

BERKELEY EMERITI TIMES

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Emeriti Luncheon Speaker Series



Thomas Brady, Ph.D.

Peder Sather Chair of History
Emeritus, 2012 Distinguished
Emeritus of the Year

A Borderer's Life
with German History

Saturday, January 26, 2013

The Faculty Club

At our first luncheon in 2013, we have the pleasure of hearing Tom Brady speak about his work as a historian of late medieval and early modern Germany. Thomas Brady, the Peder Sather Chair of History Emeritus, Professor of the Graduate School, and UCBEA 2012 Distinguished Emeritus of the Year, joined the Berkeley faculty in 1991 after working at the University of Oregon for 23 years. He hails from Columbia, Missouri, and came west after completing his undergraduate studies at Notre Dame on an ROTC scholarship, serving in the Navy for three years, and earning his doctorate from the University of Chicago.

In the 1960s, Brady reflects, the Italian Renaissance was "riding high," and so he entered graduate school to study Renaissance and Reformation Europe. His early love of the German language, inspired by his readings of German Romantic poetry, turned his attention from Italy to north of the Alps, where he has found a lifetime's fascination in central Europe, in the southern half of the German-speaking world. There, the populist heritage of his Midwestern childhood found a compelling subject in the large zone of the Holy Roman Empire that, until the creation of modern Germany in the 19th century, was not a powerful centralized nation-state. In this broad swath along the Rhine and the upper Danube, no one political unit became large and powerful. Instead, local populations managed their own affairs.

Brady had an early interest in urban history and the history of cities. This interest broadened to encompass other local municipalities, such as strong rural communes composed of farmers who formed village equivalents to urban civic associations. In areas without a strong national military power, the possibilities for centralized co-

ercion were fewer. Instead, local governments needed to accommodate the needs of different groups, especially those of large religious minorities in an area that came to hold significant populations of both Roman Catholics and largely Lutheran Protestants.

Brady's research has focused on the period when what he calls the histories of central Europe intersect with the histories of religion; during the Reformation, as he says, these two subjects become one. Across the area he has studied there is little uniformity, and it is hard to make cogent generalizations where one locale can be seen to stand for a broader region. He has thus tellingly titled his recent book *German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650* (Cambridge, 2009). This acclaimed work has garnered praise as "one of those few books which can truly be termed a masterpiece" and as "a grand oeuvre: a loving, thoughtful, and revisionist evaluation and synthesis of 250 years of German political and religious history."

We hope you will join us to hear Tom Brady share his reflections on his life as a historian of Reformation Germany and receive his well-deserved award as 2012 Distinguished Emeritus Professor of the Year.

For the announcement of Tom Brady's selection as Distinguished Emeritus of the Year, see the September 2012 issue of the Emeriti Times, available at <http://thecenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/BETS12.pdf>.

Ann Swidler Discusses Altruism in Africa

On December 1, Professor of Sociology Ann Swidler spoke to the Emeriti Association about the relationship between Western altruists and local populations in sub-Saharan Africa. Her talk focused on Malawi, a densely populated country of 15 million that relies on subsistence



agriculture, where she has conducted research since 2004. As Swidler showed, the relationship between altruists and their recipients is mediated strongly through imagination, each conceiving of the other in their own terms.

Defining an altruist as someone who provides something for a person or group that they cannot provide for them-

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Published before each meeting of the UC Berkeley Emeriti Association to provide closer networking for members with meeting announcements, meeting reviews, executive committee actions, pertinent campus news, and to reach out to members who cannot attend the meetings.

selves, Swidler pointed out that the altruist is doing what he or she thinks the other needs. In this way, the activities of contemporary altruists resemble those of 19th-century missionaries. Altruists come to Africa with a generic understanding of “the poor.” Swidler described the delirious excitement they can feel upon meeting the “real orphans” they have come to help.

