

Feinstein College of Arts & Sciences

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

June 13, 2012

Dear Deputy Secretary:

It gives me great pleasure to recommend distinguished professor and legal mind Patrick T. Conley for the honorary position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. In my estimation, no one deserves this accolade more than Dr. Conley. I also extend congratulations to Governor Lincoln Chafee for recognizing that in signing legislation to so honor a Rhode Island historian, he has raised the level of state history to its rightful status.

I first met Dr. Conley when I enrolled in the Masters of Arts in History at Providence College in January 1983. By then, he had already taught at PC for several years and earned the reputation as a taskmaster, and a fair and honest judge of student work. He tested our knowledge and endurance in many ways, and demanded that we research thoroughly, write professionally, and accept criticism graciously. I believe that we as students are the better for his approach.

Most essential as well, Dr. Conley introduced his graduate and undergraduate students to Rhode Island History through his extensive research projects. Many of these students now hold important positions in state government, institutions of higher learning, and industry because of their analytical skills acquired at Providence College under the thoughtful guidance of their fine professors, including Dr. Patrick T. Conley.

As an example, Dr. William Jennings, a lifelong resident of Central Falls and a student of Dr. Conley's, recently delivered a lecture on Mayor Thomas P. McCoy at the Blackstone Valley Historical Society. Another prominent scholar and outstanding faculty member at the University of Rhode Island, Dr. Scott Molloy, an author of several books on Rhode Island urban history, admittedly credits Dr. Conley as his mentor and the foremost authority on Rhode Island history. These examples are just a few of the many students who have benefited from Dr. Conley's knowledge and guidance.

On a personal note, I believe that I was able to attain a position at Roger Williams University in 2001 in part because of my knowledge of American and Rhode Island history and historiography. When a question was posed to me about the history of the United States, my knowledge of history satisfied the committee enough to offer me the position. Now, eleven years later I have embarked on a project to write a biography of former Governor of Rhode Island and Attorney General J. Howard McGrath, and it was Dr. Conley who first introduced me to McGrath's exciting career path. Because of my research skills, acquired first as a student at Providence College under professors like Dr. Conley, I feel ready to embark on this endeavor.

In closing, I believe that Dr. Patrick T. Conley should be chosen as Rhode Island Historian Laureate for several reasons:

- 1.) His extensive publications on all aspects of Rhode Island history: social, political, and legal is more than proof of his worthiness for the position; he is a most fitting representative for our state.
- 2.) His continued interest and promotion of Rhode Island as a state as evidenced by his extensive philanthropic activities and lectures on its history and society
- 3.) His promotion of historical inquiry: first as an outstanding student of history, then as a professor of history, and finally, as a patron and founder of historical societies throughout the country.
- 4.) Finally, and most importantly, his continued interest and support of his students in their scholarly and professional endeavors. It is for this reason that I am eternally grateful and support without hesitation his nomination as *Historian Laureate of Rhode Island*.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for Dr. Patrick T. Conley. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

*Debra A. Mulligan*

Debra A. Mulligan, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of History

Roger Williams University

One Old Ferry Road

Bristol, RI 02809

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1-401-254-3779



PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE

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*Graduate Program in History*

One Lamplighter Way  
Mount Hermon, MA 01354  
June 12, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, R.I. 02904

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to write a letter in support of Professor Patrick T. Conley for the position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. There is indeed no one more qualified for that position than Professor Conley. As his lengthy curriculum vitae indicates, Conley has written on almost every aspect of Rhode Island history, from the founding period to the 1986 constitutional convention. Anyone who has spent time in the Rhode Island Historical Society Library knows how often the staff points novice researchers to Professor Conley's works. His 1977 book *Democracy in Decline* has stood the test of the time as the most comprehensive discussion of Rhode Island's constitutional development from the Revolutionary-era to 1841. *Democracy in Decline* was ahead of its time in terms of blending legal and political history together in a seamless narrative. And, for those interested in the history of Providence, Conley's pictorial history is simply invaluable.

The fact that the eminent historian Gordon Wood of Brown University thought so highly of Professor Conley that he asked him to read and comment on his award-winning book *Empire of Liberty*, speaks volumes for Conley's

skills as a historian. Professor Wood makes note of this in his acknowledgements. Students of Rhode Island history will be forever indebted to Professor Conley for his recent work on the volumes on Rhode Island in the prestigious series, *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*. Conley has also edited a volume on the U.S. Constitution drawn from lectures given by visiting scholars at his annual Constitution Day event. I have had the good fortune to attend a half dozen of these informative lectures.

I first met Professor Conley when I was a doctoral student at Syracuse University (2005-2011). He invited me to his home in Bristol when he learned that I was writing a new history of the 1842 Dorr Rebellion. Conley graciously shared his encyclopedic knowledge of the historical records available at the Rhode Island Historical Society, the John Hay Library at Brown University, and the state archives. We discussed research methods at great length. Professor Conley helped me to understand how I could break new ground by examining questions of race and gender. As I progressed with the research and writing, Professor Conley read and commented on numerous draft chapters, as well as a separate article I wrote for *The New England Quarterly* (forthcoming in 2013).

In addition to my work on Thomas Wilson Dorr and the Dorr Rebellion, I have also written on the controversy over state aid to non-public education in Rhode Island in the 1960s. As I set out to conduct research on this topic, I quickly discovered that the only scholarly article was authored by Professor Conley. We communicated numerous times as I wrote an article on

the failed 1968 tuition voucher plan, as well as an article on the contentious issue of city-owned textbooks for parochial school students.

As a native Rhode Islander, I am aware that controversy often surrounds Professor Conley, but to my knowledge this has never extended to his historical work. I have only known Professor Conley to be kind, courteous, and generous with his time and advice. I firmly believe that Conley will be able to serve the citizens of Rhode Island well as historian laureate. There has been a need for quite some time for a comprehensive narrative of Rhode Island history that can be used in secondary education. There is no one more capable of writing this history than Patrick T. Conley.

Thank you for your time. I have attached my cv to this letter so you will have a better sense of my background. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. My email address is [echaput@providence.edu](mailto:echaput@providence.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik J. Chaput', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Erik J. Chaput, Ph.D.

Instructor at Providence College

Faculty member Northfield Mount Hermon School

# Erik J. Chaput, Ph.D.

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## Curriculum Vitae June 2012

One Lamplighter Way  
Box 4833  
Mount Hermon, MA 01354

(401) 523-6684 (cell)  
(413) 498-3985 (home)  
echaput@providence.edu  
echaput@nmhschool.org

### EDUCATION

2011 Ph.D., Major: Early American History. Minors: Legal and Modern U.S. History  
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

Dissertation: *The Dorr Rebellion: The Competing Politics of the People's Sovereignty in Jacksonian America*

Advisor: James Roger Sharp

2008 M.A. of Philosophy, History, Syracuse University

2005 M.A., with distinction, Providence College  
Major: *American History*; Minor: *European History*

2003 B.A., summa cum laude, Providence College  
Major: *History*; Minor: *English Writing*

### HIGH SCHOOL TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- Fall 2011-present: Instructor in the History and Social Sciences Department at Northfield Mount Hermon School, Gill, Massachusetts. Courses: *U.S. History*; *World History*
- 2003-2005: History and English Teacher at LaSalle Academy, Providence, RI.

### COLLEGE TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- Spring 2010-present: Instructor in the History Graduate Program and the School of Continuing Education at Providence College. Courses: *American Civil War*; *American Constitutional Development*; *American Revolution*
- Fall 2009: Adjunct Professor in the History Department at Salve Regina University, Newport, RI. Course: *American Revolution*

- Spring 2009: Adjunct Professor in the History Department at Le Moyne College, Syracuse, NY. *Course: Western Civilization*
- 2008-2009: Teaching Associate for the undergraduate Citizenship Seminar at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.
- 2007-2008: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs Dean's Alumni Funded Graduate Teaching Associate.
- 2005-2007: Teaching Assistant in History Department at Syracuse University.

#### **RESIDENCE LIFE POSITIONS:**

- 2008-2009: Area Coordinator Stonehill College

#### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

##### **Teaching Awards**

- 2011 Certificate of Teaching Excellence from the Graduate School at Syracuse University
- 2008 Outstanding Teaching Assistant, Syracuse University

##### **Academic Awards**

- 2010 Peter Guilday prize from the Catholic Historical Association for "Diversity and Independence in the Educational Marketplace: The Rhode Island CEF and the 1968 Tuition Grant Debate." The award is given to the best article in the *Catholic Historical Review* by an up-and-coming scholar.
- 2008 Nels Andrew Cleven Founder's Paper Prize awarded by Phi Alpha Theta for "Diversity and Independence in the Educational Marketplace: The Rhode Island CEF and the 1968 Tuition Grant Debate."
- 2003 James Madison Memorial Fellowship.

#### **DIGITAL HUMANITIES PROJECTS**

- I recently wrote and produced a documentary on the Dorr Rebellion that is the focal point of a new website on the Dorr Rebellion: <http://library.providence.edu/dorr>.

- I am currently editing a Digital Edition Letters of Thomas Wilson Dorr that will be inserted on the website in late 2012. For a story about the project see: <http://www.nmhschool.org/thomas-dorr-political-reformer>

## PUBLICATIONS

### Manuscript:

- *Thomas Wilson Dorr and the Politics of the People's Sovereignty* is under review at the University Press of Kansas.

