Richard Davies: Rivals! The Ten Greatest American Sports Rivalries of the 20th Century

History Professor Richard Davies spent almost four years researching and writing Rivals! The Ten Greatest American Sports Rivalries of the 20th Century, published recently by Wiley-Blackwell.


Davies spends a chapter on each one, weaving in personal information on athletes and coaches, providing a glimpse of American culture and history, and illuminating little-known facts and feelings behind each rivalry. He teaches a course, titled “The History of American Sports,” and was one of the first to offer sports as a way to bring American history and pop culture to life in the classroom.

“Our sports stadiums are like Europe’s cathedrals,” he said. “Decades and centuries from now, visitors to the United States will make sure to see Wrigley Field and the Superdome. They will serve as examples of what American life and culture was like.”

Besides Rivals!, Davies has authored, edited or co-edited about 15 other works on sports history and 20th-century American history. He says the research he does for his books helps keep his teaching up to date after 50 years in the classroom. And, he still gets great fulfillment from his writing.

“At age 72, it’s still a thrill. I take great pride in my work,” Davies said, “I like to think my legacy will be my books and my students.”

— Claudene Wharton ’86, ’99M.A.

Gret de Jong: Invisible Enemy

After nearly three years of work, Gret de Jong, associate professor of history, is publishing her second book, Invisible Enemy, on racism in the post-civil rights era. Invisible Enemy is part of a larger book series by publisher Wiley-Blackwell called “America’s Recent Past,” which focuses on developments since the 1960s and 1970s.

This book focuses on the systems that disadvantage African-Americans today and on the way African-Americans struggle against those continuing forms of racism. De Jong sees the black freedom struggle as something more than a fight against discrimination.

“When I talk about the freedom struggle, that refers to the idea that black struggles are not just about legalized discrimination or Jim Crow or political rights or civil rights,” she said. “They’re also about economic justice, and that’s the area of the struggle that policy makers have neglected since the 1960s.”

De Jong’s hope is that people will be able to read and enjoy her work while learning more about racism in America.

—Mary Hunton, Class of 2011

Geography departments and DRI: The Mojave Desert: Ecosystem Processes and Sustainability

The Mojave Desert: Ecosystem Processes and Sustainability, a book edited and composed in part by faculty from the Department of Geography and the Desert Research Institute, earned the University of Nevada Press an Honorable Mention in the 2009 American Publishers Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE).

“It’s neat to be recognized,” said Jill Heaton, assistant professor of geography and one of the chief editors of the book. “PROSE recognizes state-of-the-art entries, and it’s great to be alongside them.”

The book is the result of a 2004 conference, the third Mojave Desert Science Symposium hosted by the geography department. The scholars at the symposium, specially selected by department organizers, pooled their presentations along with work from other Mojave Desert experts to create the book. It’s a collection of 38 essays detailing threats to the Mojave Desert ecosystem as well as options for its restoration.

“We were getting a lot of good science,” said Heaton. “It just made sense to publish it together.”

—Skyler Dillon ’10