

SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Office of the President

SHEAR Distinguished Service Award for Craig T. Friend

Craig Friend has quietly served SHEAR for more than a decade as the conference coordinator. He works almost exclusively behind the scenes. Years in advance he begins laboring on all the details that go into these three days that we all take for granted. Everything from the conference location to the book exhibit to the timing of the panels is in his hands. He reminds Program Chairs of their deadlines. He cajoles new Presidents to organize his or her Plenary on time. He encourages excellent new ideas – like the Pecha Kucha – and he nixes bad ones (which you don't have to endure, thanks to him!) He patiently responds to an endless stream of emails from people like me asking for last-minute technology or late registration. He listens to complaints without complaining himself. He relentlessly pursues scofflaws who fail to pay their registration fees. He trains students to work the book exhibit. He folds programs. He lugs boxes. He reassures nervous first-time attendees. He reassures nervous first-time presidents. He needles Dan Feller. He occasionally sits in on Jim Broussard's poker games. He collaborates with the hard-working Amy Baxter-Bellamy. It is his organizational and entrepreneurial skills that have resulted in an inclusive, smooth-running, professional, warm, inspiring, and thoroughly enjoyable conference experience. He transformed SHEAR's annual meeting into a profitable venture – no easy task in today's academic marketplace.

In other words, we have Craig to thank for our fabulous conference.

In other words, Craig IS SHEAR.

But Craig is so much more. You probably don't know that he is an esteemed and award-winning scholar with a tremendous publishing record including studies on manhood, death, southern history, and much more. He is an innovative leader of a cutting-edge public history program. He is a demanding and devoted teacher. He is a loving partner in a relationship of more than 20 years. He has a dry sense of humor that keeps us all on our toes. He is a tremendously talented painter. He is a dog lover – particularly his own Topper. He values his privacy (so he probably has mixed feelings about my speech tonight!) and he wants to retire to some lush mountainside to read, paint, laugh with friends, walk his dog, and live with his lifelong partner Rod.

Best of all, to me, he is an obstinately loyal, supportive, honest, compassionate, thoughtful, loving friend who enriches my life. During our weekly phone calls he often says, "Well, I don't have much to tell you but I just wanted to hear your voice." He doesn't know it, but that brings tears to my eyes every time he says it.

Here is to Craig Friend!

July 18, 2015