### Articles:

- FORTHCOMING: "Thomas Wilson Dorr and His 'Deluded Democratic Followers': Anti-Slavery and Pro-Slavery Politics in the 1842 Dorr Rebellion," *The New England Quarterly*.
- FORTHCOMING: "Governor in Exile: The 1842 Dorr Rebellion and New Hampshire Politics," (*Historical New Hampshire*, 2012).
- "Sidney R. Rider and the Business of Rhode Island History," commissioned digital essay for Providence's 350th anniversary. See <http://www.providenceri.com/archives/sidney-rider-and-the-business-of-rhode-island-0>
- "Let the People Remember!: Rhode Island's Dorr Rebellion and Massachusetts Politics, 1842-1843," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 39 (Summer 2011).
- "The Rhode Island Question on Trial: The 1844 Treason Trial of Thomas Wilson Dorr," *American Nineteenth Century History* 11:2 (June 2010).
- "The Lost World of Thomas Wilson Dorr: The People's Sovereignty on Trial," *Maxwell Review* (2010).
- "The Rhode Island Question: The Career of a Debate," *Rhode Island History* 68:2 (Summer/Fall 2010).
- "The Battle of the Books in Rhode Island: *Bowerman v. O'Connor*," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 28:3 (Summer 2010).
- "Strange Bedfellows: The Politics of Race in Antebellum Rhode," [www.Common-Place.org](http://www.Common-Place.org) vol. 10, no. 2 (Jan., 2010). Note: Co-authored with Russell J. DeSimone.
- "Diversity and Independence in the Educational Marketplace: The Rhode Island CEF and the 1968 Tuition-Grant Debate," *The Catholic Historical Review* 95:1 (January, 2009).
- "'O City Without Soul': Ideology, Morality, and the Law in Antebellum Boston," *Maxwell Review* (2009).



# CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

John P. Kaminski, Director

Timothy D. Moore, Deputy Director

June 13, 2012

Mr. Paul F. Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Mr. Caranci:

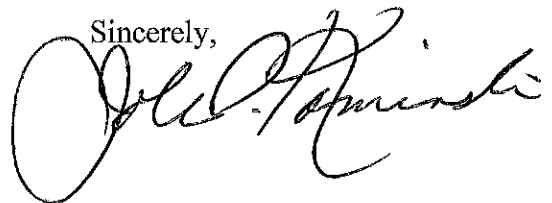
I write this letter in support of naming Dr. Patrick T. Conley as Historian Laureate for the State of Rhode Island. I have known Pat for more than a quarter century and believe no one is more deserving of this recognition. He has for many years been recognized as the greatest Rhode Island historian of all time by everyone familiar with Rhode Island history. Pat is also well-known and highly respected for his historical work in a variety of historical fields, especially the American Revolutionary Period and in constitutional and legal history and ethnic history.

Pat received his A.B. from Providence College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame with the highest honors. He taught history at Providence College for twenty-five years before resigning to pursue other interests. He continued to teach at Providence College and at several other universities including most recently at Roger Williams University School of Law. He directed the Rhode Island bicentennial celebrations of the American Revolution, the U.S. Constitution, and the Dorr Rebellion, and was one of two Rhode Island delegates on the Council of the Original Thirteen States, serving from 1970 until the end of the council in 1992.

Pat is phenomenally productive in both writing and making presentations on a wide variety of topics. He has written dozens of books and hundreds of pamphlets or articles, mostly on Rhode Island history. I cannot count the number of personal appearances that he has made making historical presentations. He created and still chairs the Rhode Island Publication Society, which has done a phenomenal job in promoting Rhode Island history for over thirty years. He has an extensive bibliographic and historiographical knowledge. He is generous to a fault in sharing his knowledge. I have asked him to be consulting editor on the three Rhode Island volumes of the *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*. Two of the three volumes have been published and the third should be published before the end of 2012. His knowledge has been invaluable for us. His turn-around time reviewing our documents and annotation is unbelievably rapid. In fact, we are dedicating the third and final Rhode Island volume to Pat, pointing out that he is the greatest historian of Rhode Island.

It is impossible for me to conceive that anybody else would be named as Historian Laureate of Rhode Island other than Pat. He is the perfect individual for not only the honor, but to fulfill the requirements of the position.

Sincerely,





BROWN

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River St.  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Mr. Caranci,

14 June 2012

I am writing to endorse the selection of Patrick T. Conley as the Rhode Island Historian Laureate. I can't think of anyone who is more qualified than Conley for this position. For the past 40 years or so he has been the unofficial historian of the state. He began his extraordinary career as a historian teaching at Providence College. Although he next got a law degree and branched out to engage in many other activities, he never has lost his interest and involvement in history, and especially in the history of Rhode Island. As you can see from his remarkable list of publications, he has continued to research and write on various aspects of the history of this state. No single person over the past 400 years has written more about the history of Rhode Island than Conley.


I have the utmost respect for his knowledge of history. Indeed, I asked him to read the manuscript of my book, Empire of

Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815. His

comments on the manuscript were very helpful, and he saved me from many errors. Even though he hadn't been recently working in this period, he remembered much of what he had learned 40 years ago in studying for the PhD at Notre Dame. He also convinced me to include a section on Catholics in the early Republic, even though they numbered only about 35,000 in a population of 4 or 5 million. I think that inclusion made my book all the more meaningful for a modern readership. I was deeply grateful for his help.

I realize that Conley has stepped on a lot of toes over the years, but I think all Rhode Islanders have to recognize that he is a force of nature and a state treasure. He already has made an impact on this state that will be long remembered, and his historical works will be read and consulted after the rest of us are long gone. I hope very much that he will be selected as the Historian Laureate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gordon S. Wood".

Gordon S. Wood

Alva O. Way University Professor Emeritus

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5 Allan Drive  
Lincoln, RI 02865  
15 June 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Secretary Caranci:

This letter is written in support of Dr. Patrick T. Conley who has applied for the position of Historian Laureate for the State of Rhode Island. I strongly endorse his candidacy.

I have known Dr. Conley for over forty-five years as a friend, mentor, and director of my doctoral dissertation ("Prince of Pawtucket: A Study of the Politics of Thomas P. McCoy", 1985). Dr. Conley also was substantially helpful to me when I wrote a seminar paper entitled "Providence and the Fabre Line, 1911-1934" in 1974 at the University of Connecticut. He directed me to important historical records and interviews with persons who at that time knew the line first hand, and he also suggested the topic. I have taken numerous courses taught by Dr. Conley both as an undergraduate and graduate student at Providence College, and I found him to be an excellent, well-prepared, and inspiring instructor.

For many years Dr. Conley has chaired or served on a host of committees dealing with Rhode Island's colorful past – his chairmanship of ri76 (the state's bicentennial committee) is a good example that comes to mind. Dr. Conley's Rhode Island Publications Society has published many scholarly studies that have illuminated the state's past.

Dr. Conley's principal academic interests are Rhode Island and constitutional history. His book-length study entitled *Democracy in Decline: Rhode Island's Constitutional Development, 1776-1841* is by far the best balanced and scholarly study of the politics of the state's constitutional evolution during the years covered. It also is the best work on the events leading up to the Dorr Rebellion of 1842. Dr. Conley possesses a firm grasp of our nation's past as well as its diplomatic history, and because of this he is able to place Rhode Island happenings and events into the national perspective. He focuses very sharply, and his interpretation of events and how other historians have looked at our past in by-gone eras is remarkable and very fairly balanced. I do not know of another Rhode Island historian whose knowledge of our state's past has such depth and is so broad in its scope, or is even close to being equal of that of Dr. Conley.

Dr. Conley has frequently been interviewed by local television stations seeking illumination concerning their coverage of historical events or celebrations. He once spent the day during a Bristol Forth of July parade providing historical color and background for those broadcasting the parade to the viewing public. The media seems to know where to go when they want accurate, illuminating information concerning past times in Rhode Island.

Finally, Dr. Conley is a Rhode Islander through and through, immensely proud of his native state. He takes pride in his own heritage, and he displays appreciation for the heritage and background of others. He is an good speaker, a colorful, scholarly, and interesting writer, and an excellent historian who is especially well versed in the history of his native state.

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Once again, I strongly endorse Dr. Patrick T. Conley for the post of Historian Laureate of the State of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William J. Jennings, Jr." with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

William J. Jennings, Jr., Ph. D.



CHARLES T. SCHMIDT JR. LABOR RESEARCH CENTER  
Hart House, 36 Upper College Road, Kingston, Rhode Island 02881  
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<http://www.uri.edu/research/lrc>

Paul F. Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

June 13, 2012

Dear Secretary Caranci:

I would like to enthusiastically recommend Dr. Patrick T. Conley for the newly created position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. The four requirements and experience that are enumerated: lectures, research, source material, and the dissemination of information—at the behest of several officers of the state—all dovetail perfectly with Dr. Conley's career and abilities.

While I was a RIPTA bus driver and transit union official, I enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Providence College in 1981. I took Dr. Conley's History of Rhode Island course and he changed the course of my life. He managed to stretch the study of the Ocean State into two semesters of scintillating material. Although I already possessed an MA in American history from the University of New Hampshire, my knowledge of local history was minimal—but not for long. In class after class, Dr. Conley presented a behind-the-scenes examination of some of Rhode Island's finest moments on the national stage and some incidents that still stain the state's reputation. He delivered these incredible stories through wonderfully informed and exciting lectures. Dr. Conley managed to engage students over material that ordinarily might not seem so important.

