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## **Jim Farr and French Historical Studies**

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*Editors' Note: Jim Farr and his Purdue colleague John Contreni co-edited French Historical Studies between 1992-2001. The new editors wanted the journal to engage readers through intellectual dialogue and debate, and saw the use of focused forums as a key means toward this end. Their first issues set the tone with forums on patronage, political culture, the public sphere, gender, consumerism, and memorials. Later forums, including "Thinking History, Doing History," focused on application and pedagogy. Much of this work, which attempted to capture the immediacy of scholarly conversation found in conferences but previously missing in journal publications, translated quite well into the new medium of the web. As John relates below, this was a formative period for the journal, and their terms as editors coincided with the development of a new listserv named H-France. In honor of his service to the new listserv, Jim was named an Editor Emeritus of H-France.*

### **Jim Farr and French Historical Studies**

**John J. Contreni  
Purdue University**

Jim Farr brought *FHS* to Purdue University in 1992. At that time I was head of the department and helped grease the ways in negotiations with the department and the dean. But Jim did the heavy lifting and secured the authorization of the Executive Committee of the French Historical Society to bring the journal to Purdue. The initial term was for three years, but two more terms were added bringing our tenure as co-editors into the new millennium in 2001.

It was an eventful and transformative nine years for the journal. At all times, Jim was the liaison with the Society and reported on the journal's achievements at its annual meetings. In 1992, the journal came out twice a year, but it soon transitioned to a quarterly publication (with a consequent increase in workload for the co-editors and our manuscripts' reviewers!). When we began, we inherited a professional free-lance copy editor based in Ohio. Under Jim's leadership, *FHS* entered Duke University Press's stable of publications. Duke assumed responsibility for marketing and subscriptions and considerably enhanced the professional profile of the journal.

Shortly after *FHS* came to Purdue, Dr. Jean-Pierre V.H. Hérubel, professor of library science in our humanities library and a European intellectual history Ph.D., approached us with an idea to initiate a "Recent Articles on French History" section in the journal. This would augment Thomas Schaefer's bibliography of books and dissertations. Jim pitched the plan to the Society and J.-P.'s twenty-page bibliography became a regular feature of *FHS* for the next thirty years.

Jim also came up with the idea to solicit and publish forums on topical issues in French history. The forums presented opportunities for readers to engage multiple perspectives on hot-button themes by leading scholars in French history. This innovation also became a constituent feature of the journal.

All in all, it was a lot of (uncompensated) work, but also a fun ride. In addition to his own outstanding scholarship, Jim made major contributions to the French historical enterprise in North America by transforming the field's flagship journal and enhancing its impact as an intellectual force in French scholarship from the Middle Ages to the present.

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