



# NO LAUGHING MATTER

Political Cartoons and the Arkansas Historical Perspective



JOE  
KENNEDY

AN EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

**Thursday, Nov. 3, 2016**

Little Rock Marriott Hotel and Statehouse Convention Center  
Petit Jean Room





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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Political cartoons, also known as editorial cartoons, occupy a delicate spot in modern culture: Part humor, part satire, they reflect a view of society's challenges at a particular time. The development of the editorial cartoon genre can be traced to 18th-century British politics when a few caricaturists began lampooning British leaders and the French Revolution. Almost 300 years later, the genre continues to be a bellwether of culture and politics. Looking back through archives of these cartoons paints a picture of the history of the day and offers a glimpse of the emotions, struggles, and opinions of the time that words may fail to capture fully.

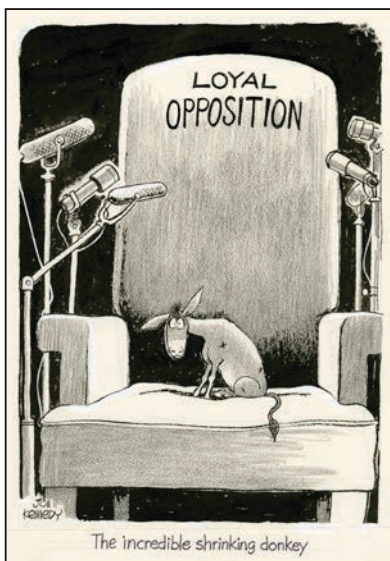
Arkansas's colorful political history is well documented thanks to two iconic cartoonists. Jon Kennedy was the political cartoonist for the *Arkansas Democrat* for almost 45 years, and Bill Graham was the cartoonist for the competing *Arkansas Gazette* for 37 years. The career spans of these two cultural commentators included Arkansas events like the Little Rock Central High School crisis and Bill Clinton's political rise.

"No Laughing Matter: Political Cartoons and the Arkansas Historical Perspective" began as a product of an unrelated project when the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture proposed a workshop for teachers, librarians, and archivists around the state. The workshop, Teaching a Web of Arkansas History, brought together professionals from around the state to learn about digitizing photographs, writing about the photographs, and creating online exhibits to highlight archival material. For the workshops, Center staff



thought political cartoons would be interesting source materials for the participants to work with and contemplate exhibiting. From that, the virtual exhibit was born and the idea for this symposium soon followed.

Today's symposium and the accompanying virtual exhibit examine the interaction of politics and history in Arkansas, featuring original works by local political cartoonists Jon Kennedy (*Arkansas Democrat*, 1941-1988) and Bill Graham (*Arkansas Gazette*, 1948-1985). The symposium and exhibit explore issues made evident through political cartoons and the human impact surrounding those issues, including the power of political cartoons on the human condition, historical events as seen through political cartoons, and cartoons as satire and persuasion. Also included is a first-hand account from political cartoonist John Deering (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*) and a timely look at political cartoonists working both sides of political campaigns.



Through the exhibit, visitors can explore topics like voting (local and national elections), education funding and desegregation of schools, urbanization and economic development, prison reform, and local gambling legislation. Other political collections such as the Winthrop Rockefeller Collection and Dale Bumpers Gubernatorial Papers, provide contextual information that guide viewers to a fuller appreciation of the cartoon themselves. The virtual exhibit also offers a wealth of educational materials designed around Arkansas curriculum frameworks for teachers and students around the state.



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2016

*The following sessions are designed for educators, scholars, enthusiasts, high school and college students, and the general public.*

**8-9 a.m.**

## **Persuasion, Comedy, and Politics: The Rhetorical Impact of Satire in Political Cartoons**

What is the purpose of political cartoons? It has little to do with politics. Contemporary politics is just the subject, cartoons are satire. Attendees will learn how humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule is used to expose and criticize society's vices, and the various ways cartoon analysis can be applied to subjects covered in the classroom.

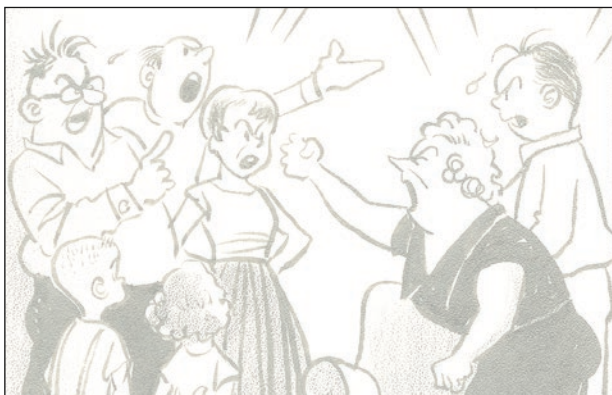
**PRESENTER(S):** George Jensen, UALR Department of Rhetoric and Writing  
J. Bradley Minnick, UALR Department of English

**9:10-10:10 a.m.**

## **Illustrating History: Jon Kennedy and Historical Representation**

Political cartoons reflect the human condition at a point in time. Like literature, they offer an emotional, sense-based context to historical facts not found in modern reporting. Responses range from a call to action to reflection or deeper thought on a particular issue. Attendees will analyze editorial drawings by Jon Kennedy between 1940 and 1980 to tell the story of Arkansas political history.

