

BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING NEWS! BREA

History and Philosophy Department Newsletter

Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Victoria Khiterer, Professor of History
Managing Editor, Logan Lutz, Graduate Assistant



Top Left: Senior First Class of 1899 , Top Right: Students and Faculty 1879
Bottom: A Sketch of Campus around 1900

MU PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORIAN

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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In the past year our faculty published and prepared for publication two books, articles and book reviews, and hosted the 40th MU Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide.

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Letter from the Chair

By Dr. Robyn Davis

Dear Friends,

We are living in an age of declining political and public support for higher education, of threats to democracy and the rule of law, of insidious attacks against the value of creativity, ingenuity, and the power and worth of the human mind. Yet in the face of those erosions, and like our predecessors for the past 170 years, the History and Philosophy faculty at Millersville are mentoring, teaching, and training spirited students and future educators. We relish the privilege.

And we know the value of sharing historical knowledge; indeed, in my note last year I told you that I had implored the PASSHE Board of Governors to impose a United States History class as a graduation requirement at all PASSHE schools! Regrettably, they haven't chosen to act on that recommendation. Frankly, I think a better understanding of our history – and the improved critical thinking skills that the study of history imparts is more urgently needed than ever.

Here on the hall, and as we work towards implementing the University's new Gateway Gen Ed program, the History and Philosophy faculty have been making explicit the connections that exist between what we teach in the classroom and what our students are able to do in the world. You – as historians and teachers of history – already appreciate the value of studying history and appreciate as well the ways in which it fosters the ability to think, to read, to write, to listen, and to look – and to do those things well. Now we'd love for you to tell us how your education in the History or Philosophy department at Millersville helped prepare you for your lives. Send your updates to HISTPHIL@millersville.edu



Of course, the one thing studying history teaches us is that things change (and as the philosopher Heraclitus observed, everything is in flux) – and the department is not immune to the inexorable laws of history. On June 1st, we became the Department of History and Philosophy when the two departments were merged and Drs. Jen Miller and Chuck Ward joined us. (Dr. John Kaiser-Ortiz has left Millersville and moved to New Orleans.)

The Philosophy B.A. has been put into moratorium – we are teaching out the last of the majors over the next few years – and we will continue to offer a Philosophy minor and a certificate in Ethics, along with our B.A. and M.A. in History, B.S.Ed. in Social Studies, along with minors in History and Military Science.

Faculty accomplishments, student successes, alumni achievements are on the pages that follow. Did we miss your news? Send your updates to HISTPHIL@millersville.edu

Connect with us on LinkedIn; follow us on Instagram; and have I mentioned? You should send your updates to HISTPHIL@millersville.edu

Warmest regards,
Dr. Davis

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Faculty News

Dr. Ronald Frankum

During the academic year 2024-2025 prepared for publication his book and published a book review:

Between Two Ambassadors: J. Lawton Collins and his Special Mission to Vietnam, 1954-1955 (Texas Tech University Press, forthcoming 2026).

H-Diplo|RJISF Review Essay of *Nguyễn Phi Vân. A Displaced Nation: The 1954 Evacuation and Its Political Impact on the Vietnam Wars*. Cornell University Press, 2024.



Dr. Tanya Kevorkian

Dr. Tanya Kevorkian's article about her dissertation adviser, "Memorial: Mack Walker (1929-2021)," was published in *Central European History* in December 2024.

She gave a paper on "Mennonite Arrival Stories as a Source for Colonial Lancaster-Area Environmental History" at the German Studies Association meeting in Atlanta in September 2024. She gave a paper on the same topic for the Quest for Learning senior citizen lecture series in Lancaster in October.

In Fall 2024, she attended the American Bach Society and Pennsylvania Historical Association meetings.

For the 2025-26 academic year, Dr. Kevorkian has been awarded a sabbatical to work on her forthcoming book *Environmental History of the Area of Lancaster County, PA Since 1300*. She plans to publish the book in 2029, in time for the 300th anniversary of the establishment of Lancaster County.

