

Indiana University Alumni Newsletter

P * H * I * L * O * S * O * P * H * Y

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College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Association

Fall 2008

Beloved by all, Morgan moves on to retirement

Chancellor's Professor Michael Morgan retires after 33 years with department.

Chancellor's Professor **Michael Morgan** retired after this past spring semester. Most of you reading this newsletter have, in some way, been touched by Professor Morgan. It is hard to imagine the Philosophy Department without him. In his 33 years with Indiana University, Morgan has taught 120 courses to roughly 4,500 students. In addition, he supervised at least 10 doctoral dissertations and served on countless committees. He also was director of graduate studies and conducted departmental scheduling for 25 years.

Morgan's university service has also been outstanding. He served on both tenure and promotion and policy committees in the College and was associate dean of faculties for three years. He also founded the High School Philosophy Institute which was held for 15 summers at IUB's Sycamore Hall.

Somehow Morgan also found time to write 60-plus articles and more than 50 reviews, and to write or edit 15 books. He is a historian of philosophy and Jewish religious thought with wide range. He has published extensively in Ancient Greek philosophy, early modern philosophy, and 20th-century philosophy and intellectual culture.

Even as Morgan's teaching career drew to a close, his scholarly output accelerated. In 2007, Cambridge published his forthcoming *Discovering Levinas* and the *Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy*, a volume co-edited by Mike and including his essay "Emil Fackenheim, the Holocaust and Philosophy." He also completed the final editorial work on a third volume appearing in 2007, *Emil Fackenheim's Epitaph for German Judaism*. In 2008, his book *On Shame* appeared in



At a spring 2008 conference in his honor, Professor Mike Morgan (second from left) is flanked by wife Audrey and daughters Debbie and Sarah. At right, conference speakers Robert Bernasconi, Shaul Magid, Paul Franks, Leora Batinzky, and Joshua Shaw with Morgan.



the Routledge Thinking in Action Series and SUNY Press published *The Philosopher as Witness: Fackenheim and Responses to the Holocaust*, co-edited with Benjamin Pollock and including his essay, "Fackenheim and Levinas: Living and Thinking after Auschwitz."

To honor Morgan's contributions, the department co-sponsored The Quest for the Past and Future of Jewish Philosophy: a Conference in Honor of Professor Michael Morgan, in cooperation with the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program. The late-March event included speakers such as Benjamin Pollock, former philosophy colleague Paul Franks, Leora Batinzky, Robert Bernasconi, Shaul Magid,

and alumnus **Joshua Shaw**, PhD'04, Morgan's former thesis advisee. A reception followed at which Morgan's daughters, Debbie and Sarah, presented a mock-up poster of "Philosophy for Dummies by Michael Morgan."

Not one to stop working altogether in retirement, Morgan will spend next fall in London as a visiting professor at the Leo Baeck College and associated with the Forum of European Philosophy at the London School of Economics. And last but not least, if you run into him, be sure to ask about granddaughters Sasha and Gabby.

Around Sycamore

From the chair Transitions continue



Tim O'Connor

Two years ago, I noted that we were in a time of significant transition in our faculty. A glance at the rest of this newsletter shows that the transition has continued.

This May brought the retirement of a

beloved, even revered, colleague, **Michael Morgan**. From what I have heard over the past few months, I'll bet that a number of my readers are thinking, "Professor Morgan was the best teacher I ever had." This August, we welcome two new and highly distinguished colleagues, **Allen Wood** and **Rega Wood**. While the transition we foresaw is not yet quite complete, we are already looking ahead to exciting new initiatives in the department.

Check the department homepage (www.indiana.edu/~phil) throughout 2008–09 to learn what's on the horizon for philosophy at IU.

Several alumni and other friends of the department have contacted me to express interest in being better in touch with us. Though you are scattered around the country and indeed across the globe, we'd like to provide more opportunities for us to reconnect. We're thinking not just of events here on campus, but possibly also "road shows"—social gatherings in conjunction with our annual professional meetings on each coast and in the Midwest. (Since a handful of us will be there for any given meeting, we thought, "Why not throw a party?") If you'd like to be informed about such events, please shoot me an email at toconnor@indiana.edu. — *Tim O'Connor*

Philosophy hosts two international conferences

In September 2007, the IU Philosophy Department hosted Agency and Responsibility: Perspectives from Metaphysics, Ethics, and the Emerging Sciences of Brain and Behavior. We invited 20 philosophers from the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, and Italy to join us in a three-day conversation centered around seven lectures.

