D. Caccavo, Esq., (LA'75)***

"I was at Tufts from 1971 to 1975, majoring in History. . . . While at Tufts, Prof. M was my advisor and also my instructor for several classes and one "Winter Session" seminar. I think his influence had some bearing on my decision to take a semester abroad in Greece. And he was of great help to me in seeing all my credits transferred. He was always accessible and helpful as well as an enlightening and entertaining lecturer. While I was there, he was well known for his Russian History lecture about the assassination attempts on Czar Alexander II. When word got out when that lecture was scheduled, it guaranteed a packed house, so students enrolled in the class had to be early or miss out getting a seat.

I had a motorcycle while at Tufts and would occasionally cruise up the North Shore and Cape Ann. At that time, Prof. M lived in Salem, and he invited me to stop in on my travels. I visited him there several times and have fond memories of our chats in the Salem house with his mother and uncle and their bi-lingual dog, who responded to English and Greek equally well.

I wish Professor Marcopoulos all the best in his retirement."

***From Hande Deniz, (GS'06)***

"I could not have wished for a more knowledgeable and experienced as well as a more understanding and kind advisor than Prof. Marcopoulos. His encouragement, patience and guidance helped me immensely in my first few months of graduate student life at Tufts. I

*See Marcopoulos  
continued on page 10*

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am most thankful to him for greatly improving my understanding of both medieval and modern European and Ottoman history. It was a very rewarding experience to work as his teaching assistant in History 10 and 11. Over time, it became impossible not to get impressed with his dedication and special connection to his students of all levels. One personal example is the fact that although he has been on medical leave during this year, he has still managed to give me valuable advice via email and phone. His retirement is certainly a great loss for the Tufts community. I wish for Prof. Marcopolous all the best in his future life.”

***From Erik Goldstein, (LA’79, GS’80, FL’80), Professor and Chairman, Department of International Relations, Boston University***

“I dedicated my most recent book to George, with the statement that it was dedicated ‘To an inspired and inspiring teacher.’ I had not intended to major in history at Tufts. George changed that, and with some surprise, I find myself all these years later a professional historian. I was a student at Tufts from 1974 to 1980. George always had time for me and any other student who wanted to speak with him. I not only learned about history from him, but I also realized later that I also learned how to teach from him. His support didn’t end when I left Tufts, but he continued to be supportive, reading the draft of my Ph.D. thesis, of my first articles, and my first book. His generosity of time was always amazing. When I was in my first university post, in England, and I would write to him with some question about my work or about my lectures, he would phone (and in those days, it was not as straightforward as now) and talk me through whatever the question was about. Throughout my career, he has always been there to provide sound and practical advice about my research, writing, and about academic life. There are many reasons I am immensely fond of Tufts, but the root of that fondness is the remarkable teaching and mentorship provided by George.”

***From June Grasso, (GS’76, 81), Associate Professor of Social Science, Boston University***

“George Marcopoulos has shared his wealth of knowledge and wisdom with generations of students and graduate students. I was privileged to be one of them. I was a Teaching Assistant in George’s course in European history when the History Department was in transition. The job market for history Ph.D.s was virtually non-existent, and the Ph.D. program was terminated. I think many of us thought we had already reached the pinnacle of our teaching careers as T.A.s, but that turned out not to be true.

From hindsight, I can see how much better off I am as a teacher having been “forced” to T.A. in European history. By that, I mean there were no T.A. positions then in Chinese history, my primary area. From George, we didn’t just learn the chronology of European history, but were treated to the often amusing, sometimes horrifying, anecdotes from lives of historical figures, mostly royalty, George’s passion, I have benefited in two ways. By teaching about Europe, I drew connections to events simultaneously happening in Asia, something many area specialists overlook. But, more importantly, I learned from George that one can reach students more effectively by making the details of history memorable.

George was also a great mentor. We graduate students had a standing invitation to join him for lunch at the Fletcher School Faculty Dining Hall, back in the days when George never missed an opportunity to top off a meal with a scoop of ice cream. Hanging out with the faculty gave us useful insight into academic politics, even if Tufts politics pale in comparison to what I would later encounter at Boston University. At one lunch, several History Department faculty were having an animated discussion about a job candidate’s interview earlier that day. The candidate in French history brought excellent credentials, but when asked how he would approach a course on the French Revolution, he answered, “I would not teach anything beyond the 17<sup>th</sup> century.” George made it clear to us that that was not the right answer.

