

## Virginia Joy Scharff (1953- )



United States, women's, western, and environmental historian Virginia Joy Scharff was the 47th president of the Western History Association (2007-2008). Dr. Scharff is Distinguished Professor of History at the University of New Mexico. She specializes in teaching women's, western, and environmental history, and in teaching writing to historians. She is Director of The Center for the Southwest at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Scharff is Women of the West Chair at the Autry National Center of the American West, Los Angeles, California.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 21, 1953, Dr. Scharff received a B.A. in American Studies, Yale University (1974), an M.J. in Journalism, University of California at Berkeley (1977), an M.A. in History, specializing in Western U.S. History, University of Wyoming (1981), and a Ph.D. in history,

specializing in U.S. history, women's history and social history with a minor in American women's literature, University of Arizona (1982).

Dr. Scharff's scholarly publications include *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (1991); *Twenty Thousand Roads: Women, Movement, and the West* (2003); two textbooks, *Present Tense: The United States Since 1945* (1996); and *Coming of Age: America in the Twentieth Century* (1998); and the edited volume, *Seeing Nature Through Gender* (2003). Dr. Scharff served as co-curator of "Home Lands: How Women Made the West," an exhibition sponsored by the Autry National Center, which opened in Los Angeles at the Autry in April 2010 and traveled to the Missouri History Center, the Museum of New Mexico, and the Gilcrease Museum. She is also the author of four mystery suspense novels, and is currently at work on a historical novel. Dr. Scharff's most recent book, *The Women Jefferson Loved* (HarperCollins, 2010) was named a New York Times "Editor's Choice."

Among her many awards and honors Dr. Scharff is Executive Board Member for the Society of American Historians and has been a Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians (2003- ). She was the Armstrong Lecturer at Bradley University (2011), Roland Betts Lecturer at Yale University (2010), Annaley Naegle Redd Lecturer at Brigham Young University (2010), and Beinecke Senior Research Fellow at the Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders at Yale University (2008-9). Dr. Scharff received the International Center for Jefferson Studies Fellowship (Summer 2008), and a Mellon Fellowship at the Huntington Library (Spring 2007).

### Sources:

<http://www.virginiascharff.com/virginia.php>, [http://www.unm.edu/~hist/faculty/scharff\\_virginia.html](http://www.unm.edu/~hist/faculty/scharff_virginia.html).

### Authored by:

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