

Contributed by Glennys Young, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of Washington

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I am deeply saddened to let you know that our beloved colleague George Behlmer died on January 4, 2024.

George earned his B.A., with highest honors, in 1970 from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, he was also a Regents' Scholar and a President's Undergraduate Research Fellow. He was a California state finalist in the Rhodes Scholarship Competition.

George did his graduate work in British and modern European history at Stanford University, where he earned his M.A. in 1972 and his Ph.D. in 1977. While a graduate student, he took courses in the Psychology Department to pursue his interest in psychological factors and historical change. His dissertation: "The Child Protection Movement in England, 1860-1890," was advised by Peter Stansky.

During the 1977 to 1978 academic year, he was a Teaching and Research Fellow in European history at Stanford. From September 1978 to August 1979, he was a Lecturer in History at Yale University.

George's appointment at the University of Washington as an Assistant Professor of History began on September 16, 1979. In 1982, he won a Distinguished Teaching Award as an Assistant Professor. When interviewed about the award and asked about his memories of teaching, he noted the following: "In the first Irish history class I taught, I had a role-playing exercise. The debate was over whether the British Army should be forced to leave Northern Ireland. One student, who was Irish and thought of the IRA as heroes, had to argue for the British. He got involved more than any student I've ever had. He even called the Rev. Ian Paisley in Ireland and interviewed him on tape. During the class, when he was asked a question, he played the tape. It blew everyone away."

His dedication to teaching the history of Northern Ireland and of the Republic – and especially to examining viewpoints about the conflicts there – led to four UW study abroad programs in Belfast between 2001 and 2007. His lifelong affection for that part of the world culminated in his 2012 Alumni Association History Lecture Series, *Revenge and Reconciliation in Modern Ireland*.

George was a prize-winning and prolific historian. In 1982, he published *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England* (Stanford, 1982), a revised version of his Stanford dissertation. It won the

best first book prize from the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association. *Friends of the Family: The English Home and Its Guardians, 1850-1940*, also from Stanford, came out in 1998, closely followed by *Singular Continuities: Tradition, Nostalgia, and Identity in Modern British Culture* (Stanford, 2000). His most recent book was *Risky Shores: Savagery and Colonialism in the Western Pacific* (Stanford, 2018), which won the 2019 Stansky Book Prize, sponsored by the North American Conference on British Studies. The book was the subject of a featured review in the June 2020 issue of the *American Historical Review*. Among his prize-winning articles were “Grave Doubts: Victorian Medicine, Moral Panic, and the Signs of Death,” (*Journal of British Studies*, 2003), which was the co-winner of the 2003 North American Studies Association Donald Gray Prize.

Over the course of his career, he served on numerous Ph.D. committees. He was an active member of NACBS and PCCBS and held several leadership positions, including the presidency of PCCBS from 2011-12.

If you would like to write to Jane Cater, her email address is [jcater@earthlink.net](mailto:jcater@earthlink.net). If you would like to make a donation in George’s memory, Jane asks that you consider the Continuum Hospice Foundation: <https://continuumwa.com/donation/>.