

The first thing I want to say is thank you to Ethan's family for inviting me to say a few words about Ethan. I had the wonderful opportunity to advise Ethan during his graduate work at the University of Kansas from 2002 to 2007. I watched him develop into an exceptional historian, and since then become a rising star in his field. But more than that, he became a dear friend of mine; we did not just talk history but we talked about our families, children, sports, and a number of other non-academic topics. I deeply admired him as I saw first-hand how devoted and loving he was as a husband, a father, a son, and a brother. The love he had for you—Liz, Connor, Dylan, Brianna, Susie, Tom, Brett, Jeff, and all his extended family—was something he lived and breathed every day. I am sure it was what made him such a joyful person—one who brought out the best in everyone. Thank you for sharing him with us at KU; we are all better people because of it.

I remember vividly the first time I met Ethan. I had received an email from a master's student at Emporia State who wanted to continue his work in Native American history at the doctoral level. I was flattered that he sought me out, and we agreed to meet in my office. He walked through the door with this big smile, lots of energy, and very eager to start talking about history. We started talking about a key book—that every graduate student in history must read—and of course he had already read it. I had read it too and honestly I thought it was overrated. Ethan, however, had a different view of the work and thirty minutes later he convinced me that the book was one of the most important works of history ever written. I knew Ethan was someone we should admit. He certainly had everything else going for him—the grades, test scores, etc.—but he had more; he had this passion for history and this very respectful demeanor when interacting with his professors and peers. Through the years of his graduate work, he taught me a lot; he was self-driven, a hard worker, an eloquent writer, and in short a brilliant

scholar. The best decision I ever made with Ethan was to stay out his way. Occasionally, I would play devil's advocate, but he did it all. His success followed with his own efforts and intelligence.

His books and articles are a testament to that hard work and have enriched the field of history tremendously. It will be bittersweet of course when I assign Divided Dominion and Native Americans in the Revolution to my students, but I will assign these works—not just because of my relationship with Ethan, but because they represent the best of historical scholarship. They go to the very heart of the American experience and force us as Americans to ask hard questions, reject harmful mythologies, and come up with explanations that reveal a more complex process of how we have become who we are. This process of discovery—one that Ethan was so skilled at getting his students involved in—makes us better people, more aware of the consequences of our actions, more thoughtful of our fellow human beings, and more hopeful for the future. Or in Ethan's own words: "I value the fact that inquiry for the sake of inquiry is honored in the profession. We never accept the conventional wisdom or current paradigm as an acceptable answer. To be a historian (and a practitioner in any other humanities field for that matter) is to grapple with the very core of what it is that makes us human. Our triumphs, our tragedies, our flaws, and our strengths are all laid bare by the scholarly study of history and without this kind of inquiry there is little hope for mankind I think." To this I would add, thank you Ethan, there is hope for mankind. Because of your example, many others have become curious and inspired to dispel falsehood and illuminate the truth.

I don't know exactly how many students Ethan had at KU, Texas Tech, and Delta State but I'm sure it was into the thousands. Ethan Schmidt—a prize winning teacher—touched the

lives of these individuals in a positive way and gave them valuable life lessons. His role as a teacher—not just to those students but to us all—lives on with his example and his scholarship.

The many friends he made while at KU especially gained a lot from their experience with Ethan. As a faculty member, I did not always know what was going on among graduate students, but I did know that Ethan was extremely well liked. This is quite clear from the outpouring of remembrances that Ethan's friends have shared with us over the last several days and that I want to share with you now:

Ethan's friend Kristen Epps particularly remembered Ethan bringing a ray of sunshine into what was a rather unaccommodating office space that graduate students had to share. She wrote of "his perpetually full coffee pot, which was a congregating point for those of us stuck in the dingy basement of Wescoe. I was his office mate for two years and don't recall ever seeing that pot empty ... I will always admire his incredible work ethic and wonderfully helpful advice to new students and established students alike."

David Trowbridge, his friend from both Emporia State and KU, said Ethan "represented the best of our profession. He helped me prepare for my first teaching job [and he] shepherded many of us through graduate school-[He was] a friend and a mentor to each and every one of us."

Nicole Anslover whose time at KU overlapped considerably with Ethan's characterized him as her "buddy." She wrote, "He was my mentor, I turned to him for advice. I turned to him for friendship. And when I missed my family, Ethan folded me into his."

Lon Strauss overlapped with Ethan not as much as the others but the experience left a profound impression. Lon said, "Ethan had the kind of spirit that only a few and truly good

human beings have. ...[he] would help you if you asked, no matter what. He truly was a giving person, to his community, profession, and his family. I admired his work ethic (he would be up at 4AM to write so he could spend the rest of his day with his other professional duties and still have time for his family),. ... I was truly blessed to have known him.”

Jason Roe was Ethan’s student when Jason was an undergraduate and became truly inspired by Ethan’s example. “[Ethan was] my first history instructor at KU,” Jason wrote, “[and] the first person who made me think of becoming a professional historian....” Ethan became Jason’s “peer mentor ... and friend....” “His passion for history was truly infectious and second only to his family,” Jason wrote.

Another one of Ethan’s friends Brady DeSanti was a doctoral student of mine who was at KU at the same time as Ethan. It is one of the most rewarding experience for me personally to have worked with both Brady and Ethan—not because they both became fabulous historians—but because they became great friends in the process, helping each other through what is a difficult process and staying in touch with each after they began their professional careers in different parts of the country. Brady refers to “Ethan” as “really the nicest guy ... and one of the most genuine and kindhearted people I've ever known.”

Brady adds “[He] was the epitome of a good father and husband. Along with these roles, he was the consummate scholar. ... I'll always remember ... when I was thinking of giving up on graduate school in the fall of 2004. I couldn't focus or form an intelligent sentence for a paper. Ethan had me over and we hammered out things until my confidence and faculties came back and I could work again. He always took that kind of time for his friends. As many others have noted, he was the best of us from that era in the KU history graduate program.”

John Schneiderwind shared with me his experience with Ethan that I think captures what many of us at KU feel and I would like to quote it at length: “Ethan was like a brother to me One of the reasons why I loved being a KU grad student so much was the tight-knit camaraderie that our group had. There was no feeling of competition, or rivalry, only mutual respect, friendship, and a sincere desire to help each other become better scholars. Looking back, Ethan was the center of it all. We all naturally gravitated to his personality, his humor, and his love of learning. That was Ethan's magic and beauty.

One personal experience that stands out to John is this: “in the summer of 2006. I ... was accepted into an intensive Japanese language program in Yokohama, Japan. I planned to stay an extra year for dissertation research. Ethan arranged a small going away dinner before I left and of course Connor and Liz were there. Toward the end Ethan and I were saying our goodbyes and he hugged me and began to sob softly. I remember Connor asked him, ‘Dad, why are you crying?’ and Ethan simply replied, ‘I'm not going to see my friend for a long time.’ It was a touching moment and, as I write this, one that brings me to tears. For as much as we loved Ethan as a friend, a colleague, or as a ‘brother,’ Ethan loved us back, and loved us fiercely. That kind of person does not come along very often.”

And these memories are just a few of the reasons that—while Ethan’s time on Earth has been much too short—he will always be with us. And let me just say to all of us, but particularly to you Liz, Connor, Dylan, and Brianna, about, your husband, your father, and our friend: he would want you to live as he did—following your passion, working hard to achieve your dreams, finding joy in your relationships with all the good people around you, and above all loving your friends and family and knowing that they love you too.