

OPENING NIGHT SESSION
SOUTHERN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
75TH ANNUAL MEETING

A LEGACY OF DISTINCTION:
INTRODUCING THE PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE
SOUTHERN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

CHARLES JOYNER

Good evening, and welcome to the Southern Historical Association's Diamond Jubilee! What a grand occasion this is! Bethany Johnson's all-too-brief summary of the history of the association whets my appetite for more, and I look forward eagerly to her forthcoming book on the subject. Tomorrow night we shall have a special tribute to our late president Jack Temple Kirby, and Saturday night we shall remember three giants of our profession: John Hope Franklin, David Donald, and Kenneth Stampf. But tonight we honor the *living* former presidents of the SHA.

Jack had looked forward with special pleasure to introducing them tonight. And I had looked forward with special pleasure to hearing them introduced in Jack's warm, Virginia-accented baritone. It is a privilege to stand here where he would have stood and to perform this special task his untimely death prevented him from performing.

[The following italicized section was omitted from the reading version.]

It was 1910, and two Harvard freshmen were animatedly conducting an informal seminar in southern history. Specifically they were discussing oral history accounts of a Mississippi county during the Civil War era. They might have found it useful to consult Professor Edward Channing. Channing knew Mississippi history

and followed Mississippi politics with a more nuanced understanding than most New Englanders. He had written an essay praising Mississippi Congressman John Sharp Williams for rebuking the racial policy of his opponent James K. Vardaman in that year's senatorial election and for promising a friendlier racial policy for black Mississippians. But the two freshmen lacked the necessary pre-requisites for his courses, and Channing disdained oral history as unreliable.

*One of the freshmen was a quintessential insider from Mississippi. The other was his roommate, an obtuse outsider from Canada. Neither the insider's contextual analysis nor the outsider's psycho-historical hypotheses could bring order out of their seemingly chaotic evidence. But when William Faulkner rubbed Quentin Compson and Shreve McCannon against each other, he created *Absalom!* *Absalom!*, considered by many to be his greatest work. One might conclude that any subject studied only by insiders, or only by outsiders, is only half-studied.*

The living former presidents of the Southern Historical Association offer even greater support for that proposition, for they are even more diverse in their backgrounds than Quentin and Shreve. V.O. Key--in his classic study *Southern Politics*--defined the South as the states of the late Confederacy. If we follow that definition, more of our living presidents were born outside the South than within. They come not only from the seceded states, but also from California, Colorado, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania. And--as in the late unpleasantness--the Border States could tip the balance.

Gilbert C. Fite was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1974. He is Richard B. Russell Professor Emeritus at the University of Georgia. A native son

of North Dakota, he earned his doctorate at Missouri and went on to become one of the great historians of southern agriculture, tracing its evolution from the farmer's frontier through the decline of cotton and the transformation from farm to factory to farmers as America's New Minority. To many of us Gil Fite was always Mister Phi Alpha Theta. We send him greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Richard Current was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1975. I met him at the University of London in 1997, when we were participants in a conference on the enduring significance of the American Civil War. He was only 85 then. I was sitting with him and Jim McPherson when a political scientist from one of the universities in Florida announced from the podium that "all those South Carolinians were crazy!" It was not that I completely disagreed with him. But how could I endure such a bracing insult to my state and to my people? So I challenged him to a duel. Current and McPherson were delighted. I had confirmed their dearest stereotypes of the hair-trigger violence that lurks in every grease pit south of Cincinnati. The political scientist responded--rashly. "Name your weapons!" I responded ---prudently. "Snowballs! The next time it snows on either of our campuses."

Dick Current, as he introduced himself, was born in Colorado and entered graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, where he became close friends with fellow graduate students Frank Friedel and T Harry Williams. They would all become prominent historians and co-authors of a notable American History textbook, but first they had to complete their studies under the formidable William Best Hesselstine. It would be an understatement to say that Hesselstine was eccentric. When Current,