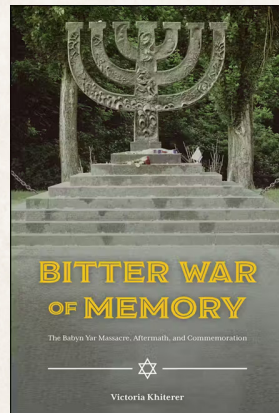


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Faculty News

Dr. Victoria Khiterer



Published her book *Bitter War of Memory: The Babyn Yar Massacre, Aftermath, and Commemoration* (Purdue University Press, 2025).

Dr. Victoria Khiterer also published an article and a book review:

"*For Fear of Babyn Yar: Why did it Take so Long for a Monument to be Built in the Largest Holocaust Site in the Soviet Union?*", *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 42, no. 3 (2024): 105-132.

Vladyslav Hrynevych and Paul Robert Magocsi, eds. *Babyn Yar: History and Memory*. (University of Toronto Press, 2023), *The Russian Review*, 83, no. 4 (2024): 663-664,

Dr. Khiterer participated in two podcasts about her books:

Podcast about *Bitter War of Memory: The Babyn Yar Massacre, Aftermath, and Commemoration* (Purdue University Press, 2025) hosted by Dr. Ari Barbalat of New Books Network on May 11, 2025, <https://ow.ly/Lt9E50WbISr>

Podcast about *Jewish Pogroms in Kiev during the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2015) hosted by Dr. Ari Barbalat of New Books Network, February 21, 2025, <https://newbooksnetwork.com/jewish-pogroms-in-kyiv-during-the-russian-civil-war-1918-1920>

Dr. Khiterer presented five papers at national and international conferences:

Presented "Let My People Go: The Struggle of Kyivan Jews for Immigration to Israel" to the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 2-11, 2025.

Presented "Kyiv as a Center of Soviet Jewish Culture in the 1920s-1930s" to the Seminar "New Perspectives and Works in Progress on Ukrainian Jewry," Jewish Theological Seminary, June 4, 2025.

Presented "Peculiarities of the Anti-Cosmopolitan Campaign and the 'Doctors' Plot' in Kyiv" to the 2025 ASN World Convention, Columbia University, May 22-24, 2025.

Presented Americans at Babyn Yar, Babyn Yar Commemoration in America to the Western Jewish Studies Association Conference, San Diego, CA, March 16-17, 2025.

Presented "How Kyiv Became the Capital of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union," to the 56th Annual Online Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), December 16-19, 2024; and to the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and the Friedrich-Schiller University Jena (Zoom presentation), January 24, 2025.

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Special Events

The 40th Millersville University Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide

Millersville University's 40th Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide hosted three events during the 2024-2025 academic year. The theme of the conference was "The Children of Survivors of the Holocaust and Genocide: Remembrance and Reflection." The conference was organized by co-directors: **Dr. Victoria Khiterer** (History Department) and **Mr. Barry Kornhauser** (Office of Visual and Performing Arts) and by the members of the organizational committee:

Ms. Miriam Baumgartner (Jewish Community Alliance of Lancaster)

Dr. Sarah Brooks (Educational Foundations Department)

Dr. Kasia Jakubiak (English and World Languages Department)

Dr. Tanya Kevorkian (History Department)

Rabbi Jack Paskoff (Congregation Shaarai Shomayim)

Public Lecture and Teachers Workshop were held on September 30, 2024. **Dr. Victoria Aarons** (Trinity University) and **Dr. Alan Berger** (Florida Atlantic University) delivered a public lecture "We do not live in the past, but the past lives in us" (Elie Wiesel): Post-Holocaust Generations and the Extension of Holocaust Memory. Before the lecture, **Dr. Aarons** and **Dr. Berger** led a workshop on teaching about the Holocaust through literature and film.



