

## **In Memoriam**



### **Terrence M. Cole**

**Professor Emeritus of History and Arctic & Northern Studies**

**University of Alaska Fairbanks**

**1953-2020**

With sadness and immense gratitude, we honor Professor Emeritus Terrence M. Cole for his three decades of service to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Professor Cole died on December 12, 2020, following a three-year battle with cancer.

Terrence and his identical twin Dermot followed their older brother Patrick to Fairbanks in the early 1970s to attend the University of Alaska. After earning a B.A. in Geography and Northern Studies, and an M.A. in History, Cole earned a Ph.D. in History at the University of Washington. He joined the UAF History Department in 1988 and taught in the M.A. in Northern Studies Program (now Arctic & Northern Studies) from its founding in 1992 until his retirement in 2018. Throughout his career at UAF, Professor Cole ranked among the university's most esteemed professors and ardent supporters, enhancing students' educational experiences through co-curricular activities and scholarships he funded, and rallying others to support the institution. In 1998 the University of Alaska Foundation honored him with the Edith Bullock Award for excellence in support of the University of Alaska.

A deep believer in the value of a broad liberal arts education, Cole urged students to question their assumptions, unsettling many, while earning the enduring gratitude of countless students for teaching them to think critically and write effectively. An occasional tendency to appear the absent-minded professor belied an extraordinary intellect and ability to deliver riveting lectures that captivated and inspired thousands of students. Cole's excellence in teaching earned him UAF's Emil Usibelli Distinguished Teaching Award in 1994, the Golden Key National Honor

Society Award for Outstanding Teaching in 1995, and the Associated Students of UAF's Award for Outstanding Faculty Member in 1996.

Foremost an eminent scholar of Alaska and polar history, Cole's enviable publishing record includes five books on Alaska history, most recently *Fighting for the Forty-Ninth Star: C.W. Snedden and the Crusade for Alaska Statehood* (Fairbanks: UA Foundation, 2010), a treatment of the state, national, and international personalities, interests, and forces that shaped Alaska's statehood movement. He compiled, edited, or contributed to twenty books related to Alaska and polar history, published dozens of peer-reviewed and other articles, produced nearly twenty government sponsored and other projects, and contributed to numerous film, television and radio productions. Among the most noteworthy are his monograph "Blinded by Riches: The Permanent Funding Problem and the Prudhoe Bay Effect" (Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2004) which analyzes Alaska's historical dependence on a single resource, most recently oil; and his projects on Alaska's Constitution, including the Emmy winning *The 49<sup>th</sup> Star*, a joint project of KUAC-TV and Alaska One, which he co-wrote.

Of his many public service commitments, Dr. Cole found most rewarding his work with the Fairbanks National History Day program, which he founded and co-directed for two decades. His encouragement of young students' love of history, research, and scholarship inspired a generation of Alaskans to believe in themselves and their dreams, and to recognize that excellence requires hard work. Cole's service to the community and to the state garnered him the Governor's Award for the Humanities in 2006 and the Boy Scouts of America's Fairbanks Citizen of the Year award in 2011, which he shared with his brother, the journalist Dermot Cole.

Throughout his life, Dr. Cole's remarkable intellect, boisterous sense of humor, generous spirit, and childlike wonder at the world endeared him to family, friends, colleagues, and students. Until his death, he remained grateful to the institution that had permitted him to enjoy a gratifying career doing what he loved – researching, writing, and teaching history. His greatest legacy, apart from his three beloved children, Henry, Desmond, and Elizabeth, lies in the hundreds of students whose lives and careers he profoundly shaped through his dedication not only to their intellectual growth but also to their personal well-being.