A Letter from the Editors

We are pleased to introduce the first issue of the *Western Illinois Historical Review*, which is dedicated to displaying the best student work. We are committed to incorporating work in all areas of history, and the editorial board has worked enthusiastically and cooperatively in selecting these papers. We have carefully reviewed these papers in order to represent the History Department, its faculty, and its students to the best of our ability. The student work in this issue focuses on topics ranging from Ancient Rome to World War II. We did not specify a certain historical era for paper nominations, and feel that a wider array of topics displays the vast range of interests that Western Illinois students possess. All of these student essays exemplify the highest standards of Western Illinois University.

Andrea D. Van Drew, in her honors thesis under Dr. Brice, examines the enduring legacy of Rome’s Colosseum. In her article, Van Drew explores the question of why the Colosseum has been more popular than the Circus Maximus. By tracing the history of both sites from their construction to their demise, the author concludes that ongoing repairs and attention from Roman rulers has caused the Colosseum’s legacy to withstand time, in comparison to the Circus Maximus.

World War II has often been the focus of historical research for the past sixty years. In his paper for Dr. Combs’s Nazi Germany class, Adam Bednar focuses on German Commando Otto Skorzeny. Bednar examines the frequently overlooked role that Skorzeny played in the Ardennes Offensive in 1944. Through the spreading of rumors and faulty intelligence, Skorzeny served to be a constant threat to Allied security on the front lines.

Throughout the 1960s, women asserted their voices in an attempt to achieve equal rights. Such is the focus of Ashley Eberle’s honors thesis, guided by Dr. Boynton, which examines the formation of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union. Eberle argues that 1960s activism helped spawn the Chicago organization, which then created social change for women and proved to be an example for future women’s organizations.

Darren Miles, in his History 599 graduate paper for Dr. Key, explores the crucial role that Illinois Republican Senator Everett Dirksen played in passing civil rights legislation in the 1960s. Dirksen was essential in overcoming the filibuster and various other obstacles in order to ensure the approval of numerous Civil Rights Acts. Miles demonstrates the importance that one person can have in passing monumental pieces of legislation that paid dividends for the country.

The members of the editorial board have worked diligently and cooperatively to present these papers, which exemplify the passion and intelligence of Western Illinois students. The *Western Illinois
Historical Review will continue to evolve in future years, as the editorial board is committed to making this a lasting publication within the History Department at Western Illinois University. Thank you for taking the time to visit the Western Illinois Historical Review.

Adam Bednar and Shane Leadbetter
co-editors