and Williams, and Friedel (and Ben Quarles, and Ken Stamp, and Steven Ambrose) asked him to direct their dissertations, he had a stock reply: "I don't direct dissertations. Can you write a book?" I was a student in Hesselstine's "New South" seminar when he was a visiting professor at USC in 1958. He used to lie in his lectures! It was one of his favorite teaching methods; and heaven help the hapless student who failed to challenge him! I was too shy to confront him--the first time. But I got over it, and obviously so did Richard Current, for he often challenged conventional wisdom in his prolific scholarship on Lincoln and the Civil War, never more trenchantly than in his two volumes on "carpetbaggers" in the South. Current taught at Wisconsin before moving south to UNC-Greensboro in the 1960s. We send him greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Charles Roland is a native of Tennessee and served as an infantry captain in World War II. After earning his Ph.D. at LSU he taught at Tulane for eighteen years and at Kentucky for another eighteen, where he is Alumni Professor Emeritus. I first met Charlie Roland in the early 1980s--introduced by his student John David Smith--and have enjoyed our annual visits at the Southern ever since. It was a special pleasure to share the stage with him in a session a few years ago celebrating the first hundred years of Thomas D. Clark's remarkable career. We all tried to do our very best for Tom Clark, but when it came time for the centenarian himself to conclude the session with a comment, Dr. Clark walked to the edge of the platform and addressed the audience directly, speaking without notes, *literally* upstaging us with his undiminished eloquence. But Charlie Roland's own eloquence is on full display in his prolific scholarship on the Confederacy, and especially in his memoirs and his

elegiac history of the Civil War, *The American Iliad*. Please join me in welcoming the 1981 President of the Southern Historical Association, Charles P. Roland.

Robert F. Durden presided over the 50th anniversary of the SHA in 1984 when it met here in Louisville. A native of south Georgia, he was a veteran of World War II. He earned his degrees from Emory and Princeton before joining the faculty at Duke, where he spent his entire career--except for Fulbright Professorships in Italy and Australia and a visiting professorship at William and Mary. Bob was almost as famous for his dapper haberdashery and his trade-mark bow ties as for his eclectic and innovative scholarship. He is especially esteemed for his "Duke" quadralogy—his "biographies" of the patriarch, the family, the university, and the endowment. But he also wrote on such diverse topics as nineteenth-century southern politics, Carter G. Woodson, and the Confederate debate over emancipation. We send him greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Paul C. Nagel was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1985. He is a native Missourian who taught at the University of Georgia. His exploration of nineteenth-century American nationalism, *This Sacred Trust*, has become a classic, but he is probably better known to the general public as one of our leading family biographers. His trilogy on the Adams Family not only earned him acclaim but also informed a major television miniseries and contributions from later biographers. His reputation as a southern historian was sealed by *The Lees of Virginia*, which cogently characterizes seven generations of Lees, from their seventeenth-century progenitor to the failed soldier who found his true calling as a college president. My favorite is Nagel's labor of love, *German Migration to Missouri*, in which he draws upon his

skills as a researcher and as a literary craftsman to find in the particular story of his own family a saga of universal significance. We send him greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Carl Degler, was born and reared in New Jersey. When I first met him he was teaching at Vassar. He is now Margaret Byrne Professor Emeritus at Stanford University. Carl is one of the few historians to serve as president of the AHA and the OAH as well as the Southern. Back in the 1980s many assistant professors, trying to turn their dissertations into books, were mercilessly teased by senior colleagues with the question, *Oh, have you seen Carl Degler's new two-volume study of that?* Many fell for it, since it was so devastatingly believable. The regularity with which he contributed breathtaking scholarship earned him the nickname "fastest typewriter in the West." Just think, his Pulitzer Prize-winning comparative study of race and slavery in Brazil and the U.S., *Neither Black Nor White* (1972); his study of white dissenters in the nineteenth-century South, *The Other South* (1974); his meditation on southern distinctiveness, *Place Over Time* (1977); and his astute synthesis of the history of women and family, *At Odds* (1981); all appeared within a single decade! Please join me in welcoming the 1986 President of the Southern Historical Association. Carl Degler.

Willard Gatewood was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1987. I first met him about forty years ago as the result of having reviewed one of his books in the *Charlotte Observer*. The book was *Controversy in the Twenties*, a collection of documents about modernism, evolution, and fundamentalism in the South. I was then teaching the New South and had already read a lot on the Scopes

