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'Dead Last': New book by SBU professor traces history of Warren G. Harding's image

A new book by St. Bonaventure University faculty member Dr. Phillip G. Payne explores how Warren G. Harding's name became synonymous with corruption, cronyism, and incompetence and how it is used to this day as an example of what a president should not be.

Payne's book, "Dead Last: The Public Memory of Warren G. Harding's Scandalous Legacy," was published by Ohio University Press (January 2009).

Payne traces the history of Harding's image from the election of 1920 to the current debate over George W. Bush's place in history examining such things as presidential rankings, commemoration and legacy formation, political uses of history and memory, and the role of scandal in popular and political culture.

"Harding is generally considered among the worst of the presidents, typically ranking dead last or as a failure in presidential rankings," said Payne, associate professor of history at St. Bonaventure.

Ironically, Payne explained, during the 1920 election the Republican campaign carefully crafted an image of Harding as a small-town civic booster. The Harding campaign made effective use of modern techniques to craft Harding's image that enabled Harding and the Republicans to win a landslide victory. When Harding died in August 1923 he was widely popular. He was commemorated with a memorial, the last significant presidential memorial campaign conducted before the advent of the modern presidential library system.

"However, it was not an image that would last. The revelations of scandals soon ruined Harding's reputation. Harding would become an icon of presidential failure," said Payne.

Payne teaches courses in United States and public history at St. Bonaventure. Prior to joining the university faculty in 1998, he worked as the historic site manager at President Warren G. Harding's Home and Museum in Marion, Ohio.

Payne earned his Ph.D. and master's degree in history from The Ohio State University. He did his undergraduate work at Marshall University, Huntington, W.Va.

Copies of “Dead Last” are available at Amazon.com and from the publisher at <http://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Dead+Last>.

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Longtime philosophy professor authors 'must-read' book on comparative ethics

Rich Reilly’s new book bridges the gap between Buddhism and philosophical ethics with an unforeseen ally — Christianity.

Released by Rowman and Littlefield, Reilly’s “Ethics of Compassion” places central themes from Buddhist (primarily) and Christian moral teachings within the conceptual framework of Western normative ethics. The book bridges Eastern and Western cultures, philosophical ethics and religious moral discourse, and notions of acting rightly and of being virtuous.

“When I started the project I envisioned writing a book on Buddhist ethics for Western readers, utilizing the conceptual framework of philosophical ethics in the Western intellectual tradition,” said Reilly, a 40-year professor of philosophy at St. Bonaventure University. “What was particularly surprising, and really transformed my project as it developed, was my recognition of deep similarities between the fundamental truths of Buddhist ethics and fundamental teachings of Jesus and certain theological interpretations of them.

“My book sheds light, I think, on the meaning of ‘The Golden Rule,’ the story of the Good Samaritan, the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, and on a number of points made by well-known Christian (mainly Catholic) theologians that do not seem to be well-understood today.”

The book has been praised widely.

Reilly’s book “not only bridges ethical theory and religious moral discourse more generally, but also Buddhist ethics and Western moral theory, in the process enlarging the scope of both. This is a much needed and brilliant work in the relatively new field of comparative ethics, which falls in the sparsely populated category of ‘must read,’” said Joseph Prabhu, professor at California State University, Los Angeles.

Reilly said the book “really is a distillation of my ‘teaching-learning’ throughout my career at St. Bonaventure. In particular, the work I had been doing in the 1970s on ‘freedom of the will’ and ‘action theory’ was resurrected as the final chapter and is very much an important, central piece of it.”

Ultimately, Reilly said he hopes readers will realize that morality and “doing the right thing” are not simply matters of doing what one was taught to do.

“Rather, we each have the responsibility and intelligence to devise a coherent, sublime moral orientation for ourselves,” he said. “This requires us to reflect on our vulnerabilities and aspirations as well as on the inherited traditions of our culture. Understood in this way, the virtuous life, I argue, is a joyful, happy life.”

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Olean native Trietley named vice provost for Student Life

Rick Trietley's job title just got a little shorter; the interim tag no longer applies.

Trietley accepted an offer Wednesday to become vice provost for Student Life at St. Bonaventure University, just three months after agreeing to fill the job on an interim basis when Stephen Pugliese stepped down. Trietley was also serving as director of Campus Safety and Security, a position that will now be filled on an interim basis by Joe Becker, assistant director of Campus Safety and Security.

The Office of Student Life includes residence life; housing; the Center for Activities, Recreation and Leadership; Counseling Center; Damietta Center; Campus Safety and Security; and Health Services.

"To add someone of Rick's caliber and integrity to our administration is a windfall for this university," said Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., university president. "He's clearly demonstrated in his short time as interim vice provost the capacity to lead and inspire people."

A 1986 St. Bonaventure graduate, Trietley finished a 22-year career with the Army in May when he stepped down as the head of St. Bonaventure's ROTC program to become director of security at SBU.

"Rick's presentations during the interview process highlighted not only his devotion to the SBU community, but also the transferability of his experiences in the Army, where he was responsible for the social, intellectual, and leadership development of young cadets and officer-trainees for more than two decades," said Dr. Michael Fischer, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "He is also committed to continuing professional development in the field of student life."

Trietley, who was professor of military science at SBU from 2003 to May 2008 and a lieutenant colonel in the Army, is "honored that I was chosen. It was an easy decision to accept," he said.