**PRESENTER(S):** Barclay Key, UALR Department of History  
John Deering, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*



**10:20-11:20 a.m.**

**The Political Cartoonist as Entrepreneur: Arkansas Cartoonists Working Both Sides of Campaigns**

Modern political cartooning uses two styles to depict visual metaphor, traditional and linear. Regardless of style, editorial cartoons express current events in a comical manner. This session will review these styles and offer suggestions of how analysis of each can be incorporated into classroom topics. Attendees will also have the opportunity to review drawings by Arkansas artists Jon Kennedy and Bill Graham between 1940 and 1980 to tell the story of Arkansas political history.

**PRESENTER(S):** Revis Edmonds, Department of Arkansas Heritage  
Joseph Giammo, UALR Department of Political Science  
John Deering, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

**4:10-5:10 p.m.**

**Modernizing History: Developing and Publishing a Virtual Exhibit for the Modern Student**

Attendees will learn how to create a strategy for creating a virtual exhibit for the modern student using primary sources.

**PRESENTER(S):** Chad Garrett, UALR Collections and Archives  
Shannon Lausch, UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture  
Stan James, eStem Public Charter School





**Joseph Giammo, Ph.D.**, is the interim director of UALR's School of Public Affairs. He teaches a variety of classes on American politics, including courses on elections, the presidency, and Congress. His research focuses on campaigns, voters, election laws, and political communication.



**George H. Jensen, Ph.D.**, professor of rhetoric and writing at UALR is a specialist in composition and rhetoric. His recent books include "Some of the Words Are Theirs: A Memoir of an Alcoholic Family," "Identities Across Texts," and "Storytelling in Alcoholics Anonymous: A Rhetorical Analysis."



**J. Bradley Minnick, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor for the UALR Department of English.



**Barclay Key, Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor of history in the UALR History Department, where he teaches courses in modern American history, African-American history, southern history, American religious history, and Arkansas history.



**Revis Edmonds, Ph.D.**, is the coordinator of preservation outreach for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at the Department of Arkansas Heritage.

**John Deering** has been an editorial cartoonist and illustrator for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* for 30 years starting with the *Arkansas Democrat* in 1981. His two comic features, "Strange Brew" and "Zack Hill" are distributed by Creators Syndicate as are his editorial cartoons. John has spent a lifetime as an artist and his paintings can be seen at Cantrell Gallery in Little Rock. He is also a figurative sculptor. John regrets never having entered the "Draw the Pirate" cartoon contest.



**Chad Garrett**, master of arts, is the director of technology and digital initiatives for the UALR Collections and Archives Division. Garrett works closely with the digital archives and preservation program and set up the division's Digital Services Lab, which provides tools and support for preserving analog audio, video, and documents, as well as born digital materials. Garrett's 20 years in information technology have included work as a technical writer, web designer/developer, systems and server administrator, trainer, and manager/leader. He has spearheaded all 13 virtual exhibits for the Center for Arkansas History and Culture.



**Stanley James** holds a BA in History from UALR with minors in Secondary Education and Social Studies. He works with the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture on web exhibits and education materials. He worked as the web editor and education coordinator on Johnny Cash: Arkansas Icon and As Much as the Water: How Steamboats Shaped Arkansas virtual exhibits. Stanley is the AP World History and World History teacher at eStem High Charter School in downtown Little Rock.



**Shannon Lausch** is the multimedia archivist at the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture. She earned her undergraduate degree in political science at North Central College and her master's degree in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has worked as a graduate assistant at the University of Illinois's archives and as an intern at the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum.





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[ualrexhibits.org/laughing](http://ualrexhibits.org/laughing)

The UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture is a unique and reliable resource that explores and promotes Arkansas's rich history through identifying, collecting, and preserving records that are of enduring value. CAHC is part of the Collections and Archives Division at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Collections and Archives supports the academic success of the university community by engaging in research and lifelong learning.

Images used in the creation of the virtual exhibit were scanned by participants of the Teaching a Web of Arkansas History workshops. These hands-on workshops were made possible by the Arkansas Community Foundation's Bridge Fund grant program.

501.320.5780 | [ualr.edu/cahc](http://ualr.edu/cahc) | [cahc@ualr.edu](mailto:cahc@ualr.edu)



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Humanities  
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HISTORY AND CULTURE

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