trial and the anti-evolution controversy. But I learned how much more there was to learn from the wide-ranging sources he had assembled. So I wrote a very favorable review and sought him out at the next Southern. Certainly Willard has made greater contributions to southern scholarship in his master work *Aristocrats of Color* and to southern higher education in his service as Chancellor of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. But I remain particularly grateful to that remarkable early collection for introducing me to one of the great figures of our profession. We send our greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Anne Firor Scott was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1989. When I first heard of her in the mid-sixties, there was a buzz about this brilliant young scholar of the progressive movement who was teaching at Duke. She read a paper at the Southern that confirmed all the wonderful things I had heard about her. But I had no idea then she would soon publish her classic *The Southern Lady* and establish herself as the preeminent scholar of southern women's history. It has remained in print for nearly 40 years! She is the author of other notable studies--of the early historians of southern women as well as of women's associations, and an important collection of her essays, *Making the Invisible Woman Visible*; Three years ago, she edited forty years of the interracial correspondence of Pauli Murray and Caroline Ware. Anne is co-author, with her late husband Andrew Scott, of *One Half the People*. She and Andy are also the co-authors of the prize-winning historian Rebecca Scott, their daughter. A native Georgian, Anne is W. K. Boyd Professor Emerita at Duke, having first come there on a visiting appointment in 1961. We send our greetings and miss her presence tonight.

Louis R. Harlan was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1990. Born in Mississippi 87 years ago, he was educated at Emory and Vanderbilt and earned his doctorate with C. Vann Woodward at the Hopkins. After serving as a naval lieutenant during the Second World War and teaching at East Texas State and the University of Cincinnati, Lou moved to the University of Maryland, where he is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus. His two-volume biography of Booker T. Washington and his thirteen-volume edition of the *Booker T. Washington Papers* have earned him the Pulitzer Prize, the Beveridge Prize, and two Bancroft Prizes. My personal favorite among his books is his memoir, *All at Sea: Coming of Age in World War II*. He remains the *only* person ever to serve as president of the AHA, the OAH, and the SHA at the same time. We send our greetings and miss his presence here tonight.

Jimmie Lewis Franklin was also born in Mississippi. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma and won numerous teaching awards at Wisconsin State before embarking on a distinguished academic career at Vanderbilt, where he chaired the history department and won the prestigious Jefferson Award. His books include histories of prohibition and of African Americans in Oklahoma. I was impressed and influenced by his eloquent presidential address, emphasizing that there is “a shared past between black and white southerners” manifested in “matters of manners and morals, folk beliefs and foodways, blended musical forms, material culture, and others.” Please join me in welcoming the 1993 President of the Southern Historical Association, Jimmie L. Franklin.

Dan T. Carter was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1995; and among living former presidents he is my “*furthest back*” person. We met in the spring of 1961 and shared an apartment while he was completing his undergraduate degree and taking his first semester of graduate work at USC. We were groomsmen at each other’s weddings. Trying to balance duty with conscience, we felt guilty when we neglected our studies to participate in the Civil Rights Movement, and we felt guilty when our research in Avery Craven’s seminar caused us to neglect opportunities to witness for righteousness. We are still trying to balance those parts of our lives. Dan earned his Ph.D. with George Tindall at the University of North Carolina, taught in Maryland and Georgia, and wrote a lot about Alabama before returning to his native state in 2000, where he is Educational Foundation Professor of History Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. He has also been a visiting professor at Genoa and Pitt Professor at Cambridge. His books won the Bancroft Prize, the Anisfield Wolfe Award, the Lillian Smith Award, the Jules Landry Prize, the Avery Craven Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Prize, and the Sulzby Prize. His script for the television documentary, *George Wallace: "Settin' the Woods on Fire,"* won him an Emmy--the only one ever awarded to a professional historian. This semester Dan holds the Dow Research Chair at the Roosevelt Study Center in Middelburg, Holland. We send him greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Hal Woodman was born in Chicago and earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. After teaching at the University of Missouri he moved to Purdue, where he is Louis Martin Sears Distinguished Professor Emeritus Purdue University, where he also served for twelve years as chair of the program, and was named to the

university's *Book of Great Teachers*. His distinguished scholarship in southern economic history is on display in such books as his *King Cotton and His Retainers*, his *Independence, Dependency, and Economic Change*, and his *New South—New Law*. Generations of students undoubtedly knew him best for his influential anthology *Conflict and Consensus in American History*, co-edited with Allen Davis. We send him greetings and miss his presence tonight.

Paul Conkin is known both for his down-home manner and his towering intellect. He came by the first naturally. He told me he was reared on a hardscrabble farm in East Tennessee, where most folks were descendants of Abe Lincoln Republicans and Civil War Unionists. My friend Frank Proffitt--who taught me many ballads and folk songs, who made my dulcimer and my fretless banjo, and who passed on the song "Tom Dooley" to the world--came from a similar background. His grandfather, in fact, had fought in the Union army. Frank had a sixth-grade education but a brilliant mind. He had to walk four miles each way to the one-room school in a community he called "pick-britches valley" in Watauga County, North Carolina. To go beyond sixth grade he would have to walk down the mountain to Boone. He tried it. The nine-mile journey down the mountain in the morning was alright, he told me. But having to walk nine miles back up the mountain in the afternoon just about wore him out. I have often wondered what Frank Proffitt could have become with greater access to what he called "book learning." But Paul Conkin has made the journey from the highlands of Appalachia to the heights of academia with grace. He is best known for his work in intellectual history, but this renaissance man has also opened new directions in religious and educational history, agricultural

and environmental history, the Vanderbilt Agrarians, and the New Deal. Please join me in welcoming the 1997 President of the Southern Historical Association, Paul Keith Conkin.