From left to right: Dr. Alan Berger (Florida Atlantic University), Dr. Victoria Khiterer, Dean Ieva Zake, Mr. Barry Kornhauser and Dr. Victoria Aarons (Trinity University) at the 40th MU Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide

Special Events

The 40th Millersville University Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide

The Alan & Linda Loss Keynote Lecture was held on April 1, 2025. The Loss Lecture The Commitments of the Son of a Survivor: How the Holocaust Has Shaped My Moral, Political and Spiritual Commitments was delivered by **Yossi Klein Halevi**, prominent author, journalist and son of a Holocaust survivor.

The film “Kaddish” screening was held by Millersville University on April 22, 2025. The event began with pre-screening panel discussion, where **Dr. Jack Fischel, Dr. Victoria Khiterer, Dr. Jeff Mufson, Rabbi Jack Paskoff** and **Ms. Julia Fallows** participated. The director of the film **Steve Brand**, who was present at the event, answered the questions of the audience after the film.

The film is about the psychological ramifications of history, the choice between viewing ourselves as perpetual victims or resilient survivors, and the search for a Post-Holocaust Judaism. It is the story of the stormy yet loving relationship between recovering Jewish activist Yossi Klein Halevi and his father Zoltan, who had survived the Holocaust’s devastation of Hungarian Jewry by hiding in a hole in the ground for six months. Meanwhile his parents perished at Auschwitz.

Supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, “Kaddish” originally premiered at New Directors/New Films in 1984, went on to win a Special Jury Award in Documentary at Sundance, and made David Edelstein’s 1985 10 Best Films list in the Village Voice.

All three Holocaust conference events were well attended and received very complimentary feedback from the audience.



CONFERENCE ON THE
**HOLOCAUST
& GENOCIDE**

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Special Events

Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy sponsored a field trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rodin Museum on November 18. Students from Dr. Jen Miller's PHIL 383 Philosophy of Art & Aesthetics class were joined by other MU students for a day of art and conversation about art and philosophy.



The Department of Philosophy hosted a World Philosophy Day event in the Ford Atrium on November 21, 2024. World Philosophy Day was established by UNESCO in 2002. The UNESCO website for WPD includes this statement: *By celebrating World Philosophy Day each year, on the third Thursday of November, UNESCO underlines the enduring value of philosophy for the development of human thought, for each culture and for each individual.* At the MU 2024 WPD event, current students, alumni, current faculty and retired faculty gathered to collectively acknowledge the important role of philosophy for public higher education. A number of students and past faculty spoke at the event to highlight the value of philosophy and its history at MU.



The Department of History and Philosophy is planning another World Philosophy Day event for November 20, 2025.

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Special Events

Annual Ethics & Society Symposium

The Department of Philosophy held its annual Ethics & Society Symposium on March 28, 2025. Current MU students, alumni and former faculty presented on various topics ranging from AI Ethics, Animal Rights, Treatment of Death Row Inmates, Immigrant Resettlement and more. A Symposium for Spring 2026 is in the planning stages.



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Student News and Achievements

2024-2025 History Department Award Recipients

Bolton-Beck Award

Bryanna Nase

Lyman R. Brenner '71 History Scholarship

Reilly Parker

Dr. Abram Foster Scholarship for Excellence in History

Hamida Abdelhalim

Dr. Richard C. Keller Award in American History

Sarah Casler

Louis and Margarete Koppel Award

Paige Shelley

Charlotte A. Lafferty History Scholarship

Bryanna Nase



Professor Ronald Frankum and Chair of the Department of History Professor Robyn Davis presenting the History Department Awards

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Student News and Achievements

2024-2025 History Department Award Recipients

John W. Loose History Research Award

Eric Schubert (2024-2026)
Andi DeMackiewicz (2025-2026)
Sarah Gehret (2024-2025)

C. Maxwell & Edna H Myers History Award

Sarah Dutton

Dr. Robert D. & Roma J. Sayre Excellence in
American History Scholarship

Veronica Fox

Joseph E. Walker American History Scholarship

Nathaniel Morris

The Joan M. Williams Scholarship

Cassidy McNew



History Department Award Recipients with Dean Ieva Zake

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Student News and Achievements