I finished my classes, incrementally, over a ten year period and managed to take about half of them with Dr. Conley who eventually became my dissertation adviser. His enthusiasm in the other courses was just as infectious and judicious as Rhode Island history. Although the relationship between a mentor and his student is very close I remember so well when my own responsibilities caught up with me one semester and I slacked off ever so slightly in the program. Dr. Conley, without regard to our friendship but out of a sense of professional dedication, warned me in no uncertain terms to shape up or ship out. Needless to say I got back on track, finished my doctoral degree in 1991, and had my localized dissertation published by the Smithsonian Institution as *Trolley Wars: Streetcar Workers on the Line*. Dr. Conley's fingerprints were all over the manuscript as he pushed me to excel and caught any egregious errors with his editing.

I eventually took a position at the University of Rhode Island, teaching the state's history among other duties—and still relying on my notes from his classes. Along the way Dr. Conley took me under his wing to experience first hand his self-imposed duties

to disseminate the story of the Ocean State to all of its citizens. I marveled then, and continue to do so, at his monumental capabilities in this area. He has become the most published historian in the history of the state and about the state. His publications run the gamut of highly professional monographs on constitutional history by the most prestigious publishers. On the other hand, he never forgot his own plebian roots and writes books and articles for the common citizen. His output can only be described as a blizzard that reaches greater depths as he acquires even more wisdom and knowledge as time passes. He probably sacrificed some academic glory by focusing so intensely on Little Rhody, a place so small that we are often overlooked on the national grid.

On another level that duplicates the requirements for the Historian Laureate, Dr. Conley has spent a lifetime on projects that highlight certain periods and episodes in Rhode Island's past. He ran the state's Bicentennial Commission with more fervor than the original participants through carefully crafted lectures delivered in stunning oratory. He sponsored a series of Law Day seminars for the state's judiciary and academics. Some of the most storied names in the study of American constitutional history graced the state at these events that Dr. Conley, for all intensive purposes, created and funded single-handedly. He has also been a champion of Thomas Wilson Dorr, the leader of the 1842 Dorr War that sought to bring democracy to Rhode Island at a time when aristocracy seemed to trump that other virtue.

There is one more venue that Dr. Conley deserves unmitigated praise for: his devotion to honoring the state's most prominent citizens by inclusion into the self-supported Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame. An inductee himself, Dr. Conley has been president of that august organization for more than a decade insuring that Rhode Islanders from all walks of life are not excluded because of the lack of a pedigree or political correctness. Roger Williams, the state's founder, would beam with pride at the diversity of inductions under Dr. Conley's stewardship which includes an historian's committee that reexamines our storied past for potential candidates who might have been overlooked, unknown until recently, or the subjects of discrimination in other times despite their accomplishments. These annual events, always close to Rhode Island Independence Day, are magnificent affairs with all the pomp and circumstance that the awards deserve. This year's induction at the historic Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet drew more than 700 guests. Dr. Conley, even without the mantle of the Historian Laureate title, has been the guardian of our past.

The awarding of this position to Dr. Patrick T. Conley would not only serve as a capstone to his brilliant career but would also provide a garland of professional honor to the state itself for as long as he held the title of Historian Laureate.

Sincerely,



Scott Molloy, Ph.D.  
Professor

June 16, 2012  
20 Bartlett Road  
Middletown, RI 02842

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Re: Rhode Island Historian Laureate

Dear Secretary Caranci,

I am writing to endorse Dr. Patrick T. Conley for the newly established honorary position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate.

While I have known Dr. Conley for nearly a half century it was in my endeavors over the past twenty-five years of research and writing about the rich history of Rhode Island that I have had the opportunity to get to know him as a historian. Without doubt in my mind he has no peer in his deep understanding and enthusiasm of our state's history; he brings energy, insight and commitment to all projects he undertakes.

Dr. Conley has served the state's history well. He has advised governors, mayors and legislators on Rhode Island history and heritage. As author he has written numerous books (nearly two dozen), pamphlets and articles on Rhode Island history. This body of work alone would qualify him as a candidate for state historian but it is not by his pen alone that makes him so well qualified. He has served as chairman on numerous commissions and committees. During our country's bicentennial he served as chairman of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission in 1976, during the sesquicentennial of the Dorr Rebellion in 1992 he chaired the celebration committee, he was the founder and chairman of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, in fact he was one of the first to recognize and document the importance of Rhode Island's immigrant communities to the fabric of our state. He continues to serve our state as president of the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame. In all of these positions he has caused to be published books and articles expanding our knowledge of who we are as Rhode Islanders. Dr. Conley also serves as chairman of the Rhode Island Publication Society, in this capacity he has encouraged and mentored others to write about state history.

Dr. Conley has influenced (some may say infected) others with his enthusiasm for Rhode Island history, during his early career he taught history at Providence College, one of his courses was a two semester course on Rhode Island history. It was a PC that he was responsible for several newly minted PhDs including Dr. Scott Molly and Father Robert Hayman both of whom went on to write about RI history. He continues to speak and host other speakers on historical matters – mostly pertaining to Rhode Island, He has done this through more than twelve years of hosting Constitution Day each September,



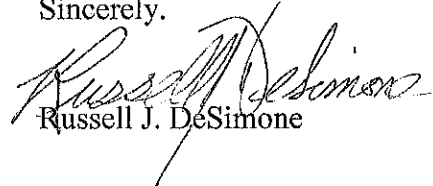
inviting nationally renowned constitutional scholars to speak and through his Fabre Line Club which has hosted many public monthly historical talks.

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Dr. Conley is the leading authority on Rhode Island constitutional law and the history of its development. His master work *Democracy in Decline* published in 1977 explored Rhode Island constitutional development from 1776 through 1841 and his *The Rhode Island State Constitution - A Reference Guide*, co-authored with Robert G. Flanders Jr. in 2007, provides important insight and historical context to our state's constitution. His interest in RI constitutional development was demonstrated by his serving as a delegate to the 1973 RI state constitution convention to which he served as that convention's secretary. Because of his command of this subject and his historical insight he was recently invited to participate in a video interview on the Providence College Dorr Rebellion website as well as write introductory essays on the People's and Law & Order constitutions; the essays and video interview may be viewed at the following: <http://library.providence.edu/dps/projects/dorr/video.html>.

As advisor, author, editor, publisher, public speaker and teacher Dr. Conley has served our state's history exceedingly well. As Rhode Island Historian Laureate I know he will continue to bring great energy and historical insight to this position. As the first historian laureate he will also set the bar high for all future historians laureate to emulate. For consideration to this position I believe Dr. Conley is *sine qua non*.

Sincerely,



Russell J. DeSimone

**Arlene Violet, Esq.**

499 County Road  
Barrington, RI 02806  
Tel 401-246-0314  
Fax 401-246-0314

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June 12, 2012

IN RE R.I. HISTORIAN LAUREATE

Dear Secretary Mollis,

I hope that this letter finds you well

I am writing to you as a result of your request for applications for the position of Historian Laureate in order to support wholeheartedly Dr. Patrick T. Conley for this post. I cannot think of anyone more worthy of this position and whose appointment would be roundly recognized by his fellow historians and historical related organizations as the inevitable choice.

I have worked with Patrick for the last 6 years on the Board of the R.I. Heritage Hall of Fame. Most people are familiar with the induction held annually in May since the nominees tend to be 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> century inductees. Less known are the other inductions instituted by Mr. Conley which recognizes those past Rhode Islanders who should be in the Hall of Fame from the state's founding until the present in all spheres of influence like the arts, entrepreneurship, politics, etc. He displays a deep knowledge of all things R.I. Most importantly, he speaks without any partisanship and solely on merit as candidates are considered.

I'm sure you are aware of his prolific writings on all aspects of Rhode Island History as well as his selection as editor by such historians as Pulitzer Prize winner Gordon Wood and others for their tomes. He has been selected time and time again by cultural organizations like the Bristol Fourth of July Committee and the dedication of the Irish Famine Memorial to deliver the keynote addresses at their functions. The Supreme Court has recognized his expertise by having him as the keynote lecturer on Law Day, and at the multi-year celebration of Constitution Day. Former Supreme Court Justice Robert Flanders requested Patrick to co-author the seminal work on the R.I. Constitution.

The educational committee is well-aware of this man's depth of knowledge of the History of Rhode Island. He has taught at Providence College (and, no doubt, as a professor for some of the candidates who may now seek this laureate), Salve Regina University, and was an Adjunct Professor of Constitutional Law at Roger Williams University Law School.

He not only writes about history, he makes it as a volunteer on numerous charitable boards and organizations locally and nationally. His selection would give credibility to the post since he has a national reputation as evidenced by his service on such national boards as the Bicentennial Council of the Thirteen Original States and as Chair of the United States Constitution Council among other boards.

**Arlene Violet, Esq.**


499 County Road  
Barrington, RI 02806  
Tel 401-246-0314  
Fax 401-246-0314

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Prolific author, editor, lecturer, professor, philanthropist, historic preservationist, historic awards winner, and inductee himself into the R.I. Heritage Hall of Fame and President of the Heritage Harbor Museum, A P.H.D and J.D. credentialed scholar-who else has these credentials for the post?

Your selection of Dr. Patrick Conley will be universally hailed by every segment of the population involved in history because of his lifelong commitment. He has the energy to disseminate information about R.I. History and the knowledge to know it is accurate! I respectfully urge you to appoint him as Historian Laureate.

With every best wish,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arlene Violet".

Arlene Violet, Esq.

223 Ivy Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02906  
June 9, 2012

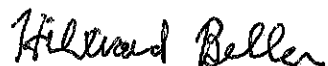
Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02904

Dear Mr. Caranci:

Rhode Island Historian Lauriat designation

I have been familiar with the historical work of Dr. Patrick T. Conley—and with that of other historians, and with Rhode Island history generally—through my employment as editor at both the Rhode Island Publications Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society during the past thirty years. On the basis of this experience I can say, unequivocally, that Dr. Conley is clearly the best choice for the designation of Rhode Island Historian Lauriat.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hilliard Beller".