Carol Bleser was President of the Southern Historical Association in 1998. She is a graduate of Converse College who earned her doctorate at Columbia University and became a leading figure in the study of southern women. I met her when she was researching her first book, *Promised Land*. After teaching at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and Colgate University, she became the first woman to hold an endowed chair at Clemson as the Kathryn and Calhoun Lemon Distinguished Professor of American History in 1988. In 1990 she lit up the screen as one of the featured commentators in *Legacy of Conflict*,” a documentary mini-series that I produced for South Carolina public television. A few years later, when she was a distinguished visiting professor at Coastal Carolina University, our students were treated to her stimulating seminar on editing women’s diaries. A prolific scholar, Carol published books on South Carolina’s notorious slaveholder and politician James Henry Hammond and his family, as well as studies of marriage and family in the nineteenth-century South; and of the domestic life of Union and Confederate leaders and their wives. In addition, she edited an influential series of southern women’s diaries and memoirs. We send her greetings and miss her presence tonight.

Jim Cobb earned all his degrees at the University of Georgia. We were colleagues at Ole Miss, and he was my boss in the honors program at Alabama, before he became Bernadotte Schmidt Professor of History at Tennessee and then returned to his alma mater as the Phinzy Spalding Distinguished Professor of History. Cobb

has done his folks right proud as a prize-winning author and editor of a dozen books on the *Annaliste* interaction of economy, society and culture in the South, all of them written with clarity and sensitivity and enough wit to make John Shelton Reed envious. His diverse works include his influential study of southern industrial development, his deep plowing of the Mississippi Delta, and his fascinating reflections on southern culture and southern identity more generally. In addition to his scholarship, Cobb is one of those “public intellectuals” who write op-ed pieces for newspapers and blogs for the internet. But he’s still a good old boy--a little older and a mite less boy-ish--but twice as good. Please join me in celebrating the “tencennial” of the last president of the previous millennium, James Charles Cobb.

When I was studying folklore at Penn in the mid-1970s I met a brilliant young graduate student named Drew Faust. I didn’t need the gift of prophecy to tell that she would become a great historian. And she was off to a pretty good start with an endowed professorship at Penn, a shelf full of such books as *James Henry Hammond and the Old South; The Creation of Confederate Nationalism; Mothers of Invention;* and *This Republic of Suffering*, and a wall full of the prizes that they won. After developing administrative skills as president of the Southern Historical Association in 2000, she became Dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard and then president of Harvard--the first woman and the first person since the 17th century who was not a Harvard graduate (its earliest ones having earned their degrees in that other Cambridge in England. When the great mentioners began to mention Drew for president, I didn’t wish her good luck in being chosen, because I was not at all sure being chosen would be that lucky. I told her I wished her an

interesting and happy life. When she was chosen, I wrote to congratulate her and to express my hope—by way of a Gullah proverb--that the job would bring her more rewards than burdens. I hope they have, but the latter prevent her being here on this special occasion. We send her greetings and miss her presence here tonight.

Bert Wyatt-Brown is Richard J. Millbauer Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Florida. Although the exigencies of his father's employment caused him to be born in Pennsylvania, he came from a southern family and spent much of his childhood and youth in the mountains of East Tennessee. I had known him by mail before Drew Faust introduced us at an OAH meeting in the late 70s. I have treasured my friendship with him and his wife Anne ever since. After serving as a naval officer he studied at the University of Cambridge (where he introduced his friend Sylvia Plath to his housemate Ted Hughes). Then he earned his PhD at the Hopkins with C. Vann Woodward. A gifted interdisciplinary historian, he is the author of such books as *The Shaping of Southern Culture*; *Yankee Saints and Southern Sinners*, *Hearts of Darkness*; *The House of Percy*; *The Literary Percys*, and his classic *Southern Honor*. Please join me in welcoming the 2001 President of the Southern Historical Association, Bertram Wyatt-Brown.

