



the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES NETWORK

Dr. Kathryn Lofton Receives LGBT Religious History Award

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Religious Archives Network (LGBT-RAN) honors Dr. Kathryn Lofton as the 2006-07 recipient of its LGBT Religious History Award. Dr. Lofton's paper, "Queering Fundamentalism: The Case of John Balcolm Shaw (1860-1935)," was selected by the review jury to receive this award.

Dr. Kathryn Lofton is an assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Program in American Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington. After contemplating majors in medicine and public policy during her undergraduate years at the University of Chicago, Lofton became interested in the multiple ways religion grapples with societal dilemmas that politics and economics cannot. With a dual focus on religious studies and U.S. history, Lofton went to graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the Department of Religious Studies, where she received her M.A. in 2002 and her Ph.D. in 2005. During her time at Carolina, she focused on developing analytical connections between the history of religious America and contemporary American life.

Lofton's research and writing on John Balcolm Shaw illuminates the contradiction between living in a society that simultaneously celebrates individual self-expression alongside the propagation of more socially restrictive structures. The Rev. John Balcolm Shaw was a prominent Presbyterian church leader in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles who was deeply involved in the intellectual formation of American fundamentalism during the early twentieth century. After becoming president of Elmira College for Women, he was accused of the "crime of sodomy" by a series of anonymous letters posted to local preachers. Although initially discounted by his ministerial colleagues, stories and questions about his "improprieties toward young men" grew. Lofton's paper traces how a subsequent investigation led to Shaw's dismissal from ministry in 1918. Lofton uses this case as a point of departure to explore the complexity of early fundamentalism, and the interconnectedness of religious belief and sexual practice. A leader in the YMCA movement, Shaw's life signifies the ambiguity of male relationships produced by this era of "muscular Christianity." Her book-in-progress, *The Modernity in Mr. Shaw: Fundamentalisms and Modernisms in American Culture*, offers an analysis of the multiple ways modern men formed their identity through emergent institutions and contradictory social values. As Lofton states: "Like any human drama, [this] is a case maddening in its resistance to easy reduction."

Dr. Lofton will receive the LGBT Religious History Award and its cash prize at a dinner later this spring. Details will be announced soon on the www.lgbtran.org web site.

Submissions for next year's LGBT Religious History Award must be postmarked by October 19, 2007. Complete information on the award can be found at: www.lgbtran.org/historyaward.htm.

The LGBT Religious Archives Network, a project of Chicago Theological Seminary, is a ground-breaking venture to preserve the history of LGBT religious movements. It has two primary purposes: a) to assist LGBT religious groups and leaders in preserving their records and papers in appropriate repositories; and b) providing an electronic information clearinghouse on LGBT religious collections and other historical source materials on its web site: www.lgbtran.org. LGBT-RAN initiated the LGBT Religious History Award in 2005. Lofton is the second recipient.

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