

# LaFantasie Appointed First Director of Civil War Center at WKU

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Bowling Green, Ky. – President Gary Ransdell has announced that Glenn W. LaFantasie, a noted Civil War scholar and the author of two books, has been appointed the first Director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War in the West at Western Kentucky University (WKU). Dr. LaFantasie has also been appointed the Richard Frockt Family Professor of Civil War History, an endowed chair made possible by a generous contribution of Richard Frockt (WKU, class of 1967), Chairman of the Board for Bluegrass Enterprises, a venture capital company based in Las Vegas.

The mission of the Center for the Study of the Civil War in the West is to establish WKU as the world's premier institution for research, teaching, and public dialogue on the history, culture, and contemporary implications of how the Civil War was experienced by Americans living west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Center is WKU's primary vehicle to promote initiatives in scholarship and regional service.

The Center's purpose is to investigate, document, interpret, and teach about the Civil War in the West. The Center emphasizes the interdisciplinary investigation and documentation of the Civil War in the West as a culturally, historically, geographically, and demographically complex field of study. The Center will promote research on aspects of the war in the western theater by supporting the work of its faculty, staff, students, and visiting scholars. It will offer to the public, as well as to the academic community, opportunities for increasing knowledge of the Civil War in the West (and particularly in Kentucky) through conferences, lectures, credit courses, publications, tours, and archival access (including the collections of the Kentucky Library and Museum and primary sources made available through the Center's future website). The Center's intent is to become a focal point for innovative education and research on the history of the Civil War in the West, thus strengthening WKU's program in the humanities, promoting interdisciplinary scholarship in many aspects of Civil War history and memory, and encouraging public understanding of this rich field of study.

Dr. LaFantasie, who received his Ph.D. in History from Brown University, is author of *Twilight at Little Round Top* (Wiley, 2005), which spent more than 40 weeks on the History Book Club bestseller list, and *Gettysburg Requiem: The Life and Lost Causes of Confederate Colonel William C. Oates*, which will be published in July 2006 by Oxford University Press. A collection of his previously published essays, *Gettysburg Heroes: Perfect Soldiers, Hallowed Ground*, will be published by Indiana University Press in Spring 2008. Over the past thirty years, he has held various positions in the field of public history, including Editor of Publications at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Deputy Historian of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, and Director of the Aldie Mill Historic Site in Virginia. He has previously taught at the University of Rhode Island, Gettysburg College, and the University of Maine at Farmington.

"I am delighted to accept this appointment," Dr. LaFantasie said. The Center for the Study of the Civil War in the West "is perfectly positioned at WKU, where it is located in close proximity to Kentucky's important battlefields and to an astounding number of significant Civil War sites in the western theater." He also said that the Center will draw on "the History Department's superb

faculty, the strong holdings in the Civil War in the WKU's Helm-Cravens Library, and the extensive manuscript and microfilm collections of the Kentucky Library and Museum." In addition, he said, "there are several natural constituencies in the vicinity of WKU that will be served by the Center. For example, besides WKU's own alumni, there are Civil War buffs, reenactors, secondary school teachers, a large number of active and retired military personnel, and others who will find the Center's future programs informative, useful, and entertaining."

Dr. LaFantasie will begin his duties with the start of the fall semester in August 2006.