The wide-ranging discussion was lively and thought provoking. But what really had people talking long afterwards was the blowout cookout dinner and party at **Tim O'Connor's** house. Credit for flawless organization of the whole shebang goes to indefatigable IU grad student **Allen Gehring**. (Several participants wrote to say that it was the best-organized and most fun conference they had ever attended.) Gehring has since locked himself in a room and won't come out until his thesis is finished, no matter how much we offer to pay him to organize the next big event. Visit www.indiana.edu/~agenresp for more about this successful conference.

We also hosted, in May 2008, a conference on the philosophy of art, gathering together philosophers from as far off as California and the U.K. to discuss issues of Genres, Concepts, and Categories in the Arts. The conference was the second in the department's Aesthetics Anarchy series, and saw papers on such topics as the role of the conceptual imagination in appreciating music; gender in horror films; and the

distinction between the categories of art and craft.

IU's own **Michael Morgan** delivered a talk on whether holocaust films constitute a genre, and **Sandra Shapshay** offered a clarification of Schopenhauer's theory of tragedy. Our graduate program was also represented at the conference: **Joshua Shaw**, PhD'04, now a professor at Penn State Erie, addressed the question of whether narrative video games can in some real sense count as artworks, and our current student **Michael Rings** explored the aesthetic circumstances of one musical artist covering another artist's song. By all accounts, the conference was a terrific success, with several participants comparing it favorably to the hey-day of the American Society for Aesthetics meetings. In addition to the high philosophical quality and intensity of the talks and discussions, the conference's success was aided by Bloomington's beautiful May weather; a summer cook-out at Tim O'Connor's house (which ran into the wee hours of the morning); and Michael Rings's hard work doing double-duty as both a conference presenter and graduate administrative assistant. Learn more at www.indiana.edu/~aesthete.



LEARN MORE:

- www.indiana.edu/~agenresp
- www.indiana.edu/~aesthete

Two scholars join faculty

We are very pleased to announce that Allen and Rega Wood, two outstanding philosophers coming to us from Stanford University, will join the department this fall. **Allen Wood** is one of the foremost scholars of 19th-century German philosophy, especially the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. The author of many books and articles and recipient of many awards, he is the co-general editor of the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, and he has helped to edit and translate two volumes of that large edition, including the centerpiece volume, *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Rega Wood is a distinguished scholar of medieval philosophy and a renowned

expert in medieval Latin paleography. She has overseen critical editions of works by William Ockham, John Duns Scotus, and Adam de Wodeham. Currently, she heads Stanford's Richard Rufus Project (rrp.stanford.edu). The project is animated by her conviction that standard histories of the development of medieval philosophy have a major omission: they fail to note that Rufus, whose work was unknown to us until fairly recently, was a pivotal figure, being the source of a number of ideas we associate with later, more famous thinkers. Our students are very fortunate to have the opportunity to study with these two distinguished scholars.

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Alumni news

1990s

Andrew U.D. Straw, BA'92, MS'95, JD'97, has started a lobbying group called Disabled Alumni of America. He writes that the group's goal is to improve laws, public policies, and public attitudes for the benefit of disabled university alumni across America. The group's Web site is www.disabledalumni.org. Straw lives in Dunedin, New Zealand, with his wife, Paola Voci, MA'97, PhD'02, a senior lecturer of Chinese at the University of Otago.

Darren J. Schmidt, BA'96, is the director of litigation counsel at Universal Music

Group in Santa Monica, Calif. He previously worked at the law firm Jenner & Block in Chicago. Schmidt lives in Venice, Calif.

2000s

Jack Green Musselman, PhD'00, is director of the Center for Ethics and Leadership at St. Edward's University, where he also serves as an assistant professor of philosophy. He lives and works in Austin, Texas.

Matthew L. Drabek, BA'05, is pursuing graduate studies at the University of Iowa.

Adam D. Armstrong, Cert/BA'06, is a sales partner for Da-Lite Screen Company

Inc. His wife, Ashley (Bell), BA'06, is an associate sterilization scientist for DePuy Orthopaedics Inc. The couple lives and works in Warsaw, Ind.

