

# AAR Member News

## AAR Looks to the Future

### Search for New Executive Director as Jack Fitzmier's Tenure Comes to a Close

The Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion has begun the work to find a replacement for our Executive Director, Jack Fitzmier. Jack has ably served the AAR as its Executive Director for more than a decade, having begun his tenure in 2006. [Read more](#)



## In Memoriam: Former AAR Executive Director, Jim Wiggins, 1935–2017



James B. Wiggins, Eliphalet Remington Professor of Religion Emeritus, Syracuse University, passed away on February 20, 2017, at the age of 81. Dr. Wiggins earned the PhD from Drew University in 1963 and joined the faculty at Syracuse University the same year. At Syracuse, he served as director of graduate studies in religion from 1975 to 1980 and as chair of the department from 1980 to 2000. He retired in 2001. His research and writings were in the field of Western religion and culture, and his publications include *Foundations of Christianity* (1972), *Religion as Story* (1975), *Christianity: A Cultural Approach* (1987), and *In Praise of Religious Diversity* (1996). He was an ordained minister of the United Methodist Church.

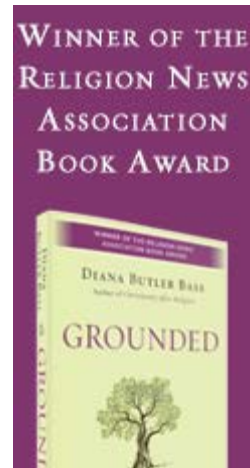
Dr. Wiggins, a Lifetime member of the AAR, served as AAR Executive Director and member of the Board of Directors from 1983 to 1991, and over the years chaired the Publications, Program, Nominations,

### Action Alert!

The Trump administration has issued a Presidential Budget Request that calls for the elimination of the National Endowment for the Humanities, along with other cultural agencies. [Tell Congress to oppose this proposal!](#)

### In this Issue

1. [AAR Looks to the Future](#)
2. [In Memoriam: Jim Wiggins, AAR Executive Director, 1983–1991](#)
3. [2017 Annual Meeting](#)
4. [Carbon Offset and Soap Drive Report from 2016 Annual Meeting](#)
5. [AAR Publications](#)
6. [Grant and Proposal Opportunities](#)
7. [2017 Regional Meetings](#)
8. [Member Notes](#)



and Finance Committees. He was well known, and will long be remembered, for his dedication and commitment to the work of the Academy.

For more information about the life of Jim Wiggins, please see the [obituary](#) published by the *Syracuse Post-Standard*.

## 2017 Annual Meeting in Boston

The 2017 Annual Meeting will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, November 18–21. Registration will open the second week of April. Opportunities to travel to the meeting include Annual Meeting Travel Grants and the Religion and the Arts Travel Grant:



### Annual Meeting Travel Grants

#### Application Deadline: April 17

The American Academy of Religion will award twenty-five travel grants worth \$500 each, plus complimentary Annual Meeting registration, on a competitive basis to members who demonstrate both financial need and a desire to participate in the Annual Meeting. The deadline for applications is **April 17 at 5:00 PM EDT**.



To learn more about the Annual Meeting Travel Grants program, click [here](#). To submit an application for an Annual Meeting Travel Grant, click [here](#).

The AAR welcomes donations to the Travel Grant program. If you've had a great time at past Annual Meetings, consider donating to the AAR's Travel Grants Fund, which awards grants to students, contingent faculty, and the unemployed and underemployed so that they may attend as well. The guild flourishes when more people can participate. To donate to AAR's Annual Meeting Travel Grants, complete the [donation form](#) and select **Annual Meeting Travel Grants** in the Program to Benefit dropdown menu.

### AAR Religion and the Arts Travel Grant

**"A much-needed guidebook for the growing turn away from organized religion."**  
—RELIGION NEWS ASSOCIATION

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a Christian**

**"An intellectual feast. . . . This is an important book for our times."**  
—Rev. Dr. David P. Gushee

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### **Application Deadline: April 17**

This generous grant, up to \$1,500, is awarded to a graduate student studying religion and the arts who is without institutional support to attend the AAR Annual Meeting. The travel grant will offset the travel costs associated with attending the Annual Meeting: registration fees (including tours and workshops), hotel room, transportation, and meals **up to \$1,500**.

More information on the Religion and the Arts Grant, including how to apply before the **April 17 at 5:00 PM EDT** deadline, is available [here](#).

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### **NativeEnergy**

The AAR and SBL are pleased to have collected a



total of \$9,555 from 606 participants attending the 2016 Annual Meetings in San Antonio for this carbon offset program. Along with a \$500 donation for the AAR and SBL's staff travel, we sent *NativeEnergy* a check for \$10,055. These funds were split towards two projects, the [Capricorn Ridge Wind Project](#) and the [Southern Ute Project](#). To learn more about the projects and to see a list of donors, [click here](#).

In 2017, the AAR is once again making it easy for members to purchase renewable energy credits when traveling to the Annual Meeting. By simply clicking a box during the [registration process](#), members can choose to give \$15 to *NativeEnergy*.

### **Soap Drive**

Our fourth annual soap drive took place at the 2016 Annual Meetings in San Antonio where 1,216 unused soaps, bottles of shampoo and conditioner, and other toiletry items were collected to be used by homeless LGBTQ+ individuals in need. The donations went to [Thrive Youth Center](#), which assists LGBTQ+ young adults who are experiencing homelessness. Thrive is also starting a street outreach program and your donations will go a long way in helping put together hygiene packs. More information [is here](#).

A *huge* thank you to our attendees for making an effort to drop off

your items to assist those in need! This year far surpassed all previous years and we hope to continue the growth of this project next year.