Hilliard Beller, Ph.D.

June 11, 2012

The Honorable Paul F. Caranci  
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE  
148 West River St.  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Paul Caranci:

I write to recommend Dr. Patrick T. Conley for Rhode Island's honorary post of Historian Laureate, which the Secretary of State is to designate under RIGL 42-100.1-6.

My support for Pat Conley may shock some who have seen us battle over the most significant constitutional issue of our generation: separation of powers. He also sparked controversy as a real estate developer and early chief-of-staff for Mayor Vincent A. "Buddy" Cianci. Each point requires attention.

In 1994, after several years of study, Common Cause Rhode Island made our highest priority the establishment of robust separation of powers between the branches of Rhode Island's government. Conley's 1977 book, *Democracy in Decline: Rhode Island's Constitutional Development, 1776-1841*, proved priceless in our research. Through detailed analysis of source documents, Dr. Conley laid out the history of abuses that flowed from a central flaw in the Royal Charter of 1663: the lack of provisions for reapportionment or amendment. Regardless of shifts in population, the Charter locked General Assembly apportionments. In my view, he correctly described the way those defects in our marvelous founding document gave rise to the People's Convention of 1841 and the Dorr Rebellion of 1842. His numerous works on this turbulent time also proved valuable.

I disagreed sharply with the 168-page brief he filed on behalf of the House in response to Gov. Lincoln Almond's 1997 request to the Supreme Court for an advisory opinion on separation of powers. He urged the justices to reject the Ethics Commission's regulation barring lawmakers from executive boards, and he argued that the Rhode Island Constitution did not provide separation of powers as practiced under the United States Constitution.

He wrote that if forces loyal to Thomas Wilson Dorr had won in 1842, a strong separation of powers clause might have shaped the intervening century and a half. But in fact, Dorr's forces lost; the victors produced a "Law and Order Constitution," which voters approved in November 1842.

That first Rhode Island Constitution barely nodded toward separation of powers. Conley noted that the Law and Order Constitution gave Rhode Island governors "no veto, no appointive power, and no budgetary power." He traced the General Assembly's dominance through what he called a

"legislative bureaucracy" that kept accumulating power throughout the 19th Century and reached its corrupt climax under Charles "Boss" Brayton. He noted: "Most of the constitutional crises which convulsed Rhode Island during the century and a quarter following adoption of the 1843 Constitution would have been avoided had the People's Constitution prevailed."

On June 29, 1999, four justices agreed with him that the state's Constitution intentionally rejected a ban on dual office holding; they asserted that "legislative appointment of executive-type boards has been a long-standing practice in this state . . ." Their unforgettable summary concluded: "Thus, Rhode Island's history is that of a quintessential system of parliamentary supremacy." (*In Re Advisory Opinion to the Governor*, 732 A.2d 1, 64. R.I. 1999). The majority concluded that the 1986 Ethics in Government Amendments (Art. III/Sections 7 and 8) did not confer broad authority on the Ethics Commission to prohibit legislators and legislative appointees from serving on boards that execute state laws. The majority declined to answer Almond's second and third questions about separation of powers in Rhode Island. The practical result of their opinion practically leapt off the page: "We suggest that the sole and proper procedure for restricting legislators from serving on or appointing 'any other person' to executive boards and commissions is through an amendment to the constitution approved by the electorate, not by an ethics regulation."

Despite a strong dissent by Associate Justice Robert G. Flanders Jr., Pat Conley's argument from history prevailed.

In 2003, when reformers promoted a bipartisan separation of powers constitutional resolution, Conley testified against deleting the "broad powers clause" (Art. VI/Sect. 10). He argued that this deletion was a partisan ploy that would hand too much power to the governor. Fortunately, public pressure convinced the General Assembly to approve the text with only one word changed from the resolution introduced by Sen. J. Michael Lenihan and Rep. Nicholas Gorham.

In 2004, 78.2 percent of state voters approved Question 1 (Separation of Powers), and advocates began the painstaking work of reconstructing boards and commissions to comply.

I retired from Common Cause Rhode Island in 2006 and began writing *Secrets and Scandals: Reforming Rogues' Island, 1986-2006*, a project that allowed me to reflect on historic reforms. I discovered that Conley had written the General Assembly's online history of Rhode Island (<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/RhodeIslandHistory/>). Chapter IX, entitled "The Era of Reform, 1984-2000," affirmed numerous reforms we had promoted.

Last fall, I went to hear Dr. Conley lecture on separation of powers, fully expecting to dispute what he would say. To my astonishment, he gave generous credit to our successful campaign and to the 2004 Separation of Powers Amendment. He said our accomplishment fulfilled two prior constitutional upheavals: the Dorr Rebellion of 1841-42 and the Bloodless Revolution of 1935.

H. Philip West Jr.

I decided to ask Conley whether the Rhode Island Publications Society might consider publishing my book, but I remained uneasy about his profiting from tax-lien sales on the South Side of Providence where I live and about his early association as chief-of-staff for Mayor Cianci.

On the matter of his real estate business, I found him candid and articulate about clearing titles for sale or for worthy projects. What he shared - largely what he has written in "Housing in Providence: Recommendations and Reflections from a Reputed Land Baron" - moved me to affirm what I now believe has been a sincere, if sometimes controversial, effort.

On the matter of his work with and estrangement from Cianci, I now recognize the dilemma of what I believe were Pat Conley's good intentions. His reflections resonated with comments from two former top officials in the administration of Gov. Edward D. DiPrete. Both came to Common Cause filled with embarrassment and regret that they had worked closely with the governor but failed to decipher his corrupt behavior. Their experiences show how loyalties often delay discovery and may end with a sense of betrayal. While I have never been in their positions, I also have trusted too much and failed to recognize my blind spots.

Since Pat Conley began as unpaid editor of my book, his criticisms have proved helpful, sound, and valuable.

I believe Pat Conley's abundant scholarly publications, leadership in two constitutional conventions, and career of service in historical organizations fully qualify him under RIGL 42-100.1-4. I appreciate his willingness to temper strong opinions in the light of historic experience. At 74, he is ready to establish a high standard for this position that will endure for generations to come. I encourage his appointment as Rhode Island Historian Laureate.

Cordially yours,

H. Philip West Jr.

Retired Executive Director of Common Cause Rhode Island

Lecturer on Ethics in Public Administration at the University of Rhode Island



**RICHARD V. SIMPSON**  
**DBA: BRISTOL ART EXCHANGE**  
**332 HIGH STREET**  
**BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND 02809-1926**  
**TEL: (401) 253-8983 eMail: DRDIX@aol.com**

BOOKS BY R.V. SIMPSON

June 11, 2012

A History of the Italian-Roman  
Catholic Church  
in Bristol, Rhode Island

Independence Day:  
How the Day is Celebrated  
in Bristol, Rhode Island

Old St. Mary's:  
Mother Church  
in Bristol, Rhode Island

Bristol, Rhode Island:  
In the Mount Hope Lands  
of King Philip

Bristol, Rhode Island  
Volume II:  
The Bristol Renaissance

Portsmouth, Rhode Island:  
Ancestral Lands of the  
Narragansett

Tiverton and Little Compton,  
Rhode Island: Pocasset and  
Sakonnet, Wampanoag Country

Tiverton and Little Compton,  
Rhode Island Volume II

The America's Cup Yachts:  
The Rhode Island Connection

Building the Mosquito Fleet:  
The US Navy's First Torpedo  
Boats

Bristol, Rhode Island:  
Montaup to Poppasquash

Bristol, Rhode Island;  
A Postcard History

Narragansett Bay;  
A Postcard History

Herreshoff Yachts: Seven  
Generations of Inventors

Historic Bristol, Tales from an  
Old Rhode Island Seaport

America's Cup:  
Trials and Triumphs

Quest for the America's Cup:  
Sailing to Victory

Paul F. Caranci, Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Subj.: P.T. Conley, Letter of Recommendation

Dear Deputy Secretary Caranci;

I first met Pat Conley in 1975 when he chaired the RI76 Bicentennial Committee. I attended the meetings as a representative of the Bristol Fourth of July Committee. At the meetings, I was impressed by Pat's organizational skills and the tid-bits of historical facts he often inserted into the meetings.

The travelling Magna Carta exhibit organized by Pat drew thousands of Rhode Islanders who otherwise could never have seen or read the historical documents housed in the 30-foot air conditioned container. Truly a Herculean deed by Pat.

Testament of Pat's encyclopedic knowledge of Rhode Island's history is his biography of published books, pamphlets and essays and his many public and private addresses and lectures.

The credo of the social historian is the dissemination of his research. Pat has done this through out his public life.

It is my sincere hope, Mr. Caranci, that you will give Patrick T. Conley's application for the post of Rhode Island Historian Laureate thoughtful review and for Pat a favorable result.

Very truly;

Richard V. Simpson





PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE

*Department of History*

June 11, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02893

Dear Deputy Caranci:

It is not often that one gets to affirm the all but unimaginable accomplishments, abilities, and capabilities of a person who has made a request to have me recommend their qualifications. However, Patrick T. Conley has made such a request concerning his interest in the post of Rhode Island Historian Laureate.

This is an individual without equal or peer in the subject of Rhode Island history. His resume and list of lectures, articles, reviews, and books is without compare concerning his lifelong love of the State's history.

