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Historical Society Launches Initiative to Honor Late UAA Professor Steve Haycox Recruits 14 Scholars to Advance New Research into Alaska's History

To honor the pathbreaking scholarship of Alaska's preeminent historian, the late Professor Stephen Haycox, the Alaska Historical Society is launching an initiative designed to advance new research into Alaska's history.

The Society has asked more than a dozen historians to undertake research into topics of Alaska history influenced by Haycox's work. Each will present their findings during the AHS annual conference, scheduled for October 7-10 in Homer. The papers are to be compiled into a book slated for publication in 2027.

Haycox, who died unexpectedly in August 2025, profoundly shaped Alaska's understanding of its history. A founding faculty member in the History Department at the University of Alaska Anchorage, for more than 50 years he authored seminal works including *Alaska: An American Colony* and *Battleground Alaska: Fighting Federal Power in America's Last Wilderness*. Haycox also was a trusted voice on public policy and a resource for scholars, journalists and the public.

The initiative is a Festschrift, a German term meaning "celebration writing" which often takes the form of a book honoring a respected academic and is usually presented to the honoree during their lifetime. Before his passing, Haycox worked with the AHS to plan the initiative and recommended scholars to invite to participate.

AHS board member, former board president and University of Alaska Fairbanks professor emeritus William Schneider initiated the project and serves as its coordinator.

"During my career, I depended enormously on Professor Haycox's scholarship and know many Alaskans did too," said Schneider. "I suggested this initiative to recognize Steve and celebrate his ground-breaking contributions to Alaska's history and set the stage for future historians who will benefit from his work and that produced for this project."

The scholars and their research topics are:

Pierce Bateman, University of Alaska Anchorage history professor: “The Politics of Alaska’s Cold War Subnational Diplomacy;”

Annaliesa Claydon, former Alaskan and adjunct researcher at the University of Tasmania: “Of Shearwaters, Whales, and Seals: Some Entanglements of the Bering and Tasman Worlds, c. 1850-1900;”

Ross Coen, editor of the journal *Alaska History* and lecturer in history at the University of Washington: “Still Searching for that Usable Past;”

Bathsheba Demuth, Brown University associate professor of environmental history and author of *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait*: “Thinking with Alaskan Land: or Why Alaska is the Best Place to Write Environmental History;”

Holly Miowak Guise, Iñupiaq historian from Anchorage and Unalakleet, and author of *Alaska Native Resilience: Voices from World War II*: “Centering Alaska Native History: A Focus on the 20th Century;”

Ian Hartman, University of Alaska Anchorage associate dean and history professor, AHS board member and author of *Black Lives in Alaska* – “introduction to the Festschrift and appraisal of Dr. Haycox’s work and its impact on Alaska history scholarship;”

Mary Mangusso, University of Alaska Fairbanks history professor emeritus and author with Haycox of *An Alaska Anthology: Interpreting the Past*: “Biography and the Work of History;”

David Ramseur, former journalist, AHS board member and past president and author of *Melting the Ice Curtain* – “Alaska-Russia Relations: The Vital Role of Alaska Native Peoples;”

Lisa Weissler, former natural resource and oil and gas attorney and author of *Capitol Crude: The Impact of Oil on Alaska Politics*: “Oil and Alaska Politics, Learning from History;”

Phil Wight, University of Alaska Fairbanks history professor, AHS board member and author of forthcoming *Arctic Artery: The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System*: “Myths and Materialism: Alaska’s Energetic Past and Fractious Future;”

Leanna Williams, University of Alaska Fairbanks doctoral candidate in Arctic and Northern Studies and AHS board member: “Flight, Fame and Frontier: Alaska Aviation in the Popular Imagination, 1926-1938;”

Charles Wohlforth, former Alaska journalist and author of more than a dozen books including *The Whale and the Supercomputer*: “First Drafts: The changing role of journalism in recording Alaska's history and establishing its cultural narrative;”

Andrei Znamenski, University of Memphis professor of history and author of *Shamanism and Christianity: Native Encounters with Russian Orthodox Missions in Siberia and Alaska, 1820-1917*: “Alaska in Geopolitical Imagination of Current Russia.”

Dagmar Phillips, Dr. Haycox’s widow: “a family perspective on her late husband.”

The Festschrift is designed to encourage Alaskans to think deeply about the state’s history and new directions in its study and provide a forum to discuss the soundness of the interpretations and conclusions of the presenters. The AHS has received interest from academic presses in publishing the papers.

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