Jacquelyn Hall was born and reared in the multicultural, multiracial, and socialist state of Oklahoma, a place she calls "sometimes in and sometimes out of southern history. . . . the place where the psychic rim of the South meets the West and the Mid-west." She is now the Julia Cherry Spruill Professor of History and Director of the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where she, her colleagues, and her students have recorded more than

2,500 conversations with black and white southerners, ranging from tobacco farmers and mill workers to educators and civil rights activists to writers and politicians. She won the university's Distinguished Teaching Award and wrote such influential and prize-winning books as *Revolt against Chivalry* and *Like a Family* (co-written with several of her graduate students). As President Clinton said when awarding her the National Humanities Medal, her work "rings with the voices of mill workers who have lost their jobs, civil rights leaders marching for freedom, [and] ordinary folks building their communities." Please join me in welcoming the 2002 President of the Southern Historical Association, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall.

I met Darlene Hine at one of the SHA meetings twenty some years ago, and I have enjoyed following her brilliant career ever since. She was born in Missouri, earned her PhD at Kent State, taught at Michigan State for seventeen years, and became Board of Trustees Professor of African American Studies and History at Northwestern. Darlene has been president of the Southern Women's Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians as well as the Southern. Her prize-winning books include *Black Women in White* and *Dark Victory*; and she is co-author of *African-American Odyssey*, and *A Shining Thread of Hope*; editor of the multi-volume set *Black Women in America* and co-editor of *The Harvard Guide to African American History*, among others. Please join me in welcoming the 2003 President of the Southern Historical Association, Darlene Clark Hine.

Wayne Flynt is Distinguished University Professor Emeritus at Auburn University. Born in Mississippi, he grew up in Alabama as a fourth generation Alabamian. He earned his doctorate at Florida State University and taught for twelve

years at Samford and eighteen at Auburn, in the process winning numerous teaching awards. He published eleven books—among them *Cracker Messiah*, *Poor But Proud*, *Dixie's Forgotten People*, *Alabama in the Twentieth Century*, *Alabama Baptists*, and *Taking Christianity to China*. And he edited the online *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. His scholarship has won multiple awards, including the Lillian Smith Award. Harper Lee, author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, praised what she called Wayne's "gift for making long ago and the recent past come alive. He writes with an unclouded clarity, and makes writing history the work of an artist." He is also a public intellectual and social activist, frequently publishing op-ed pieces in major newspapers and being interviewed by television networks, speaking out in Alabama and speaking around the world on poverty and inequality. He has been called "the conscience of Alabama." Please join me in welcoming the 2004 President of the Southern Historical Association, J. Wayne Flynt.

Charles Joyner's presidency of the Southern in 2005 marked two notable "firsts" in the Association's history: He was the first bearded president, and he was also the first president whose graduate-school room-mate had served in that office before him.

Pete Daniel, a native of North Carolina and a self-declared "accidental historian," earned his doctorate at the University of Maryland with Lou Harlan. After teaching at the University of Tennessee, he moved to Washington, becoming curator of work and industry at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. Two of his notable exhibits are *The 1927 Mississippi Flood* and *Rock'n'Soul: Social Crossroads*, the establishing exhibit at the Smithsonian's Rock'n'Soul Museum

in Memphis. He has published books on southern agriculture, peonage, culture in the 1950s, and pesticides, in the process winning the Elliott Rudwick Prize, the Louis Pelzer Prize, the Herbert Feis Award, the Charles Sydnor Prize and the Forrest Pogue Award. He continued the bearded tradition begun by his predecessor, but it has since been abandoned. Once Pete was certified as presidential timber by the SHA, he was chopped for a similar job by the OAH. Please join me in welcoming the 2006 President of the Southern Historical Association, Pete Daniel.

In 2007 Nell Irvin Painter became the first undergraduate to become president of the Southern. I am happy to report that she completed the requirements for her BFA degree at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers this spring. Nell was born in Houston, Texas, and followed a family tradition into academia. After studying anthropology at Berkeley, Medieval French history at the University of Bordeaux and African history at the University of Ghana, she received her doctorate in American history at Harvard. She taught at Penn and UNC before moving to Princeton, where she is Edwards Professor of American History, Emerita. Her books include *Exodusters*, *The Narrative of Hosea Hudson*, *Standing at Armageddon*, *Sojourner Truth*; and *Southern History across the Color Line*. Unfortunately, her studies as a first-year graduate student in visual art at the Rhode Island School of Design are demanding and prevent her from being here tonight. We send her greetings and miss her presence here tonight.