His years as a teacher have given the impetus, initiative, and outright desire to stimulate his almost unlimited energy, talent, and enthusiasm. His work with many Rhode Island organizations and committees gives all a small indication of his devotion to his skills, motivation, and dedication.

I consider myself a protégé of Dr. Conley. Despite having obtained an M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University, I will always be in awe of his breadth of knowledge, understanding, and love of his native State. I am always humbled in his presence.

It is my pleasure to recommend Dr. Patrick T. Conley for this most prestigious position, and have no doubt that he will provide the background, prestige, and qualifications to bring it the importance it warrants.

Sincerely,

Robert E. McCarthy, Ph.D.  
Professor of History  
Providence College  
1 Cunningham Square  
Providence, RI 02918



June 13, 2012

Paul F. Caranci, Deputy Secretary of State  
State of Rhode Island  
Office of Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

RE: Nomination of Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D for Historian Laureate

Dear Mr. Caranci:

On behalf of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (BVTC) I am pleased to endorse the nomination of Dr. Conley to serve as our state's Historian Laureate.

Dr. Conley is well known for his outstanding expertise of our unique heritage, and his detailed accounts of Rhode Island he has authored over the years.

In addition, Dr. Conley served in many capacities as an educator and public service, including his role as chairman of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission in 1976, where he was instrumental in bringing one of the best recognized statewide celebrations of our nation's independence, including the first ever visit of the 1976 Tall Ships to the "Ocean State."

From our perspective, as a state designated regional tourism development agency, Dr. Conley has worked with us over the years in documenting heritage and cultural aspects of the Blackstone River Valley, in support of our efforts in getting the Blackstone River Valley recognized as a National Historic Park, due to our region being the actual birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.

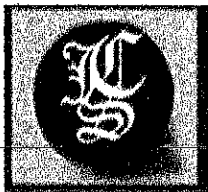
For these and many other reasons, we strongly urge your support in naming Dr. Conley to this illustrious post.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Billington, Ed. D  
President

Blackstone Valley Visitor Center  
175 Main Street • Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860  
Telephone: (401) 724-2200 • Fax: (401) 724-1342 • e-mail: bvtourism@aol.com



# The John Clarke Society

## OF EARLY AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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James A. Wermuth FAIC

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Middlebury College

Prof. Patrick Conley Ph.D.  
Providence College

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John Clarke Memorial Baptist Church

Prof. Thomas Luxon Ph.D.  
Prof. Dartmouth College

Honorable J. Wm Middendorf II  
Secretary of the Navy ret.

Prof. Victor Nuovo Ph.D.  
Manchester Harris / Oxford Univ.,  
Middlebury College

Prof. Paul Robinson Ph.D.  
Rhode Island College

Prof. Henry Rosemont Ph.D.  
Brown Univ.

Librarian Jean Simmons MLS  
Middlebury College ret.

Trustee Barbara Watterson  
John Clarke Trust

*In Memoriam*  
Wilbur Nelson -- 1915 -2006  
Ralph Carpenter -- 1909-2009  
Burt Hoffman -- 1928 -2010

John Clarke Society, 32 Green Street  
Newport, Rhode Island 02840  
401-847-3458  
[www.JohnClarkeSociety.org](http://www.JohnClarkeSociety.org)

14 June 2012

Mr. Paul F. Caranci, Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Ref: Rhode Island Historian Laureate recommendation; Conley, P. Ph.D.

Dear Deputy Secretary Caranci,

It is my great pleasure to recommend Pat Conley Ph.D. for consideration as Rhode Island's Historian Laureate. Acknowledging Dr. Conley's prolific RI historic publications, members of the John Clarke Society of Early American Democracy applauded his agreement to serve as an Advisor. As such, he joins a highly acclaimed body of distinguished scholars advising this critical historical research and education non-profit.

Throughout Rhode Island's history, few individuals have achieved the depth and scope of knowledge accomplished by Dr. Conley. This knowledge, inherent affability, and continuing willingness to research, disseminate, and promote Rhode Island's history establish him as a most worthy candidate.

Thank you for considering this recommendation.

James Wermuth  
Executive Director

Copy: admin.

PAUL R. CAMPBELL  
City Archivist



City of Providence  
Division of Archives and History

June 13, 2012

Paul F. Caranci, Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Mr. Caranci:

I write in support of the candidacy of Dr. Patrick T. Conley for the honorary position of Historian Laureate of the State of Rhode Island. I can make this recommendation with a great deal of confidence since I have known Dr. Conley for more than forty years. Dr. Conley was a Professor of History at Providence College in 1969. That year, as a junior, I had the good fortune to take his class on American Historiography.

That began a professional relationship that lasts to this day. I continued on at PC as a Master's student in the history program and made it a point to take every course offered by Dr. Conley. When he became chair of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission in 1975 he asked me to join his staff. His extraordinary knowledge of local history and his passion to promote a better understanding of our state's heritage led him to push successfully for the creation of the Providence Heritage Commission which he chaired for a number of years. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Diocesan Archives and helped lead the drive to secure a permanent archives program for the City of Providence.

During the past three decades we have collaborated in the writing of four books on various aspects of the state's history and he has published another twenty books on the subject, an achievement unmatched by any living historian of Rhode Island. Dr. Conley's former students perhaps number in the thousands and can be found in leadership positions throughout state government, business and in the educational arena. As a former teacher, as someone who had an in depth knowledge of Rhode Island's past, and, most importantly, as someone who has during his entire adult life displayed a passionate interest in preserving and promoting our state's rich cultural heritage, I can imagine no other person who would be more deserving of the position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul R. Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "C".

Paul R. Campbell  
City Archivist, Providence

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

COLLEGE OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCES

THINK BIG WE DO

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

80 Upper College Road, 113 Washburn Hall, Kingston, RI 02881 USA p: 401.874.2528 f: 401.874.2595 [uri.edu/artsci/his](http://uri.edu/artsci/his)



June 14, 2012

Dear Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci:

I highly recommend Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D. for the new honorary position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. A man of extraordinary ability and talents, Dr. Conley is a renowned expert on Rhode Island History. A professor of history, a constitutional scholar and a practicing attorney, Dr. Conley is well qualified for the position of Historian Laureate for the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

Dr. Conley taught history at Providence College for over twenty five years. At Providence College, Dr. Conley was an energetic and dynamic professor. A commanding presence in the classroom, his lectures were witty, entertaining and extremely informative. A great orator, Dr. Conley's photographic memory enabled him to deliver outstanding lectures without the use of lecture notes. He demanded excellence, and his students were taught to critically evaluate primary sources, to study historiography, and to write effectively. Over the course of his illustrious career, he has inspired and educated scores of students, and it is noteworthy that many of his former charges have gone on to positions of leadership within the state.

Not only is Dr. Conley an example of teaching excellence, he is an acclaimed scholar and historian. He has written and edited numerous scholarly essays, books, journal articles, and pamphlets on diverse Rhode Island history topics. Additionally, he has published a variety of popular community studies and handsome pictorial histories that detail and highlight our state's rich history. Dr. Conley continues to promote historical awareness in our state by initiating, participating and chairing countless civic, philanthropic and historic preservation endeavors. The Bicentennial Commission, the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, Rhode Island Constitutional Convention, Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame, Rhode Island Historical Society, and the Rhode Island Colonial Charter, 350<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary Commission, are only a select few of the many organizations that have benefitted from his years of dedicated service.

I am pleased and honored to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of Dr Patrick T. Conley. I believe he is an outstanding and most deserving candidate for the position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Catherine DeCesare, Ph.D.

History Coordinator/Academic Advisor

The University of Rhode Island/Feinstein Providence Campus

80 Washington Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

[cdecesare@mail.uri.edu](mailto:cdecesare@mail.uri.edu)

50 Park Row West  
Apt. #417  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
June 13, 2012

Mr. Paul F. Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02904

**Re: LETTER IN SUPPORT OF DR. PATRICK T. CONLEY AS  
RHODE ISLAND HISTORIAN LAUREATE**

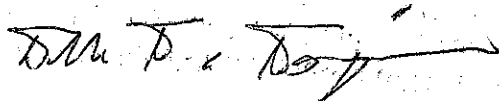
Dear Paul:

I am writing to you in support of the nomination of Dr. Patrick T. Conley as Rhode Island's first "Historian Laureate". As a working, professional historian, myself, I know that Dr. Conley fully meets all the criteria for the position in question as outlined in the "Announcement" published by the Office of the Secretary of State.

As a distinguished Professor of History, a widely-published scholar and an active "public historian", Dr. Conley has devoted his entire career to the systematic study of Rhode Island History. His knowledge of the subject is nothing short of encyclopedic and his willingness to share his understanding and insight with fellow scholars and the general public, alike, is legendary. Probably no living person knows more about the history of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations than he does. Under these circumstances, I can think of no better candidate for the position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate than my colleague and friend, Pat Conley.

Thank you for your serious consideration of my views. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or need any further information.

Sincerely,



Donald D. Deignan, Ph.D.  
[ddeignan3@cox.net](mailto:ddeignan3@cox.net)  
351-7455 [home phone and answering machine]

CHRISTOPHER COLLIER

344 WEST RIVER ROAD  
ORANGE, CONNECTICUT 06477

(203) 795-5088

CCOLLIER07@AOL.COM

June 12, 2012

Paul F. Caranci,  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

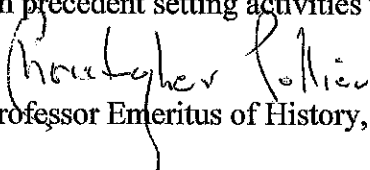
Dear Mr. Caranci:

I write in support of Patrick T. Conley's appointment to the position of Historian Laureate of the State of Rhode Island. I have known Prof. Conley as professional colleague for more than three decades. We have collaborated on a number of publications relating to Rhode Island history and the history of Connecticut where I was the official State Historian for twenty-three years.

