

## Memorial Resolution for Prof. John Pettegrew

It is with great sadness that I enter this memorial resolution for my friend John Pettegrew, professor and chair of Lehigh's history department and a distinguished scholar of U.S. intellectual and cultural history, who died on May 29 from cancer.

John was considered one of the leading historians of modern American masculinity, and produced a body of scholarship characterized by archival range, methodological flexibility, conceptual sophistication and a dual commitment to historical rigor and contemporary political relevance.

The recipient of awards for his teaching, Pettegrew offered a wide range of popular courses in 19th- and 20th-century history—including recent courses on documentary film as a practice of contemporary historical interpretation—and on the history of sports, evolution and culture. He was a much sought-after mentor to graduate students and trained an entire generation of U.S. intellectual and cultural historians at Lehigh, supervising nine Ph.D. dissertations and 23 M.A. theses in history and American Studies. He also served on dozens of Ph.D. exam and dissertation committees.

He was a prolific and accomplished scholar, a “natural community builder” with a deep and unwavering commitment to social justice, as well as a warm and caring friend.

Pettegrew's influential first book, Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America (2007), documented the cultural process by which millions of Americans came to believe in the late 19th century that men were inherently disposed to violence, aggression and the domination of women. In his second monograph, Light It Up: The Marine Eye for Battle in the War for Iraq (2015), he extended this inquiry into the evolution of violent masculinity in a highly original study of the technologies and ideologies of martial manhood in the U.S. Marine corps during the era of the post-9/11 war in Iraq.

The feminist commitments that animated both of these books also found expression in the three-volume anthology, Public Women, Public Words: A Documentary History of American Feminism (1997-2002) that Pettegrew co-edited with Lehigh professor Dawn Keetley. In A Pragmatist's Progress? Richard Rorty and American Intellectual History (2000), Pettegrew brought together some of the leading intellectual historians of this generation to reflect on the implications of American pragmatism for the practice of intellectual history. His preoccupation with feminism, pragmatism and intellectual history was further extended most recently in an article in The Journal of Women's History (Spring 2018). At the time of his death, he was at work on a new book, “Love in the Twentieth Century: an Intellectual and Political History.”

A committed citizen of the university from the time he joined the Lehigh faculty in 1996, Pettegrew contributed to many university initiatives. He chaired the history department since 2016 and was the director of the interdisciplinary program in American Studies for fourteen years. From 2007-14, he was co-founder and director of the South Side Initiative, a nationally recognized project of democratic university-community collaboration between Lehigh and the working-class neighborhoods of South Bethlehem, including the Town Hall Lecture Series at Bethlehem City Hall. In recent years, he also helped to create the Graduate Certificate in Documentary Film and the LVAIC documentary film minor. Over the years, he produced a number of documentaries, including "Work in Progress: Bethlehem Steel During World War II," which grew from a class assignment to his students and ultimately aired on the History Channel's History Showcase. He was also a driving force behind Lehigh's Community Gardens project. The gardens have expanded beyond the first shared space on the Goodman Campus, and now include several gardens throughout the South Side-- the Lehigh Community Garden will be renamed in his memory.

Born in Appleton, Wisconsin, in 1959, John Pettegrew received his BA from Valparaiso University in 1981, a JD from Marquette University Law School in 1984, his MA in history from the University of Chicago in 1986, and Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1994.

John took special joy in cooking, skiing and traveling with his partner, Lehigh Associate Professor Tamara Myers and his children Nick Pettegrew, a current student at Lehigh, and daughter Helen Keetley. He also loved good music, film, fly fishing and sports of many kinds—although he had a special affinity for the Green Bay Packers.

He is survived by his partner, his children, and parents Mary and Fred Pettegrew of Prospect, Ky.; his sister Jane Pettegrew Stewart (and husband Dr. Robert Stewart), also of Prospect; and brother Jim Pettegrew (and partner Gina Ferrigno) of Placitas, N.M.

A public celebration of John's life and career will be held this afternoon at 5 p.m. in the Asa Dining Room.

*--adapted from Linda Harbrecht on Lehigh News [<https://www1.lehigh.edu/news/mourning-the-loss-of-professor-john-pettegrew>]*