"St. Bonaventure is truly about people — students, faculty, staff, friars, and administrators all working together to create a unique and special environment for learning and discovery. I hope I can contribute to that atmosphere in every way possible," Trietley said.

Trietley was among 19 people honored in March 2008 by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) when he was named to the Alumni Hall of Distinction. The honor recognizes New York's Independent Sector graduates who make contributions to society through their careers and community involvement.

During his time as a U.S. Army infantry officer, Trietley was a leader in organizations as large as 3,200 people both during peacetime and the global war on terror. He managed resources in excess of \$5 million. He planned and organized complex, multinational operations of great sensitivity under challenging conditions with strategic national security implications.

After receiving his bachelor of science in education at SBU, Trietley entered the U.S. Army. He was twice selected for Who's Who of American College Professors. Trietley has also been honored with military awards, including the Combat Infantryman's Badge for service in Afghanistan and the Bronze Star.

He received his master's in education from Webster University in 1998.

A 1982 Olean High School graduate, Trietley lives in Allegany with his wife, Michelle, and sons Ricky, 17, and Kyle, 15. Michelle earned bachelor's and master's degrees at SBU.

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Music of India concert at SBU rescheduled to May 6

The “Music of India” concert scheduled for later this month at St. Bonaventure University has been rescheduled to May due to an injury sustained by the artist in a fall.

The concert featuring Aditya Verma, originally scheduled for Feb. 20, will now be held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, at St. Bonaventure’s Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts. The concert is part of the World Music Series being presented by Friends of Good Music in association with the Quick Center.

Verma, who plays the sarod, a 25-string Indian instrument, injured his wrist in a fall on ice and is in a cast, said Ludwig Brunner, the Quick Center’s assistant director and director of programming. “The injury is not serious, but obviously he cannot play for some time,” said Brunner.

All tickets for the Feb. 20 performance will be honored on May 6. Those who bought tickets for the concert or selected it as part of their subscription series need only show up on the rescheduled date.

Any ticket holder who is unable to attend the May 6 concert may obtain a refund by calling the Quick Center Box Office at (716) 375-2494. Tickets may also be donated as a tax-deductible gift for use by students.

Verma is a fast-emerging force on the world music stage, said Brunner. He has won numerous awards and the admiration of audiences across North America, Europe and India.

A disciple of the legendary Ravi Shankar, Verma also trained under the eminent Ali Akbar Khan and the renowned sarod master Aashish Khan. His creative collaborations with artists of various traditions from around the globe have been received with acclaim and enthusiasm, as was his performance with the Washington National Symphony Orchestra on Capitol Hill for an audience of over 500,000 people. He recently hosted a CBC television documentary on Indian music.

For tickets to the rescheduled performance or additional information about the concert, call the Quick Center at (716) 375-2494.

For each Friends of Good Music performance, the Quick Center galleries will open one hour before the performance and remain open throughout intermission. Regular gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Admission to the museum is free year round.

This performance is supported in part by the New York State Council on the Arts.

For more information about the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts, [click here](#).

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The Extraordinary Classroom Series for Spring 2009

The Extraordinary Classroom Experiences Series is a forum for the presentation and celebration of vitally engaging learning environments at St. Bonaventure University. Through this series, University faculty invite the campus community to attend a particular lecture, class exercise, or presentation that exemplifies a faculty member’s passion and expertise.

The next [Extraordinary Classroom](#) Experiences program will be held at 3 p.m. Monday in Garret Theater. The topic is

"Reinventing Shakespeare's Henry V: The Director's Cut."

On Wednesday at 3 p.m. in the Robert R. Jones Board of Trustees Room in Doyle Hall., the program is titled "Earnings Management and Corporate Social Responsibility: An In-Class Exercise to Illustrate the Short Term and Long Term Consequences" will be held.

All events are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served following each program to encourage continuing dialogue on the subjects. [Click here](#) to download a printable .pdf listing of the Extraordinary Classroom Series.

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Newsmakers for Spring 2009

Kevin Brayer, executive director of the St. Bonaventure Buffalo Center, was elected the 124th vice dean of the Saturn Club located in Buffalo. At the club's election, Brayer was re-appointed as the House Committee Chair. He is the first person to hold both positions in the Saturn Club's 124 year history. Brayer has served on the Marketing Committee, Membership Committee, Finance Committee, Employee Benefits and House Committee, as well as the registrar and on the faculty.

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Friday Forum

All SBU faculty, staff and administrators are welcome to Friday Forums.

Date: Friday, Feb. 13, 2009

Speaker: Mark Phillips

Time: 12:20 to 1:30 p.m.

Place: University Club

Topic: The Journey of the Class of 2008: Bonaventure or Badaventure?

Abstract: From spring 1987 to fall 1988, Cuba, NY was filled with rumors that its young people were worshipping the devil, sacrificing animals, and planning to commit suicide. As the rumors intensified, the school superintendent feared that "the rumors themselves might cause us to lose a child." A local psychologist said that the rumors had "reached pathological proportions." Mark Phillips covered the story for Notre Dame Magazine. In his talk about the advance and retreat of the panic, he will draw from investigation and research conducted for his article.

Cost: \$3

The Friday Forum is Generously Subsidized by The President's Office.

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