

## MICHAEL GROSSBERG

In 1995, Michael Grossberg came to Indiana University Bloomington as professor of history and editor of the *American Historical Review*. He had already achieved distinction as a graduate student at Brandeis university, visiting assistant professor at Wellesley College, and then assistant and associate professor at Case Western Reserve University. Mike's prize-winning first book, *Governing the Hearth: Law and the Family in Nineteenth-Century America*, had made him a major figure in the field of legal history. His terms as chair of the Department of History at Case Western and editor of the *Law and History Review* had underscored his broad institutional and scholarly vision; his fair-minded, humane collegiality; and his considerable leadership skills.

At IU, those qualities served him well over his decade as editor of the *American Historical Review* (AHR), one of the world's leading scholarly journals. The AHR's global scope and high standards make the editorship challenging at any time. But Mike joined the Bloomington-based journal just as the internet and digitization revolutionized scholarly publication. During his editorship, the AHR went online and pioneered digital-born articles. Overseeing the evaluation of thousands of manuscripts and the review of thousands more books, Mike sought to ensure that in an age of specialization, the review would speak across specialties to common concerns and overcome the marginalization of fields within the historical discipline. "Mike Grossberg is largely responsible for making the *American Historical Review* what it is today. . . at the cutting edge of scholarship in the digital age," says Professor Robert Schneider, his editorial successor. Mike's highly visible editorship positioned him for broader leadership as president of the International Commission on Historical Journals of the Congress of Historical Sciences and co-founder of the History Cooperative, an electronic scholarly publishing organization.

Despite the demands of editing, Mike established himself in the department. Teaching courses in legal history, he won a Teaching Excellence Recognition Award. He served for decades as the advisor to pre-law students, frequently chaired the U.S. field, and



repeatedly won election to the departmental Executive Committee.

Meanwhile Mike's second book, *A Judgment for Solomon: The d'Hauteville Case and Legal Experience in Antebellum America*, cemented his reputation as a leader in his field. Three co-edited volumes; a flood of articles and book chapters; and a tidal wave of talks, lectures, and other public appearances further expanded the reach of his ideas. Focusing on the intersection of law and social change, he broke new ground by integrating family history with legal history, a field long dominated by economic concerns, and by insisting on children's importance in the law. So Mike widened the scope of legal history, just as he expanded the range of the AHR. For many younger scholars, his collaborator Professor Hendrik Hartog of Princeton University observes, Mike's "genuinely canonical" work "changed their lives, made them reassess what they wanted to do, helped them find their calling and their vocation."

In recognition of his scholarly and departmental contributions, Mike became the first Sally M. Reahard Professor of History in 2006. Meanwhile, his range of commitments helped shape Bloomington campus life. He served as a member of the Bloomington Faculty Council, co-chair of the Alliance of Distinguished and Titled Professors, a supporter of the Individualized Major Program, and a member of numerous committees for the College of Arts and Sciences, the campus,

and the university.

Most notably, Mike became professor of law in 2001—a reflection of his truly interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching. Serving as longtime co-director of the Center on Law, Society, and Culture, Mike also taught classes in legal history and family law for the Maurer School of Law. In addition, Dean Austen Parrish notes, Mike was a "fabulous colleague" and "caring mentor." Interested in the broader ramifications of law and justice, Mike became founding director of the College of Arts and Sciences' Political and Civic Engagement Program. According to his successor, Lisa-Marie Napoli, he was "courageous and innovative" in working "to make the program distinct in its ability to train students to become engaged in public life." As if his many commitments weren't enough, Mike served as interim chair of the Department of Criminal Justice from 2012 to 2015. Leading a department as an outsider is one of the most demanding tasks in academia, but Mike effectively guided criminal justice through a challenging period. "Though the position required him to be firm at times," a colleague recalls, "he always exuded a sense of humor and good will as he deftly reshaped the department's mission and culture."

Even as he devoted himself to university life, Mike received recognition well beyond campus. He has been president of Bloomington's Community Justice and Mediation Center and board member of the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana. He has won prestigious Guggenheim and American Council of Learned Societies fellowships. He has served as a distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians and as president of the American Society for Legal History. A frequent visiting scholar at the Department of Child Studies, University of Linköping, Sweden, he has received the Doctor of Philosophy (*honoris causa*) from the university.

In retirement with his wife, Tina, Mike will continue his civic involvement and his work on various scholarly projects, including a book, *Kids Matter: Protecting Children in Modern America*. His colleagues in the Department of History and across the campus will miss his collegiality, wisdom, and powerful humanistic commitment.

*Michael McGerr*