The cohort I T.A.’ed with entered the job market when prospects were dismal, but everyone is doing fine. Three of us are tenured at B.U. and another is a chair of a large history department. We all have different academic specialties, but George played a positive role in our professional development.”

***From Antonios Papantoniou, (LA’04)***

“I would like to thank Professor Marcopoulos for all of the time and help he dedicated to my development while at Tufts. I took two classes with the professor, Byzantine Empire and Europe since 1815, through which I redeveloped a particular affinity toward history.

Furthermore, the professor would always make himself available for meetings in his office, where we would have lengthy discussions relating to history and especially that of my home country, Greece. During these meetings, Professor Marcopoulos also gave me valuable advice with respect to my career, serving in effect as my primary advisor, even though I did not major in history.

In resume it was honor to have Professor Marcopoulos as a teacher and I wish him all the best in his life after Tufts.”

*See Marcopoulos  
continued on page 11*

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*From David J. Proctor, (LA'94, GS'01), Department Administrator, Department of Classics, Tufts University*

"This is perhaps one of the hardest things I have ever had to write. Professor Marcopoulos has, quite literally, been one of the most influential forces not only in my academic career, but in my life. He has shown me how to be a scholar, a colleague, an advisor in my own right and above all else, a teacher. He has for the last ten years been my mentor and my friend. To describe in a few sentences the impact of someone who has helped make you the person that you are is not an easy task.

George Marcopoulos is, without question, one of the most extraordinary individuals it has ever been my privilege to associate with. He is not only an outstanding mentor and one of the finest teachers I have ever worked with, but he is also someone who has dedicated his life to his field and to his students.

As a scholar, Professor Marcopoulos has remained a well-respected member of his field, someone whom other scholars look to for advice and assistance. He is as comfortable discussing the history of the Byzantine Empire and medieval Southeastern Europe as he is talking about the Napoleonic Wars, Hitler or the current state of the European Union. Professor Marcopoulos represents something which has become more and more rare, a European historian who understands the full scope of historical development from the late classical through the modern period.

This breadth of knowledge actively infuses Professor Marcopoulos' teaching. In my own work with him, he has always encouraged me to think beyond the narrow confines of one outlook or perspective. He has always pushed me to absorb the latest scholarship while at the same time to be careful not to become subsumed in the latest trend or style of analysis which might be popular one day and discredited the next. He has taught me to think critically not just about the factual information I am learning, but about how I process and evaluate that knowledge. In addition, he has shown me that breadth and depth can co-exist in scholarship, that becoming expert in one area does not mean that you sacrifice your intellectual pursuits in others. More specifically, by opening my mind to the full progress of European history, Professor Marcopoulos has helped me to realize how interconnected history truly is. My M.A. thesis was and my current dissertation work is directed toward an examination of that interconnectedness. My own research owes much to Professor Marcopoulos' influence and guidance.

Professor Marcopoulos values greatly collegiality and has instilled in me the necessity of building strong and supportive relationships with my own colleagues. He has taught me the importance of standing up for my own beliefs and perceptions while at the same time being respectful to those who might disagree with me. He has also given me the confidence to express my own views and interact with faculty less as a student and more as a colleague.

Perhaps Professor Marcopoulos' most profound influence on me has been in showing me how to be a teacher. I served as his teaching assistant and then section instructor from 1996-1999 and 2002-2005 in the two European history survey courses he has taught since he joined the Tufts faculty in 1961. History 10—Europe to 1815, and History 11—Europe since 1815, are broad introductory courses that try to provide students with an understanding of the ebb and flow of European history. These survey courses are unique in that they make a real effort to include ALL of Europe, including Southeastern Europe, an area most Europeanists touch on only briefly, if at all, in a survey course. History 10 and 11 are both popular with freshmen and serve as points of entry for many future history majors. In addition, however, they are valuable for existing history majors who want an overview of European history. That being the case, teaching these courses requires a significant amount of skill. The lecturer must ensure that the material covered is accessible to first-year students while still providing another level of interpretation which will keep the interest of more advanced students. Professor Marcopoulos is a master at this kind of teaching, and it is from him that I have begun to learn how to teach to a truly heterogeneous student body.

