

## Professor Nathan Alexander Remembered

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*In this section we remember our colleague, teacher, and friend, Nathan Alexander. We miss you, Nathan!*

Dr. Nathan Alexander was born March 13, 1968 to Steve and Sandra Alexander in Bremerton, Washington. It is here that he would spend his childhood with his three siblings. Charismatic and quick-witted, Dr. Alexander's popularity was evident even in his youth. He graduated from Bremerton High School in 1986 and left home for Seattle, where he studied at the University of Washington. While enrolled at UW, Dr. Alexander helped establish a student historical journal, titled *Intersections*. This journal is still officially in publication, though it has been on hiatus since 2015. Dr. Alexander graduated with a Bachelor of the Arts in Comparative History of Ideas in 1990.

Dr. Alexander studied European history at the graduate level at Harvard University. He earned his M.A. in 1994 and assumed a lecturer position in the History of Literature concentration in 1997. Four years later, in 2001, he would officially earn his PhD. Dr. Alexander continued to teach at Harvard until 2005, when he took a position as Assistant Professor in History here at Troy University. Dr. Alexander was immediately adored by almost all who had the pleasure to get to know him. His enthusiastic hunger for learning and seemingly constant smile kept him in high regard by both student and professor alike.

Unfortunately, Dr. Alexander's tenure at Troy University was brief. In the August of 2008, he fell ill from complications regarding leukemia. Faculty at Troy University showed their support, filling in for Dr. Alexander's classes as he returned home to Washington for treatment at Seattle Cancer Care Alliance hospital. While in the hospital, Dr. Alexander passed away on May 24, 2009.

Dr. Alexander's legacy in Troy lives on in the form of *The Alexandrian*, named in his honor. The impact that he had on the lives of the students and professors who knew him cannot be overstated, even as new people come and go. His brief stay enriched the lives of those around him. We miss him, but we are excited to dedicate our scholarship to his memory.

From the faculty:

Nathan Alexander is still very much a part of the life of the department, even though new faculty and students are added and old ones leave. His books are in the Library, his art is on the Department walls, and even ten years later we still tell Nathan stories and miss him.

A recent contribution from colleague and friend, **Tim Buckner**:

Nathan was a New England Patriots fan before it was trite to be one, but at least he earned it by actually living there. The Patriots won every game of the 2007 regular season and he was

happy to tell you about how dominant they were every Monday morning. After they absolutely shredded the AFC in the playoffs, he let me know that someone in the organization had trademarked “19-0” to display on shirts, hats, banners, coffee cups, etc. to commemorate their perfect season which would inevitably happen as they were sure to win the Super Bowl. Of course, they lost the Super Bowl that year to the Giants in improbable fashion and so, to mark the occasion of his hubris, I bought him a T-Shirt in the NE Patriots style and colors with “18-1” on the front and presented it to him in front of one of his classes. He kind of laughed it off, but he wasn’t happy. Unfortunately, I’m an Atlanta Falcons fan. When the Falcons lost Super Bowl LI by blowing the largest lead in the history of the game to the Patriots, I felt like Nathan had pulled some strings to get his revenge on me and that I deserved it.

As we come up on the tenth anniversary of his passing, we asked people what they missed the most. Spot the pattern below!

**Scout Blum:** Ten years later, I really miss Nathan’s enthusiasm for history and his kindness to his students.

**Karen Ross:** Nathan was one of the first people who welcomed me to the department – despite the fact that I called him by the wrong name. He just smiled. I miss that smile.

**Joe McCall:** I miss the sparkle in his eyes no matter what he was discussing and no matter his audience. Almost every time I encountered Nathan, he was bright-eyed and engaging!

**Machelle Danner:** I miss Nathan’s smile. His smile was always sincere. It showed his inner happiness. I miss his easy-going personality. Being around Nathan gave me peace because he had a peaceful nature. A happy nature. All of this was reflected in his smile.

**Bryant Shaw:** I miss his infectious smile. Ten years have flown by. Nathan’s sister Rachel Alexander sums it up: “I can’t believe it has been 10 years since I lost my brother. It feels like yesterday, and I could just turn to him right now to talk, and he would be there.”

**Patty Jones:** Patty would like to publish the following link to Elisa’s Caring Bridge page. <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/fullspeedahead/journal>. Anyone who visited Nathan’s office in the old History Department on the third floor of Bibb Graves remembers seeing Elisa’s soccer jersey on the wall and many, many pictures. Some of us were fortunate enough to have met her when she visited – we miss you, too, Elisa. Come back any time.