Leon. F. Litwack was President of the Southern Historical Association in 2008. He was born in California and received all his degrees from Berkeley. He taught briefly at Wisconsin before returning to his alma mater, where he received the Golden

Apple Award for Outstanding Teaching and where he is Morrison Professor Emeritus. I was inspired by Leon's writing and his activism long before I met him and his wife Rhoda when he was a visiting professor at South Carolina. I was fortunate to enjoy their wonderful hospitality years later when I was a visiting professor at Berkeley. His books include *North of Slavery*; *Been in the Storm So Long*; *Trouble In Mind*; and *How Free Is Free?*, his Nathan Huggins lectures at Harvard. His scholarship has won such prestigious recognition as the National Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Francis Parkman Prize. Leon Litwack was the winner of the Southern Historical Association's first John Hope Franklin Lifetime Achievement Award. We miss his presence tonight and send him greetings in the Czech Republic.

At this point I wish to introduce three others who are not *former* presidents of the Southern. Some of you were present when Leon passed the presidential gavel to Jack Temple Kirby at the end of last year's meeting. Jack's untimely death during the summer did not create a vacuum in SHA leadership. The founders had provided in the by-laws that in the event a president is unable to serve, the vice-president succeeds to the office. Thus--at Jack's death--Bill Cooper became our president. He will serve until the end of the 2010 meeting, which will make him the longest serving president in the Association's history. Bill earned his undergraduate degree at Princeton and his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins . He holds the Boyd Professorship at Louisiana State University, where he has also served as provost and was named an LSU "Distinguished Research Master." As a young teacher I was excited by his first book, a study of South Carolina politics after Reconstruction, and I taught it for several years. But it would be several more years before I met him, even though he

was born and grew up in a county adjoining mine in South Carolina. Bill's prize-winning scholarship also includes studies of antebellum southern politics, a highly-praised biography of Jefferson Davis, and a textbook of southern history (co-authored with Tom Terrill). Bill has held fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEH, and the Charles Warren Center at Harvard. Please join me in welcoming the President of the Southern Historical Association, William J. Cooper.

Theda Perdue would have become Vice-President and President-elect at the end of this meeting, but she succeeded to that office when Bill became President. A native Georgian, Theda received her baccalaureate degree from Mercer and her doctorate from the University of Georgia. After teaching at Western Carolina, Clemson, and Kentucky, she became the Atlanta Distinguished Term Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She was also a visiting professor in New Zealand at the University of Auckland. Theda has been a pioneering scholar in making the history of Native people part of the mainstream of Southern History. Among her books are her histories of Cherokee Slavery, Cherokee Women, the Trail of Tears, and "*Mixed Blood*" Indians, with her husband Mike Green. Her innovative and interdisciplinary scholarship has won her the Julia Cherry Spruill Award, the James Mooney Prize, and the Thomas Wolfe Literary Award. Her teaching has won her the Phi Alpha Theta Distinguished Teaching Award. I know we will be in good hands during her presidency, because Theda already is already experienced at this president business. Prior to her selection to be the 2011 president of the SHA, she had served as president of both the Southern Association for Women Historians and

the American Society for Ethnohistory. Please join me in welcoming the Vice-President and President-elect of the Southern Historical Association, Theda Perdue.

Will Holmes served with distinction as Secretary-Treasurer of the SHA for fifteen years. Part of my service on the Executive Council was under Will's gentle but firm guidance. Born and raised in Yazoo City, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, he earned his Ph.D. at Rice University and is Professor Emeritus at the University of Georgia. Among his books are a biography of James K. Vardaman, a history of twentieth-century Georgia, and an edited volume on Populism. Please join me in welcoming Will Holmes, Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Historical Association from 1985 until 2000.

This seventy-fifth anniversary of the Southern is an occasion to acknowledge not only the achievements of our predecessors but also to note the directions in which their contributions have pointed us. We are amazed in retrospect at the great diversity of these former presidents of the SHA in their backgrounds and in their particular fields. But even more impressive are the shared commitments of these men and these women to the study of southern history and their collective achievements in painstaking research, thoughtful analysis, insightful interpretation, and literary grace. They have set a high standard for us to follow. Their influence has already been felt, and their work--like all good history--shows promise of being extended and revised in the decades to come. It should be interesting to see how scholars of our generation will be evaluated when the Southern celebrates its

centennial. In fact I have marked my calendar . . . for the first week of November, 2034, in Louisville; and I look forward with pleasure to seeing you there.