Dr. Conley is the premier scholar of Rhode Island history, respected for his scholarship and his promotion of sound history among the general reading public. His publication record is astounding, commanding as it does the field Rhode Island studies, acclaimed throughout the scholarly world and profoundly and widely respected among the public.

Not only is Prof. Conley noted for his own publications, but he has also been a prime mover in the publication of important works about the U.S. Constitution, especially its relation to the constitutional history of Rhode Island. Indeed, chief among Conley's accomplishments has been his initiation and development of public programs that bring the best of scholarship to a very wide public- a difficult thing to do these days, but done admirably by Prof. Conley.

In short, I can't imagine any other person filling this position more appropriately - especially in its initial years when precedent setting activities will shape the job - than Prof Conley.

  
Professor Emeritus of History, University of Connecticut



Supreme Court of Rhode Island  
Frank Licht Judicial Complex  
250 Benefit Street  
Providence, RI 02903

JOSEPH R. WEISBERGER  
CHIEF JUSTICE (RETIRED)

June 15, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Re: Patrick T. Conley, JD, PhD

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am informed that the subject author and historical scholar has applied to your selection committee for appointment to the honorary position of Historian Laureate of the State of Rhode Island. I believe that it may be helpful to your committee if those who are familiar with his academic achievements and historical works, write in support of his application.

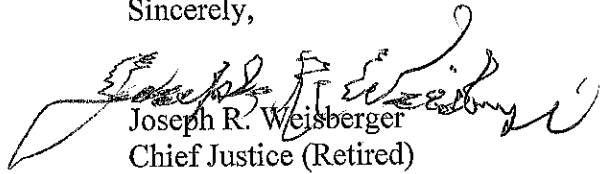
I have known Dr. Conley for more than 30 years and am familiar with the numerous books on Rhode Island history which he has authored or edited as well as the impressive array of articles in which he has portrayed virtually all aspects of Rhode Island history from the colonial period to the modern era. He has analyzed Rhode Island's political history in such landmark events as the Dorr Rebellion. He has written of its ethnic and religious diversity and its effect upon the constitutional development of the state. He has examined our legal history, including the abolition of the death penalty and our unique experience with the doctrine of Separation of Powers. In all respects his historical writings have been scholarly, informative and extremely interesting to the reader.

In addition, Dr. Conley is an outstanding speaker and lecturer. During my service as Chief Justice and as a member of the Supreme Court, he was frequently invited to address the members of the judiciary and the bar on significant occasions such as Law Day. He is one of the most eloquent speakers in our state. He makes Rhode Island history come alive. The audience is invariably both educated and entertained. No person has done more to bring all aspects of Rhode Island history to the attention of professional audiences and to the general public than Patrick Conley.



In my opinion, Patrick Conley is a most worthy and qualified candidate for the position of Historian Laureate of the State of Rhode Island. I am honored to support his application and unequivocally recommend him to your committee for appointment to this position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph R. Weisberger", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

Joseph R. Weisberger  
Chief Justice (Retired)

June 17, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Letter of Recommendation for Dr. Patrick T. Conley

It would be fitting to describe Dr. Conley as a Renaissance man because his wide ranging mind moves so easily across so many fields, but I hesitate to do so because above all else, I think of Dr. Conley as a Rhode Island historian, and at that, the very best one we have. In the many years I've spent in academic life, I've never personally met anyone so accomplished in his field as Patrick Conley is in his. A testimony to this fact can be seen in how frequently he is referenced whenever a major historical work refers to Rhode Island's past.

I first met Dr. Conley when I was a history student in the Providence College graduate program, and since then have had the good fortune to be in his company many times. What I've observed in him over the years is a wonderfully gifted mind that is intrigued with our past, a mind that truly has a romance with history. What better representative could our state have for its new honorary position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate than an enthusiastic scholar who has enriched so many lives because of his love for our state's history?

For many years Dr. Conley organized a celebration of Rhode Island Constitution Day by bringing together many of Rhode Island's, and indeed the country's, leading jurists and historians. These highly successful events are a perfect testimony to his ability to generate a real appreciation for Rhode Island history.

Dr. Conley also generates the same enthusiasm in less formal ways. I recall a structure on the property of his former Cranston home that once housed the first Stanley Steamer factory. On a visit there, Dr. Conley described it's history to a friend and me turning a

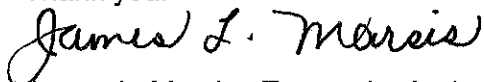
tidbit of history into a fascinating discourse. This anecdote underscores what, to my mind, makes him so valuable to Rhode Island. He is a resource who is always eager to share Rhode Island's history with all the people he meets, regardless of background. He brings all of our surroundings into historical perspective because he appreciates how much the past intersects with the present. Dr. Conley is a modern man who continually enriches his life by reaching into our past, making our heritage a part of the world he moves in.

His beautiful home in Bristol, with its extensive library and furniture and artifacts of historic interest leave visitors with a deeper appreciation for our history. The home and its environment are an expression of who Dr. Conley is. He is a lively scholar whose love for his subject makes him a fascinating person to all who meet him. His love for our heritage is contagious.

If you combine Dr. Conley's personal and scholarly traits with his organized mind, one that is easily at home with the particulars of the Law, and one that can smoothly compartmentalize various tasks, you have a person who is a dream candidate for the post of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. It is a position in which he would be honored to serve, and one which would honor our state as it deserves to be honored.

It is with great pleasure that I speak on Dr. Conley's behalf in his application for the position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Marsis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Marsis, Economics Instructor, Salve Regina University



BROWN

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

June 16, 2012

Paul Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River St.  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Mr. Caranci;

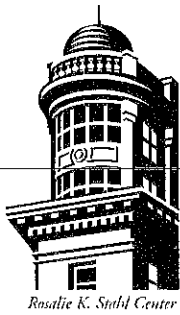
I write to offer a strong recommendation that Patrick Conley be named Rhode Island Historian Laureate. As a professor of history at Brown University for 30 years, I long ago came in contact with him, and developed great admiration for his skills as a historian, mainly of Rhode Island history. He has consistently displayed the highest standards of scholarly as well as popular writing on a wide range of aspects of our history. And, as no doubt you know, he has also organized lecture series, hosted lectures, written essays for the newspaper and Rhode Island History magazine, and promoted many other ways to make known the history of our state.

In short, he is a first-rate candidate for this distinguished post. It will be my pleasure to learn that he is appointed to this position.

Sincerely yours,

James T. Patterson  
Ford Foundation Professor of History  
Emeritus

Brown University



SUFFOLK  
UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

June 15, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul. F. Caranci  
146 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Mr. Caranci:

I am very happy and honored to recommend Dr. Patrick T. Conley to serve as Rhode Island Historian Laureate. I first met Professor Conley when I entered Providence College's graduate program in history in 1970 and had the good fortune to study with him. One of the reasons I decided to continue my graduate education at the University of Notre Dame was the strong impression Professor Conley made on me—his enthusiasm, his knowledge of US history, dedication to teaching and guiding his students, and his superb scholarship. Though he left full-time college teaching a number of years ago, he continues to be a prolific scholar. While many have produced excellent works on Rhode Island history, I know of no one who has achieved the stature of Professor Conley regarding the knowledge of and production on all aspects of our history, whether political, economic, or social, both at the state and local levels. I can attest to the fact that he is highly respected in the scholarly community. We are fortunate to have a native Rhode Islander who can preserve and tell the story of his fellow citizens not only with scholarly detachment but also with pride and love of place.

Moreover, not only did I have the opportunity to work with Dr. Conley on the Rhode Island Bicentennial Heritage Commission in the 1970s, but I have kept in touch with him on academic and scholarly research matters.

I believe that Dr. Conley is highly qualified to assume the duties expected of the Historian Laureate of Rhode Island; all one has to do is look at his impressive vitae to see that he has, in fact, been doing for many years what is expected of a state historian laureate.

You will be doing a great service for the citizens of Rhode Island to name Dr. Patrick T. Conley Historian Laureate of Rhode Island. He will, I am certain, make us all proud.

Sincerely,

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*Robert M. Laffey*

Robert M. Laffey, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Government  
Suffolk University



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

Old State House • 150 Benefit Street • Providence, R.I. 02903-1209

TEL (401) 222-2678

FAX (401) 222-2968

TTY (401) 222-3700

Website [www.preservation.ri.gov](http://www.preservation.ri.gov)

June 18, 2012

Mr. Paul F. Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Re: Patrick T. Conley  
Application for Rhode Island Historian laureate

Dear Mr. Caranci:

I am pleased to provide this letter of recommendation for the application of Dr. Patrick T. Conley to be designated as Rhode Island Historian laureate. Dr. Conley has shared his vast erudition and knowledge of Rhode Island history for decades in support of public appreciation for our state's heritage. His published academic scholarship has been paired with active civic engagement in a wide array of public organizations. Rhode Island's fascinating history has attracted the interest of a number of excellent historians, and Dr. Conley is unquestionably one of our state's foremost advocates for public historical understanding.

Yours very truly,

Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director  
State Historic Preservation Officer

# Wheaton College

26 E. Main Street  
Norton, Massachusetts 02766-2322  
508-286-8200  
www.wheatoncollege.edu

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River St.  
Providence, RI 02904

June 25, 2012

Re: Post of Rhode Island Historian Laureate

Dear Secretary Caranci:

I am writing to recommend Dr. Patrick T. Conley for the new position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate.

