

Introduction and Dedication

This is a special introduction for our inaugural issue. Doug Allen, a former student of Nathan Alexander, was the driving force behind the creation of this journal to promote student research at Troy University. He chooses to dedicate this publication in Professor Alexander's name. We miss you, Nathan.

“Cancer may take all my physical abilities. It cannot touch my mind, it cannot touch my heart, and it cannot touch my soul...those three are going to carry on forever.” Though uttered by Coach Jim Valvano in his now infamous Espy speech, these words could easily have been attributed to Dr. Nathan Alexander. My first memory of Dr. Alexander is also the most lasting. As I made my way to one of my first history classes at Troy University, a tall, bright smile walked towards me in the empty hall. Though I was already late for class, this man, with what can only be described as a warmth about him, stopped me. I do not recall the exact words, but the conversation made me laugh, think, and enjoy his company. His demeanor made me feel at ease, and his jovial attitude gave no indication he was facing an uphill battle with cancer. It was not until the end of the conversation, after many divergent topics ranging from Troy University to beach vacations, that this man introduced himself, as simply Nathan. Dr. Alexander had an infectious personality and a magnetism that made everyone he met love him.

Dr. Alexander loved his students and always believed in their ability to contribute to the historical community at a high level. He treated his students as equal partners in the process of learning and pushed the students at Troy to pursue ambitious goals. Phi Alpha Theta began a project to bring an online historical journal to Troy University. This project took many turns and even more setbacks before finally becoming a reality late in the spring semester. As a tribute to Dr. Alexander and his impact on the students of the history department at Troy University, Phi Alpha Theta decided to name the journal *The Alexandrian*. He constantly volunteered his precious time for his students, and *The Alexandrian* must thank the wonderful professors in the History Department of Troy University for volunteering their time to be readers, advisors, and editors. I would like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Karen Ross for leading this journal as our faculty advisor. Dr. Ross has been an invaluable part of making this journal a reality and has devoted her valuable time to keep *The Alexandrian* on track despite numerous obstacles. She truly exhibits some of the best qualities of *The Alexandrian* seeks to honor and this journal would not have been possible without her dedication and generous volunteering of her time.

The articles in this inaugural issue of *The Alexandrian* are representative of the high-quality research being done by graduate and undergraduate scholars at Troy University. The authors of these articles are honor students, award winners, and fellowship recipients. This assembly of articles so disparate in geography, time period, and theme is the perfect way to honor Dr. Alexander with its inaugural issue. Dr. Alexander could fluidly move from topic to topic across theme, time, or geography and read and studied across many different fields.

Anyone who spent time talking with Dr. Alexander can only smile at remembering the way he changed topics quickly. His interests ranged as wide as the articles in this issue, and it is a fitting tribute to his memory that the first issue of this journal is as diversely assembled as Dr. Alexander.

Dr. Alexander read widely and was a relentless learner throughout his life. The mind, he taught his students, was one of the greatest assets a person could develop. As amazing as his mind was, Dr. Alexander's generous heart was even more impactful on his family, friends, and students. Though his intellectual conversations were always enlightening and enjoyable, it was the personal talks that affected his students the most. Dr. Alexander had the ability to not only make his students understand history, but to believe in themselves. His kindness gives the people who knew him a standard to live up to. Lastly, Dr. Alexander's soul will be an example for others remember and follow. If we define the soul as the "actuating cause of an individual life," as Webster does, then one can only hope that they live up to Dr. Alexander's example. Dr. Alexander's "actuating cause" in his life was his family. This came in three parts: his university family consisting of his colleagues and students; his natal family consisting of his parents, brother and sisters; and the most important of all, his true actuating cause, his daughter Elisa. Somehow, Dr. Alexander found the time and energy to devote himself to these three families. Dr. Alexander gave of himself to all that encountered him in these settings, and as a result Dr. Alexander will mostly, and more importantly, be remembered through the memory of his family, friends, and students. It is my hope, though, that this journal will play a small part in helping "carry on forever" the memory of Dr. Alexander's mind, heart and soul.

To the students and professors at Troy University that he influenced, to his family, specifically his pride and joy Elisa, and most importantly to the memory of Dr. Nathan Alexander I would like to dedicate this inaugural issue of *The Alexandrian*.

Doug Allen
Co-editor and Author