Other Awards

Cassidy McNew: 2025 Thomas Justin Baker Person of the Year award; 2025 Student Leadership Awards (Emerging Student Leader of the Year)

Sarah Casler: 2025 APSCUF Scholarship Award



Millersville University President Wubah
and Sarah Casler

Students participated in the 2025 Made in Millersville Conference:

Morgan Pickle, “Political Cartoons of the Cuban Missile Crisis”

Gabriel Musser, “The Debate over the United States and joining the League of Nations as shown via Political Cartoons”

Nathaniel Morris, “Political Cartoon Analysis of the Spanish American War 1898”

Ainsley Voshell, “History Through Cartoons: Bay of Pigs”

Sarah Dutton, “Examining United States Foreign Policy through Political Cartoons – Good Neighbor Policy”

Andi DeMackiewicz, “American Views on the Acquisition of the Philippines, through political cartoons”

Logan Lutz, “The Issue of Preparedness in the 1916 Election”

Dara Helfirch, “Gwangju: An Overview of the May 18 Democratic Movement”

Mark Shell, “From the Chisel to the Pencil: The History of Writing and its Impact on Humanity”

Elliot Simcoe, “Education in Colonial PA: Examining Benjamin Franklin's ‘Proposals Relating to Education of Youth in Pennsylvania’”

Bryanna Nase, “Keystone Legacies : Tracing Millersville University's Partnership with the Carlisle Indian Industrial School”

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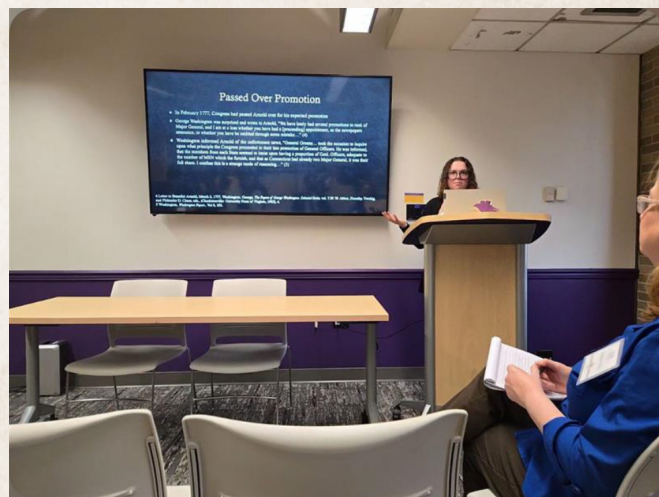
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Student News and Achievements

Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference (West Chester University, April 2025)

Justin Deibler (BSE 2025) presented, “Presidents as Commander-in-Chiefs” at the April 2025 Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference at West Chester University.

Sarah Casler (BSE 2026) presented, “Benedict Arnold: A Push Towards Treachery” at the April 2025 Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference at West Chester University.



Sarah Casler presenting at the 2025 Phi Alpha Theta Conference in West Chester.



(Left to Right): Sarah Casler, Logan Lutz, and Justin Deibler at the 2025 Phi Alpha Theta Conference in West Chester.



Phi Alpha Theta members (left to right) Jordan Shearer, Justin Deibler, Logan Lutz, Sarah Casler, Hamida Abdelhalim in front of the White House on their trip to Washington DC, April 19, 2025

Student News and Achievements

McNeil Center for Early American Studies:

Sarah Gehret, BA '25 was accepted by McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for participation in the center's 16th annual Undergraduate Student Workshop. The workshop was open to students at institutions that are members of the McNeil Center's consortium; admission was competitive. The workshop convened twice this semester. First, students met for a February archive and library tour and were matched with graduate student mentors who worked with them this spring. Then in April, the students, their graduate and faculty mentors, and others convened for the Saturday workshop. The undergraduates each gave presentations based on their honors theses, and their graduate student mentors commented. Sarah had defended her departmental honors thesis, "'A Little Smattering, and a Few Words Recommendatory': The Limitations of Early Philadelphia Educational Institutes in Teaching Black Students," a few days earlier. The day before, students arrived, attended one of the McNeil Center's regular Friday seminars, had a conversation with the seminar presenter, **Dr. Michael Blaakman** of Princeton University, and stayed for a reception. **Dr. Tanya Kevorkian**, a professor in the history department, supervised Sarah's thesis and served as her mentor for the workshop.



