



TRIBUTE TO SENIOR LECTURER ERIK LARS LINDSETH (1961-2019)

Read at Faculty Assembly, IU School of Liberal Arts, IUPUI April 24, 2020

The History Department and the School of Liberal Arts were dealt a sudden and grievous blow last November when our colleague, Erik Lindseth, died from complications of stroke. Erik was a teacher of many skills and interests and his erudition and dedication to his craft were central to the vitality of the department and the linked communities of the school, the campus, and the city. His absence is keenly felt every day. Erik, an Eagle Scout and product of North Central High School, received his B.A. at Wabash College and his Ph.D. from Edinburgh University before returning to Indianapolis to begin a teaching career at IUPUI that spanned almost thirty years. The range of his teaching, from the American, world, and western civilization surveys to British and Scottish history to the history of the book, was remarkable and the many students he taught and mentored, here and in Scotland, over the past three decades have shared memories of his “open and welcoming presence,” a sentiment shared by his many colleagues and friends. Erik was also dedicated to the vital role that libraries play in our scholarly and civic life. He served as Vice President of the National Library Binding Company, specializing in the care, conservation, and restoration of rare books. Having received an M.A. in Library Science in 1999, he taught courses on the principles and practices of library preservation and the history of libraries while also serving as a specialist in the German -American collections in the IUPUI Library. Erik also made himself available to friends and colleagues for individual expert consultations on wine, whisky, old books and coins, and fast cars. One of his favorite ceremonial occasions (ceremony and ritual were very important to Erik) was the annual induction of new members into the history honors society, Phi Alpha Theta, over which he

presided at the Columbia Club, where he was a foundation trustee, historian, and curator of the club's art collection. A former chair of the History Department recalled that when the time came to put together each semester's schedule, Erik simply said, "put me wherever you need me." And he excelled wherever you put him, winning the IUPUI Trustees' Teaching Award twice while also being named Outstanding Lecturer and Academic Advisor. Anyone who knew Erik, as a teacher, a friend, and a colleague, would agree that he embodied Ben Jonson's approbation, "Indeed he seemed to be a gentleman of an exceeding fayre disposition, and of very excellent good partes."

Kevin Cramer
Chair, Department of History

Adopted by the IUPUI Faculty Council at their meeting on April 21, 2020.