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Press Release — May 16, 2006

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The Miller Center of Public Affairs Awards Fellowships to Eight Accomplished Scholars

May 16, 2006 -- The University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs has selected eight scholars for 2006-2007 Miller Center Fellowships in Contemporary History, Public Policy, and American Politics. The fellowship awards each fellow a one-year \$18,000 grant to complete their dissertation, which explores public policy questions, twentieth-century politics, or governance in the United States.

This year the Miller Center received a total of 99 applications from scholars across the country in a variety of fields that include history, political science, economics, American studies, international relations, and sociology. The applications were judged on their scholarly quality and their potential to shed new light on important political and public policy questions. Miller Center Director Gerald L. Baliles described the strength of the incoming group of fellows as "indicative of the overall prominence of the American Political Development program. Each year the Miller Center selects its fellows from an intellectually rich pool of applicants. The eight scholars chosen this year will no doubt be at the forefront of academia for years to come."

As part of the Fellowship, each fellow is paired with an academic mentor, a leading national scholar in the fellow's field of study. The program also offers the option of residency, so that fellows may come to Charlottesville and take advantage of the Miller Center's wealth of academic resources.

The Miller Center Fellowship is the centerpiece of the Miller Center's American Political Development Program. "The fellowship program has reinvigorated the study of politics understood from an historical perspective. It has also helped to bridge the divide between the academy and an informed public" explains Brian Balogh, the co-director of the American Political Development Program.

The Miller Center has awarded 66 fellowships since 2000. A majority of recipients have gone on to tenure-track positions or prestigious post-doctoral fellowships at leading colleges and universities. Others are now in public service or at non-profit foundations.

The 2006-2007 Miller Center Fellowship recipients are:

Seth Center, University of Virginia

Spreading the American Dream?: Power, Image and U.S. Diplomacy, 1968-1976

This project explores how the United States government addressed America's image problems in the midst of the turmoil and transformations of the 1970s. Center examines how policymakers used the occasion of the Bicentennial to improve America's image, particularly worldwide perceptions of American values and power.

Larycia Hawkins, University of Oklahoma

Framing the Faith-Based Initiative: Black Church Elites and the Black Policy Agenda

This project examines the evolving politics of the black church and its relationship to the political agenda of African American elites. Using the White House faith-based initiative as a focal point of the narrative, Hawkins illuminates the complex policy and political implications in the partnership between the government and faith-based social service programs.

Sarah Kreps, Georgetown University

Power, Arms, and Allies: US Multilateralism in an Age of Unipolarity

This dissertation offers a nuanced treatment on alliance behavior. Evaluating US interventions both during and after the Cold War, Kreps assesses the effect of international structure (unipolarity versus bipolarity), domestic politics, normative pressures, and "shadow of the future" on the propensity for US multilateralism.

Katie Otis, University of North Carolina

Everything Old is New Again: What Policymakers and Baby Boomers Can Learn from the History of Aging and Retirement

This project examines the post-war history of aging as related to the growth of mass retirement at mid-century, post-war retirees' growing political power, and the social welfare policies that transformed the problems and opportunities of old age.

Joy Rohde, University of Pennsylvania

The Social Scientists' War: Expertise in a Cold War Nation

This dissertation examines the multifaceted ways that social scientific knowledge and the national security state extended, shaped and reinforced one another during the Cold War through a case study of Defense-funded social research institutes. Rohde argues that this fusion of scholarly expertise and state power raises important questions about the role of expert knowledge in a democratic polity.

Robert Saldin, University of Virginia

War and Peace as Pivot Points in American Politics

This project tackles five major wars: the Spanish-American War, World War One, World War Two, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Saldin examines how wars affect American politics "from the outside in" and argues that they provide an explanatory framework that ties American state development, policy making, elections and political parties together.

Kevin Wallsten, UC Berkeley

Political Blogs and the Bloggers Who Blog Them

Despite the popularity of political blogging, there have been relatively few systematic studies of this phenomenon. The aim of this project is to interpret and understand the impact of political blogs on the public discourse and policy-making.

Derek Webb, University of Notre Dame

Paving the Rights Infrastructure: Individual Rights and Civic Virtues in the Presidencies of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt

Through a comparative study of civic education in the presidencies of Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt, Webb seeks to extend and challenge the role of "liberal virtues" in American politics. Extending the thesis that liberalism requires a range of civic virtues, Webb shows how different kinds of rights have required fundamentally different kinds of citizen virtue for their support. Challenging the thesis that liberalism embodies a comprehensive and self-sustaining conception of the good life, Webb shows how liberal ends have occasionally been achieved through reliance upon the moral ideals of complementary yet distinct non-liberal traditions.

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