Congratulations to
Our New Graduates!



Alumni News

The 5th Careers for History Majors Alum Panel

The History Department hosted the 5th Careers for History Majors alum panel on October 28, 2024, preceded by a reception. The panelists were **Abigail Gruber**, BSE '15, MA '17, PhD Candidate and Program Manager, Education Abroad and Overseas Program, Temple University; **Jillian Hartman**, BSE '15, 7th grade Social Studies Teacher, Lebanon Junior High School; **Kristin O'Brasill-Kulfan**, BA '09, Assistant Professor & Director of Public History& Public Humanities Initiatives, Department of History, Rutgers University-New Brunswick; **Sarah Mitchell**, MA '18, Graduate Student, Middle School Social Studies Teaching Certification Program, Wilson College; **Tom Sciscento**, BA '20, MA '23, Archive Technician, Lebanon Valley College; and **Tucker Stokes**, BA '20, Associate Underwriter, Travelers Insurance. **Alexander Goodrich**, BA '14, MA '17, PhD Candidate, Public History, North Carolina State University moderated.



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Alumni News

Claire DeVinney, BA '24, Atlantic World Studies, received the Pennsylvania Historical Association's 2024 Pencak Award for best undergraduate research paper about Pennsylvania and/or Mid-Atlantic history written by an undergraduate at any college or university at the October 2024 Pennsylvania Historical Association meeting for her senior honors thesis "This Popular & Malcontent Temper": Pennsylvania Currency and Transatlantic Commerce, 1720–1723." Her thesis advisor was Dr. Tanya Kevorkian. Part of the award is potential publication of the paper in *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*. The article appeared in the Spring 2025 issue of the journal.

Cole Mellinger, BA '22, MA '24, gave a paper at the October 2024 Pennsylvania Historical Association meeting. The paper, "A Little Valley's Hopes of Prosperity and Preservation Amid Chaos: Swedish Incorporation of English Imperialism in the Delaware Valley and the Decline of Lenape Power Before the Arrival of William Penn: 1669-1682," was based on his MA thesis, advised by Dr. Tanya Kevorkian.

Zack Kelly, MA '23, will begin in the History Ph.D. program at Temple University in the Fall 2025.

Niamh Lotty, BA '22, received an MA in international relations from Queen's University Belfast in 2023. She worked as a consular immigration associate at Vialto Partners in Belfast. Currently she is working in the International Student and Scholar Services Department at the University of Pennsylvania.

Megan Schulman, B.A. Multidisciplinary, Atlantic World Studies, Millersville University '20, MA'22 was accepted into Columbia University's 2025 intensive summer program for the Dutch language. She was also awarded a fellowship for the Digital Humanities Summer Institute in Montreal.

Shane Moran, BA History, 2020, MA History 2023 received a position as College Archivist at Library and Archives, St. Mary's College of Maryland. Shane will be working to preserve and document St. Mary's history, making the Archives accessible to the campus community and beyond, and providing primary source and information literacy instruction. They will also serve as library liaison for the History and Museum Studies programs.

Alexandra Ponti, BA History, 2016 works as an Archivist and Deck Log Program Coordinator at the Navy Archives, Naval History and Heritage Command at the Washington Navy Yard.

Tracy Barnett, B.A. in History, 2014, Minor: Government and Political Affairs (magna cum laude), who recently defended her PhD dissertation, is Visiting Professor at Old Dominion, and has been named Digital and Social Media Editor for Early American Studies.