Patrick T. Conley is a distinguished retired history professor at Providence College, a practicing attorney with double digit appearances before the Rhode Island Supreme Court, and a real estate speculator and developer. But through all of these endeavors, he has managed somehow to be a consistent and serious scholar of Rhode Island constitutional law in particular and the U.S. constitution in general. I have known Dr. Conley since 1964, when we were both junior members of the staff of the Rhode Island Constitutional Convention under the direction of our late great friend and mentor, Professor Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. of Brown, who was Staff Director.

Over the decades, I have read Dr. Conley's writings and frequently reviewed them for the Rhode Island Bar Journal. Perhaps the best Conley work I reviewed for the Bar Journal was his joint effort with former Supreme Court Justice Robert G. Flanders, *The Rhode Island State Constitution: A Reference Guide*, Praeger: New York, 2006. In praising the scope and focus of this work, I noted that its section, "Rhode Island Constitutional Development, 1636-2006," was the "best brief constitutional history you are ever going to get in forty-four pages," and recommended that it be printed separately and be required reading in all Rhode Island senior high school history courses.

It is impossible to understate the contribution Dr. Conley has made to understanding Rhode Island's past. As I noted in print, he has essentially created the field of Rhode Island constitutional history. That history turns out to be unique because of the original charter and the extraordinary power of the Rhode Island legislature.

Dr. Conley also has constantly promoted the study of Rhode Island history, not only through his writings but through frequent sponsorship of public readings and discussions. Starting out as an academic, he evolved into a unique figure, what used to be called a "public intellectual." There is no one in the state better qualified to be the first Historian Laureate, and as an academic who has also been writing about Rhode Island for decades, I support his candidacy wholeheartedly.

Yours very truly,



Jay S. Goodman

Professor of Political Science,  
Wheaton College, Norton, MA 02766





PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE

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*Department of History*

June 26, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02893

Dear Deputy Caranci:

Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D. has requested that I write in support of his application for the position of Historian Laureate of Rhode Island. I am pleased to do so and if my recommendation seems overly enthusiastic it is because Dr. Patrick Conley stands far above his peers in his ability to fulfill the duties of Historian Laureate of Rhode Island. I have known Dr. Conley since the fall semester of 1963 when he and I joined the Department of History at Providence College. I continue to be a member of that department and I have served as Director of the Graduate History Program since August of 1995. In the years that Dr. Conley taught at Providence College, 1963-1994, he was by far the most accomplished American historian in the department. He was a magnificent lecturer to both undergraduate and graduate students. His lectures were the epitome of clarity and they reflected his marvelous mastery of the literature of American History from start to finish; in particular his absolutely unparalleled understanding of Rhode Island history and its many facets.

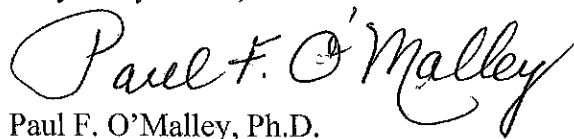
During those years, and since, he has published an unequalled variety of works on the history of Rhode Island, from its foundation in the seventeenth century to the end of the twentieth century. His work *Democracy in Decline: Rhode Island's Constitutional Development, 1776-1841*, was the first of his magisterial writing on Rhode Island constitutional history. Even before the publication of *Democracy in Decline*, he had shown himself to be a powerful historian of Rhode Island's religious history and he went on to research and write an amazing variety of impressive studies topics, from the general histories of Providence and the State of Rhode Island to the history of firefighting in Providence. Dr. Conley's prowess as a constitutional historian led him to the forefront of the masters of American constitutional history. He regularly collaborated with members of the galaxy of great American historians. He is highly regarded, for example, by Gordon Wood, John P. Kaminski, and numerous others who occupy the highest tier of American constitutional scholarship. However, I might note that while Dr. Conley's publications in constitutional history are both prolific and profound, he has also contributed like no other historian to a scholarly and popular appreciation of the diversity of

Rhode Island's population through his numerous publications on a broad variety of Rhode Island's ethnic communities. His *Rhode Island Ethnic Heritage Series*, is both comprehensive and groundbreaking.

Beyond his huge number of publications, Dr. Conley has secured distinction as a generous participant in the public life of Rhode Island. He was by far the most astute and knowledgeable participant in the Rhode Island Constitutional Conventions of 1973 and 1986. He directed one of the most productive state commissions in the celebration of our national bicentennial in 1976. As founder and director of the bicentennial commission, he engaged the talents of numerous civic-minded Rhode Islanders in often wonderful historically-grounded activities that not only recalled Rhode Island's past, but looked to the post-bicentennial future with great expectations.

I could go on to cite robust examples of Dr. Patrick T. Conley's scholarly achievements. Moreover, I could continue to write glowingly about his prowess as a teacher, not only in the collegiate classroom, but in the hundreds of formal speeches that he has given to Rhode Islanders of every age and at every level of education. I could also cite his generous and skillful mentorship of historians of Rhode Island, e.g., D. Scott Molloy and Robert W. Hayman. I could list, almost without end, his contributions to the education of the legal community of Rhode Island. I will, however, conclude my recommendation by assuring the Secretary of State that the appointment of Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D. as the first Historian Laureate of the State of Rhode Island will enrich the citizens of Rhode Island in every socio-economic group. He will be a most productive and conscientious Historian Laureate. He, to pun, will not rest on his laurels. His willingness to fulfill his duties as Historian Laureate of Rhode Island will be boundless. I am therefore most pleased to recommend the appointment by the Secretary of State of Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D. of Historical Laureate of the State of Rhode Island with the greatest confidence that he will create a standard of service that his successors will be hard pressed to equal. If you have any questions about my endorsement of Dr. Conley, or any questions about my knowledge of his readiness for this position, do not hesitate to contact me at 401-865-2912 or [pomalley@providence.edu](mailto:pomalley@providence.edu).

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul F. O'Malley". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Paul F. O'Malley, Ph.D.  
Director, Graduate Program in History  
Providence College  
1 Cunningham Square  
Providence, RI 02908

June 26, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02904

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Dear Mr. Caranci:

I am writing this letter in support of the candidacy of Dr. Patrick T. Conley for the position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. In my opinion, there is not a more qualified or more deserving person in the State of Rhode Island for this position. Dr. Conley is probably the most prolific writer of Rhode Island History that we have. He has written numerous books under his own name, co-authored countless others, and edited many more. I believe that I do not need to cite those at this time as they are included in his application.

Dr. Conley is the one person in the State of Rhode Island that other historians seek out went writing about our wonderful state. He is considered by Rhode Island historians to be the expert on Thomas Dorr and the Dorr Rebellion. He has given countless lectures on Mr. Dorr as well as other prominent Rhode Islanders and Rhode Island historical events.

My background is as a social studies teacher for 35 years and Department Chair of the Social Studies department in the East Greenwich School system. I taught all the various subjects in the Social Studies department. However, my primary responsibility for many years was to teach American History. I first met Dr. Conley at Providence College in 1985 when I enrolled in the graduate program at Providence College. I was taking my last course toward obtaining my Masters in American History, and he became my advisor on my research on the French National Churches in Rhode Island. Throughout my research, he offered advice on where to look for information and how to best obtain the required sources. He stressed that it was important to find the human story regarding these French National Churches. With his guidance, I completed my research and paper and discovered that I not only uncovered a history of these churches in Rhode Island, but also some of my own family history. He not only advised and taught me, but many other current Rhode Islanders who have a better understanding of their state and its history. I took this with me into my classroom at East Greenwich High School and tried to convey to my students that history is a telling of the story of individuals and groups, not just dates, places and buildings. I hope I was as successful with my students as Dr. Conley was with his.

Since obtaining my degree from Providence College, I have met Dr. Conley at various functions promoting Rhode Island history: Rhode Island Hall of Fame ceremonies and fundraisers for historical projects that he has undertaken. For the past seven years, I have been a member of the Fabre Line Club which Dr. Conley founded in 2007. This club was established with the purpose of promoting Rhode Island history through lectures by scholars of Rhode Island history. Through this venture, Dr. Conley has brought to the Club a number of prominent Rhode Islanders and others as guest speakers on historical people and events. He has also spoken himself on a variety of subjects including Thomas Dorr. All of the presentations have been informative and thought provoking.

Dr. Conley is also one of the persons responsible for the Irish Famine Memorial in Providence and the principal speaker for the dedication of the memorial flagstone to John Gordon at the Irish Famine Memorial. He was instrumental along with author Ken Dooley in bringing to light the injustice to John Gordon and the subsequent pardon by the Rhode Island General Assembly and Governor Lincoln Chafee. Constitution Day observances at both Gale Winds and Conley's Wharf sponsored by Dr. Conley highlight the federal Constitution. These Constitution Day lectures are given by national prominent scholars.

For the reasons stated above and many more, Dr. Patrick T. Conley is the most qualified Rhode Island historian and should be named the Rhode Island Historian Laureate. If you have any questions or need any follow-up please contact me at [raymondjp70@aol.com](mailto:raymondjp70@aol.com) or my home address.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Pouliot, Vice President  
National Education Association Rhode Island  
117 Anthony Street  
East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

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**RHODE ISLAND MARINE ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT and the  
FOUNDATION for the PRESERVATION of CAPTAIN COOK'S SHIPS**

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**401-253-2094**



**Website at [www.rimap.org](http://www.rimap.org) ~ and ~ E-mail at: [rhodeislandmap@yahoo.com](mailto:rhodeislandmap@yahoo.com)**

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June 20, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State Paul F. Caranci  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Deputy Secretary Caranci:

This letter supports the nomination of Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D., for the new, honorary, unpaid post of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. I have known Pat as a friend and colleague for nearly 20 years, and know his work well.