Hilmi M. Demir, PhD'06, married Leslie (Lutz), MA/MPA'05. In May 2007, they wrote that they planned to move to Ankara, Turkey. He planned to teach philosophy at Bilkent University, and she was working on obtaining a teaching position in English at the university. She previously worked as a marketing and development coordinator for Kalamazoo (Mich.) Loaves and Fishes, a not-for-profit food bank.

Student successes

The 2007-08 year has been a particularly good one for our recent and nearly graduated philosophy students, reports Director of Placement **Marcia Baron**.

- **Joshua Alexander** is going to Siena College in New York.
- **Tony Aumann** will stay close by with a job at Ohio State.
- **John Ceballes** will spend a year at the University of Delaware.
- **Alex Klein** has a one-year post-doc at Cornell then will move to California State, Long Beach.
- **Steve Harris** returns to Indiana with a job at the University of Evansville.
- **Georg Theiner** begins a two-year Killam post-doc at the University of Alberta

In addition to beginning new jobs, Klein and Theiner are newly wed. Congratulations all around!

Spring awards

The department was also pleased to honor several students at the annual spring awards reception.

Undergraduate honorees:

- Betty Neal Hamilton Outstanding Service Award – **Robert Clark III**
- Academic Excellence – **Christopher Austin**
- Oscar R. Ewing Essay – **Alex Boeglin**
- Dona Roberts Biddle Scholarship – **Isabel Estevez**

Graduate honorees:

- Academic Excellence – **Matthew Carlson**
- Outstanding Associate Instructor – **Michael Koss**
- Oscar R. Ewing Essay – **Susan Blake**
- Nelson Dissertation Fellowship – **Cameron Buckner**

Alumni spotlight: Joshua Shaw, PhD'04

Shaw perseveres in academia

I defended my dissertation on Levinas's ethics, written under **Mike Morgan**'s guidance, in June 2004. I worried before going on the market that my topic might hinder my chances at landing a tenure-track job. I therefore marketed myself as a generalist — someone happy to teach large, introductory classes on many areas and many periods of philosophy. This made me a good fit for Penn State Erie, where I have been for four years.

My time at Penn State has been a rollercoaster ride. Penn State Erie is a small school, roughly 3,000 students. Our students are bright. At 40 students, my classes are large but my teaching load is reasonable. And I have a lot of freedom to design my own courses.

The lone philosopher at PSU Erie, I generally enjoy being the entire philosophy department. My first years in Erie were among the happiest of my life. Among other things, I enjoyed the interdisciplinary aspect of my new job — getting to interact with poets, political scientists, and English professors for a change. However, I began to feel isolated from the profession. Mike Morgan, along with **Jonathan Weinberg** and **Peg Brand**, steered me toward conference and publishing opportunities that keep me in touch with the philosophical community.

I also find it difficult to teach in an environment where my interactions with students are largely confined to introductory courses. I find it difficult to develop a rapport with great students only to have my connection to them end after they exhaust the introductory classes I teach.

The greatest difficulty I have faced, how-

ever, has been in the area of publishing. What surprised me was the turnaround time in academic publishing. I began submitting articles to journals almost immediately upon arriving in Erie, and I completed a book-length manuscript by the end of my second year. But the works ended up bogged down in the "revise and resubmit" stage for up to three years and the book was lost on an editor's desk for nearly a year.

This is when I thought about leaving academia and I got accepted to several law schools. Around the same time, my book on Levinas's ethics was accepted for publication at the young, peer-reviewed Cambria Press.

After a lot of soul searching, I decided to continue to work toward tenure instead of leaving academia. The decision was partly practical. I became engaged this past year to Rischelle Bayless, a kind and wonderful French teacher whom I met in Erie. We hope to start a family, and it makes sense to remain in Erie, where we both have stable, rewarding, well-paying jobs.

I really enjoyed my time in Bloomington. I had a few opportunities to return to Bloomington this past year: first, in March, for the conference celebrating Mike Morgan's retirement; and again, in May, for the second Aesthetics Anarchy conference. Both visits left me feeling nostalgic. I was surprised by how much I had missed Bloomington: the restaurants, the farmers' market and coffee shops, the academic community. In retrospect, I wish I had taken more time to appreciate these things while I was a graduate student.

Travel IU style!



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Attach additional pages if necessary. Mail to the address above, or fax to (812) 855-8266.

PHILOSOPHY

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