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Alumni Share Their Stories

David Trok, MA History, 2024, Social Studies Teacher.

My education from MU gave me a leg up in my job search to find a new teaching job in public education.

Ben Mitchell, MA History, 2019, Hempfield School District – Social Studies Teacher.

All of the courses in the program allow any student to explore many different perspectives on any one topic in history. All the courses also help to prepare students to become professional historians and truly appreciate the field.

Advice to students: My advice for Millersville University students is to rely on your professors and peers to make the most out of the experience!

Special memories: The members of my cohort were remarkable, and we had an absolute blast both in and outside of class. I am still in close contact with many of my colleagues, and more importantly, met my wife through the program! Of the three Masters programs I've completed, the History degree is the one I hold most dear.

Luann Cartwright, BA History, 2022, Central Dauphin School District –English Language Arts Teacher, 6th Grade.

As an English teacher, I use my History degree to interact with my students in many ways. We often read articles and short stories, even novels, that have some relation to history. Earning a BA taught me to think differently, planning more cohesively and with foresight.

Advice to students: My advice for Millersville University students is to thoroughly enjoy and take every advantage offered to you! Education is never a waste and any class you take will, in some way, make your life different. Whether it's your perspective or you use what you've been taught, it will benefit you!

Special memories: I had the most amazing, engaged, enthusiastic, helpful professors, I think it was memorable. I wish I could return to MU for a Master's Degree in History!

Chris McCumber, BA History, 2024, Villanova University – Paralegal Student (Attending Villanova's Paralegal Program)

Advice to students: My advice is to keep pushing! Don't be afraid to pursue your dreams! And to not be ashamed if you don't know all the answers to your future. I didn't enter college with law school in mind.

Special memories: I remember how fond I was of Dr. Shelor's Seminar class. When I was proofreading, I remember reading sentences that made no sense, and Dr. Shelor and I would laugh about how odd the human brain gets when it's "autopiloting."

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Alumni Share Their Stories

Donna Molloy, BA History, 2019, Cigna Group - Collaboration Services Event coordinator.

The best way to describe what I do is help old people get on their zoom meetings. I work with anyone from the CEO to a sales director. We make it easier for departments to host town hall and utilize virtual technology and connect cross organization. Most of the time you will not actually use the knowledge you get from classes but it's the skills you use doing the work. That's what will make or break your career because you learn what you're good at and also can work on what you are not good at in a safe environment.

Samantha Gambino, BA History, 2022, Renewal by Anderson – Sales Support Coordinator.
I fulfill the needs and requests of the 60+ sales representatives and 4 sales managers that make up the sales team for RbA of the Greater Philadelphia Area.

Advice to students: Study hard and learn all you can even if it doesn't have to do with your degree!

Special memories: Taking Dr. Shelor's History of Medicine class right as the COVID-19 pandemic hit was fascinating and a good way of calming down in a time where most everything was scary and uncertain.

Jami Rhynes, MA History, 2024, County of Lancaster – Chief Deputy Recorder of Deeds.
Advice to students: Many people say they had a wasted degree because they weren't in a job that was related, or they didn't like the job they were in. However, if you had the motivation to earn a degree, you have the skill to get creative and make it work for you in ways you may not have foreseen.

Special memories: Earning my MA in the History Department was one of my life's joys. One special memory I have is of working on a project for Dr. Davis to present research topics in interesting ways. I so enjoyed that project that even now I intend to revisit it to insert ideas I have had since then to make it even better.



Alumni Share Their Stories

Alumni,

If you have information that you would like to share with us, please use our alumni update form. Once submitted, your form will arrive in the History and Philosophy Department email account. The faculty are interested in hearing how you are doing, and this is a great way of sharing information with them.

Please follow the link below to access the Alumni Information Update Form!!!

<https://www.millersville.edu/history/alum-info-update.php>

Please make sure to keep in touch with us so you can be featured in the next newsletter! Thank you for your attention and see you next time!