## AAR Publications

### Latest from *Religious Studies News*



[Francis J. Beckwith on Reason, Faith, and Beliefmaking](#)

Francis J. Beckwith, author of AAR award-winning book *Taking Rites Seriously: Law, Politics, and the Reasonableness of Faith*, discusses how we form complex beliefs and if the difference between the process of developing so-called religious beliefs and secular beliefs might be smaller than we think.

[Making Religious History Digitally Native](#)

Project Director of the Database of Religious History, Edward Slingerland, talks to *RSN* about the project's theoretical groundings, obstacles to success, and the promise of data collection and the comparative approach to discovering some of the biggest questions in the development of religious practice across history and geography.

### **Reading Religion Leadership Change**



Please read Jack Fitzmier's [announcement](#), and note of appreciation to Cynthia Eller, about the changes at Reading Religion, the AAR's open book review website.

## Grant and Proposal Opportunities

### Luce/ACLS Grants for Universities – Religion, Journalism & International Affairs



The American Council of Learned Societies requests [proposals for grants](#) to be funded by the Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International

Affairs. The deadline is March 23, 2017.

## ***In the Field***

Want to know more about events, calls, and other opportunities in the field of religion? AAR's [In the Field](#) is an AAR-member resource for news of events and opportunities for scholars of religion and theological education. Current opportunities include the following:

### **Emerging Scholar Workshops on the Societal Implications of Astrobiology (June 6–9 and June 13–16, 2017, Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey)**

The Center of Theological Inquiry (CTI) will host two four-day workshops on the quest for life, on Earth and beyond, focusing on the contributions of the sciences and humanities. Early career scholars (doctoral students and post-docs) are invited to apply. Successful applicants will receive lodging and travel support to attend one of the workshops. Workshop leaders, Dr. Lucas Mix and Dr. Frederick Simmons, are both members of CTI's Inquiry on the Societal Implications of Astrobiology. For full details and online application, visit the CTI website: [www.ctinquiry.org/Apply](http://www.ctinquiry.org/Apply). Applications deadline: March 26, 2017. Announcements: April 10, 2017. Please direct questions to [cti@ctinquiry.org](mailto:cti@ctinquiry.org)

Check it out!

## **2017 Regional Meetings**

Online registration is open for the following regions' conferences:

[Eastern International](#) – Early Bird Deadline: April 15

[New England-Maritimes](#) – Deadline: April 8

[Pacific Northwest](#) – Early Bird Deadline: April 14

[Rocky Mountain-Great Plains](#) – Deadline: March 19

[Upper Midwest](#) – Deadline: April 1

[Western](#) – Deadline: March 16

## **Member Notes**

### **In Memoriam**

Kathleen Erndl (1954–2017), Florida State University



Kathleen M. Erndl, Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Florida State University, died on February 19, 2017, at the age of 63. Dr. Erndl earned her PhD in South Asian religions from the University of Wisconsin in 1987. Her areas of research included Hindu goddesses and Indian cinema and religion. She was the author of *Victory to the Mother: The Hindu Goddess of Northwest India in Myth, Ritual, and Symbol* (1993) and coeditor of *Is the Goddess a Feminist?: The Politics of South Asian Goddesses* (2001). An active volunteer with the AAR for many years, she was serving on the steering committee of the Arts, Literature, and Religion program unit at the time of her death. Please see the [obituary](#) published by the *Tallahassee Democrat*.



Peter Foley (1961–2016), University of Arizona  
Peter W. Foley, Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies & Classics at the University of Arizona, died on December 13, 2016, at the age of 55. He earned the DPhil from the University of Vienna in 1990, and joined the faculty at the University of Arizona in 1992. He was the founding director of the Institute for the Study of Religion and Culture at UA. Dr. Foley's work focused on the history of ideas in philosophy and theological thought. He published books on Adam Müller (1990) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (2006). More information about Dr. Foley's life and work may be found [here](#) on the UA website.



Charles Reynolds (1938–2017), University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Charles Harlan Reynolds, Professor Emeritus, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, passed away on January 25, 2017, at the age of 78. Dr. Reynolds, a longtime member of the AAR, earned his PhD in religious studies from Harvard University in 1968. He joined the University of Tennessee, Knoxville religious studies department in 1969, where he served as head of the department for 21 years. He retired in 2009. Dr. Reynolds was known for his activism for justice and his dedication to the university. A highly respected teacher and scholar, he was the founding editor of the *Journal of Religious Ethics*. To learn more

about Dr. Reynolds, please read the [tribute](#) posted on the UTK website.

## **Book and Major Publications**

[Stafford Betty](#), California State University, Bakersfield

*When Did You Ever Become Less by Dying? Afterlife: The Evidence*, White Crow Books, 2016.

Jane Donovan, West Virginia University

*Henry Foxall: Methodist, Industrialist, American*, New Room Books, 2017.

Pierre Hurteau, Independent Scholar

*Male Homosexualities and World Religions*, now available in softcover, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Louis Komjathy, University of San Diego

*Taming the Wild Horse: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Daoist Horse Taming Pictures*, Columbia University Press, 2017.

[David Mellott](#), Lancaster Theological Seminary

*Finding Your Way in Seminary: What to Expect, How to Thrive*, Westminster John Knox Press, October 2016.

Adam Powell, Durham University

*Hans Mol and the Sociology of Religion*, Routledge, 2017.

[Shadaab Rahemtulla](#), University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

*Qur'an of the Oppressed: Liberation Theology and Gender Justice in Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

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Let your AAR colleagues know about your professional milestones!

[Submit your Member Note online.](#)