On the other side of the relationship, the recipients imagine what the altruists can provide for them. The life of rural Africans can be very unpredictable, with the potential for great boons from Westerners, who are presumed to be altruists. For example, a tourist may give his iPod to a local; an iPod costs three years’ salary in Malawi. Or a Peace Corps volunteer may decide to pay the school fees for a child in his or her host family. These gifts cost relatively little to the Westerners, but have a huge impact on the lives of local residents, who thus cast their nets wide in the hope that some good may fall to them.

Altruists arriving in Africa need a trustworthy local broker who will serve as a match-maker and connect them to the groups they have come to help. The broker will teach the altruist some basic local greetings, provide guidance about cultural sensitivity, and explain his own society to the altruist. In a country where only 5% of the population receives a high school education, the brokers are often very bright, the successful children who have moved away from rural villages. They are authoritative interpreters of a society they no longer live in, and as a result, they exoticize it to the altruists in order to emphasize their own modernity. Brokers may regale altruists with tales of local sexual



One of Swidler’s graduate students dances with children and a local contact in Malawi.

practices, or tell “foolish villager” stories.

Altruists depend on their brokers, who in turn have their own interests. If a broker has a relative caring for twenty orphan children who relies on his support, he will naturally propose these children as worthy recipients of an altruist’s help. Because brokers need to manage the altruists in order to ensure their own needs are met, they tell the altruists what they believe they want to hear. Hence, brokers focus on the importance of AIDS or of gender sensitization – topics of concern to Westerners. However, the Malawi population has different priorities. Their first concern is for clean water, then for fertilizer and seed, followed by general health care. Although 11% of the population is HIV positive, AIDS falls low on their list of priorities. Rather than training in how to fish – another Western ideal – they want substantive help in the form of additional resources.

President’s Message

Dear Colleagues,

No, it’s not your imagination. This is a smaller *Emeriti Times* than you are accustomed to receiving. You need not worry, however. The March and April issues of the ET will return to the usual format, replete with news, features, and announcements of interest to Emeriti. The reasons the UCBEA Board decided to shrink this issue are two-fold. First, given that the last came out in mid-November and the campus was effectively on holiday break since mid-December, there is scant news to report. A second related reason is that during the December period, a number of faculty and staff involved with production of the ET were unavailable. It also warrants mention that having this short issue results in savings to the Association which are available for other UCBEA programs. Apropos of the latter, we still need mentors for both undergraduates and younger faculty. I wish you and yours a healthy, fulfilling, and peaceful 2013.

Yours Cordially,
Edwin M. Epstein,
UCBEA President



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2012–13 Emeriti Luncheon Series

We hope to see you at the upcoming Emeriti Association Luncheons, held on Saturdays at the Faculty Club. The social hour begins at 11:00 a.m., luncheon is served at noon, and the speaker's presentation is at 1:00 p.m. Confirm your luncheon choice for January 26 by submitting the enclosed reservation form.

January 26: Tom Brady, History, 2012 Distinguished Emeritus of the Year

March 16: Randy Schekman, Molecular and Cell Biology, Howard Hughes Investigator

May 4: Matías Tarnopolsky, Director, Cal Performances

Emeriti Table

Gatherings of the bi-weekly Emeriti lunch table will resume on January 24 and continue on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, from noon to 2:00 p.m., in the northwest corner of the Great Hall of the Faculty Club. A table is set aside exclusively for emeriti faculty to enjoy a shared meal and friendly conversation.

Travel Opportunities

Feel the need to get away? The UC/CUCRA Travel Program may be your answer. It is a travel program designed especially for UC retirees, managed by Collette Travel. Each year a new selection of domestic and international destinations and adventures is planned. The customary commission for the travel agent is instead donated to the Council of University of California Retiree Associations (CUCRA), of which the Berkeley Retirement Center is a member.

CUCRA's travel maven, Rosemary Norling, has arranged several new 2013 travel opportunities for UC retirees, including 10- to 16-day trips to Patagonia, Historic America, Alaska, Croatia, and Italy. For an overview of the exciting tours available and their dates, follow this link to: <http://cucra.ucsd.edu/new/documents/2013TravelProgram.pdf>.

Further information about UC travel opportunities is available by contacting Collette Vacations at 877/872-4331. When conferring with Collette staff, please indicate your UC affiliation.