

Statement on the passing of historian Jan Ellen Lewis

August 28, 2018



We mourn the passing of Jan Ellen Lewis, the Dean of Faculty and a professor of History at Rutgers University–Newark, where she spent the majority of her career over a 40-year period.

Dean Lewis and her husband Barry were great friends to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello. As one of the foremost professors of early America, with a particular interest in family life, she was always willing to help with her time and was one of the longest serving members of the Advisory Committee of Monticello's Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies. In 2017 she joined a group of esteemed colleagues for a conference in Ireland entitled "Ireland, America and Empire in the Age of Jefferson."

Author of *The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia* (1983), she also wrote some pioneering essays on the extended family of Thomas Jefferson. She was co-editor of *An Emotional History of the United States* (1998) and the path breaking conference volume *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory and Civic Culture* (1999), to which she also was a contributor. She similarly coedited *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race and the New Republic* (2002), and the textbook, *Making a Nation: The United States and Its People* (2001). She discussed the Founding Fathers on the PBS News Hour and on NPR. As she enlightened her students about the revered founders of the nation, she portrayed them as very human men, with very human frailties.

She served as President of the Society of Historians of the Early Republic (SHEAR) and as chair of the American Historical Association's Committee on Women Historians. She was a member of the editorial committee of the American Historical Review and the New Jersey Historical Commission.

She will be fondly remembered by those who knew her for her humor, her intellectual acuity, her compassion and her encouragement.

[Read a message from the Chancellor Rutgers University-Newark on the passing of Dean Jan Lewis »](#)

<https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/news/chancellors-message-passing-dean-jan-lewis>.

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