In addition, Professor Marcopoulos always puts his responsibility to his students first, whether it be a freshman in History 10 or a graduate student in one of his seminars, or one of his advisees. He is always available in office hours for consultation, aid and advice and, for his graduate students, has been generous in not only allowing but encouraging students to contact him at home. He believes it is his fundamental responsibility, and the responsibility of every faculty member for that matter, to provide students with the best education and academic guidance possible. That philosophy has guided every day of his 45-year career at Tufts.

Above all, in his dealings with students, Professor Marcopoulos is a man of immense kindness and compassion. He understands the trials and tribulations that graduate and undergraduate students endure. He is sympathetic and supportive, understanding yet firm. He wants each and every student he teaches to reach their full potential and he wants to do his part to make sure that that happens.

When I took on my first set of pre-major advisees in the fall of 2004 and taught History 11 and History 10 as my own courses in the summer and fall of 2005, the overriding influence in how I taught my classes and interacted with my students was that of Professor Marcopoulos. Whenever I ran into a problem or had a question, I would go to him for advice and support, and he was always there for me.

I am proud to have worked with George Marcopoulos as his student and colleague and I am even more proud to call him a friend."

## ALUMINI

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

four of her 12th-grade students in Nyanga township and the state of post-Apartheid education. Her experience in South Africa was quite transformative. While at Tufts, Molly had taken courses on South Africa and read a great deal, but her time in South Africa proved a wonderful opportunity to witness first-hand the challenges and successes of their ongoing transformation to democracy. She was able to integrate herself into two different communities and the lives of two groups of students who taught her as much as she taught them. Ultimately, Molly hopes that her film will contribute to a better understanding in the United States, around the world and in South Africa of the challenges of educating young people in South Africa. Information on the film can be found at [www.matricthefilm.com](http://www.matricthefilm.com). She currently lives in Washington, D.C., where she is editing the film and raising funds for its completion.

**Geoffrey North**, (LA'98), graduated from Rutgers University Law School in 2001. Currently, he is an associate in the law firm of Gibbons, Del Deo, Doolan, Griffinger and Vecchione, P.C. in Newark, New Jersey.

**Sara Byala**, (LA'97), has completed her Ph.D. at Harvard University, graduating in June of this year. Her dissertation was on South African museum treatment of culture and heritage in the High Apartheid era and beyond. *History from the Hill* offers its most sincere congratulations to Sara on this very significant achievement. Well done!



**Sara Byala, (LA'97), left, hands in her dissertation.**

## A FAREWELL TO ISABEL ABBOTT

BY DAVID J. PROCTOR

The History Department was deeply saddened by the passing on August 6, 2006, of Mrs. Isabel Abbot. Isabel was the wife of former History Department faculty member and chair Freeland Abbott. She worked for several years in the department as a teaching assistant for Professor Albert Imlah in his History 1/2 (now 10/11) European history survey courses. From 1971 to 1987 Isabel served the Tufts community as a member of the Undergraduate Admissions staff. Even after retiring in 1987, she remained active at Tufts by volunteering to work with international students to help them improve their skills in English. Isabel was a member of the Board of the Cambridge Friends School and was also an active resident of the Brookhaven at Lexington retirement community. She will be deeply missed by all of her friends and colleagues at Tufts and at Brookhaven.

## WHAT'S NEWS

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American Political Studies at Harvard. He is completing a book titled *The New Americans* with sociologists Mary C. Waters and Helen Marrow, to be published by Harvard University Press in the coming academic year. He is also preparing a paper on the intellectual history of conceptions of the "life outcomes" of immigrants, to be presented at a conference at the Russell Sage Foundation this fall.

**Michele Malter**, (GS'07), received a research grant from the Graduate Student Research Awards Committee for her M.A. thesis research on the birth-control movement in India. She has used the funding to support her research in archives at Smith College in MA and on a recent trip to India.

## SHERWIN

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I would say there were times when my research enhanced my teaching, and there were other times when it got in the way of doing my best in the classroom.

HH: *What is next for you? Are there any current areas of research that you are going to focus more on in the years to come?*

MS: My next book is a broad-based history of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

HH. Thank you, Professor Sherwin.

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