There are many fine historians in Rhode Island and historians of Rhode Island, but he is the only one with the widest breadth of interest and the widest ability to represent the complex history of our magnificent state to professional and public audiences. His bibliography speaks to the range of his work, but what that list does not show is his passion about the topic and his lifelong effort to promote an understanding of Rhode Island's past, how it has influenced our present, and what we may learn for the future.

Therefore, I heartily endorse Patrick Conley to be the first Rhode Island Historian Laureate. His work deserves that distinction.

Sincerely,

D. K. Abbass, Ph.D.  
Director

June 27, 2012

Deputy Secretary of State  
Paul F. Cadance

Dear Mr. Cadance,

I proudly add my support for  
Pat Conley to be Rhode Island's Historian  
Emeritus.

I've known Pat since the days  
we worked together on the U.S. Continental  
Council. As a former Co-Chair of the  
Rhode Island Delegation I found Pat to  
have an unusual and high regard for  
our nation's history. His keen and  
historical knowledge was of immense help  
to all of our former delegates on  
the 13 State Council.

I admire his continued interest  
and knowledge share of our  
great country's history.

Respectfully,

David S. Sargent

1196 Paper Mill Rd  
Hewlett NE 19711

Dear Mr. Caranci,

I am writing to you a letter of recommendation for Dr. Patrick Conley to become the Historian Laureate of Rhode Island.

I grew up with Dr. Conley in the St. Michael's Parish and attended it's school as well as he did.

He was always a leader whether Co-Captain of the champion R.I. Independent League or right on up to today the Lifetime Achievement Award, R. I. Senior Olympics (2011).

Some of his professional career accomplishments include Professor of History and Constitutional Law at Providence College (1963-88); Research in American History (1964-94); Special Lecturer in History, Graduate School (1988-94).

Throughout his career he has written more books on R. I. History than any other author. He was the winner of the 1993 Fraunces Tavern Museum (NYC) Book Award for The Bill of Rights and the Constitution and the States. And many more not mentioned here.

Dr. Conley has been active in government positions as well. He was Chairman of the Bicentennial Commission and Foundation, RI (1974-1977). And also founder and Chairman: Providence Heritage Commission.

Among his many civic and fraternal activities he is past member Board of Trustees, R. I. Historical Society.

Another position worth noting is being member of R.I. Colonial Charter, 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission (2012- ).

In ending I would need to fill a book to describe all the reasons to have Dr. Patrick Conley appointed to Historian Laureate of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

 6/30/12

Thomas Aquino

Heritage Harbor Executive Board



PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE

July 15, 2012

*Department of History*

Mr. Paul F. Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Deputy Secretary of State:

Dr. Patrick T. Conley has submitted his name for consideration for the position of Historian Laureate for the State of Rhode Island. He has requested a letter of recommendation to support his application. This I am genuinely pleased to provide.

I have known Dr. Conley since September 1971 as his student and later as his colleague on the faculty at Providence College. Dr. Conley is a Providence College 1959 *magna cum laude* graduate, a 1970 Ph.D. recipient with highest honors from the University of Notre Dame, and holds a 1973 Jurisprudence degree from Suffolk University Law School. His scholarly credentials are all superior to the top one percent of the country.

There is no finer candidate for Historian Laureate. Dr. Conley has published thousands of scholarly and popular works about the political, social, legal, and constitutional history of the State of Rhode Island. His expertise and genuine love for Rhode Island History is an enduring legacy for the state.

An articulate, engaging speaker, a serious scholar, a member of multitudinous civic and fraternal associations, Dr. Conley's professional life in teaching, law, and writing makes him the best—if not the *only*—choice for Rhode Island's Historian Laureate. I recommend him to your special consideration.

If you wish more information or wish to speak with me about this candidate, please feel free to contact me at 401-865-2193. Patrick Conley is the ideal embodiment of what a Historian Laureate should and must be. Reward Rhode Island and her people with his appointment.

Very truly yours,

*Donna T. McCaffrey*

Donna T. McCaffrey, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of History

**Donald G. Magee**  
**581 Wapping Road**  
**Portsmouth, RI 02871**  
**(401) 847-1339 [nptbooks@nptbooks.com](mailto:nptbooks@nptbooks.com)**

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9 July 2012

Paul F. Caranci, Deputy Secretary of State  
Historian Laureate Selection Committee Chair  
48 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

Dear Sir,

I write this letter in support of Dr. Patrick T. Conley in his quest to become Rhode Island's first Historian Laureate. Dr. Conley is the most prolific author ever of books and articles about Rhode Island history, even surpassing the 19<sup>th</sup> century writer Sidney S. Rider, both in quantity and certainly in quality. His works are well researched and written and are quite readable whether of a macro or a micro scope.

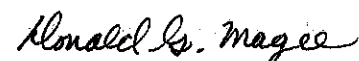
Dr. Conley is also a most dynamic speaker and an inspiring professor. I first met him in the mid 1970s when I enrolled in two of his graduate history courses at Providence College. Shortly after that, as the Department Head of Salve Regina University's Criminal Justice Program and also as the Director of Salve's Bicentennial Celebration, I hired him to teach a number of courses for the college. Over the years I have continued to attend many of his lectures around the state, where he engagingly conveys knowledge about Rhode Island's history without notes to a full house. He can certainly multi-task and is extremely goal oriented, qualities demanded of an historian laureate.

In 1987 as the proprietor of The Newport Book Store, which specializes in fine and rare books and documents of Americana and Rhode Island history, I was asked to examine a broadside located in the Portsmouth RI Town Hall. Because of some rare and unique references that Pat provided to me, I was able to declare that the broadside was indeed an original printing of the Declaration of Independence (Solomon Southwick, Newport, July 1776.) This was the seventh known copy at that time.

Dr. Conley has assembled what is probably the state's largest and finest private reference library on RI and US history, housed in a magnificent three story stand-alone library building.

Dr. Patrick Conley is uniquely qualified and exceeds the criteria for the Rhode Island Historian Laureate. He will use his knowledge, tremendous energy level, organizational abilities, speaking and writing skills, and networking contacts to be a viable, important and meaningful Historian Laureate, who will make Rhode Island proud.

Sincerely



Donald G. Magee

*Of note, I have been a Professor of History and Economics at many area colleges for 40 years including Providence College, Bryant University and the Naval War College. I am a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, the Grolier Club of New York, and President of the John Russell Bartlett Society.*



**JAMES J. MULLEN, ESQUIRE**  
**Attorney at Law**

*Accredited Attorney - Department of Veterans Affairs*



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Office: (401) 474-1571  
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e-mail: [jjmullenlaw@cox.net](mailto:jjmullenlaw@cox.net)

July 1, 2012

Mr. Paul F. Caranci  
Deputy Secretary of State  
148 West River Street  
Providence, RI 02904

RE: Patrick T. Conley

Dear Mr. Caranci:

I am glad for the opportunity to write this letter of recommendation for Pat Conley, a candidate for the new position of Rhode Island Historian Laureate. I have known Pat Conley for many years and cannot think of anyone more deserving of this honor.

I was entering my senior year at Providence College in the fall of 1964 and had one more elective to take before graduation. Most people in my position opted for one of many easy courses provided for those seniors who had completed their accredited courses for graduation and I admit to have been sorely tempted to follow suit.

I was a political science major with a minor in American History and noted that a new course was being offered on the Diplomatic History of the United States. The course was given by a graduate student, so I naturally assumed it would be reasonably easy. After the first day, however, I realized that if I remained, I was in for a very challenging time. Pat Conley was that graduate student.

Pat made it clear from the beginning that those who expected to waltz through the class might be well advised to switch to another course. He intended to challenge us, involve us in daily discussion and require extracurricular work to complete the course. I hesitated, thought of all my friends taking Accounting for Lawyers and other courses akin to Basket Weaving, but decided that remaining might better prepare me for the next three years at Boston College Law School.

I can honestly say that Pat's presentation of his course was the most challenging course I took at Providence, was carefully calibrated to engage the student, and was excellent preparation for the rigors of Law School. To this day I have maintained the course book he used in that

course, A Diplomatic History of the American People by Thomas A. Bailey (though I did update to the 10<sup>th</sup> edition, compiled through 1980, after which Mr. Bailey sadly passed away).

After graduation from Law School I remained in Massachusetts for a year before commencing my law practice in Rhode Island. From time to time I would note an article or editorial written by Pat and would always take the time to read it. I was always impressed with the scholarly depth of his research and knew that however short the article might be, it did not adequately convey the lengthy hours he would have put in preparing his work.

Over the years I have accumulated a number of his books for my personal library. I remain, largely thanks to Pat Conley, an avid "student" of American history, reading as many works as I can and keeping a special place on my bookshelves for my collection.

I also made it a point to pass on my love of history to my children and all have continued to make themselves aware of their historical surroundings, whether they still live in Rhode Island or in the case of one of my sons, Atlanta. My oldest son, indeed, wrote his first novel in 2006 entitled The Last Town on Earth and won the prestigious James Fenimore Cooper Prize for Historical Fiction, presented by The Society of American Historians.

I like to think that I helped inspire my son's work and I know that Pat Conley had much to do with my ability to be that inspiration. Rhode Island would be greatly served by his appointment as Historian Laureate.

Yours very truly,



James J. Mullen, Esquire



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