

Elliott West (1945-)



Elliott West served as the 41st President of the Western History Association from 2001-2002. Born in Dallas, Texas, on April 19, 1945, West only briefly flirted with Southern history before succumbing to the study of the region foretold by his surname. He received his B.A. from the University of Texas in 1967 and his M.A. from the University of Colorado in 1969. After completing his Ph.D. in history at Colorado under the direction of Robert Athearn, West returned to Texas in 1971 to teach at the University of Texas at Arlington. There he served as Assistant and Associate Professor before moving to the University of Arkansas in 1979, where he remains as Alumni Distinguished Professor of History.

At Arkansas, West regularly teaches courses on the history of the American West and American Indian history and was named University Teacher of the Year in 1995 and 2001. In 2009, he was one of three finalists for the Robert Foster Cherry Award, given by Baylor University to an outstanding classroom teacher in the English-speaking world who has a positive and enduring effect on students.

The author of seven books and numerous articles, book chapters, and edited collections, West has twice been the recipient of his university's Master Researcher Award and in 2009-2010 was an NEH Fellow at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. His research interests include children and families in the West, American Indians, and the environmental history of the Great Plains. His book, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (University Press of Kansas, 1998), won six major awards, including the Caughey Prize, given by the Western History Association, the Francis Parkman Prize from the American Historical Association, and the Ray Allen Billington Prize, awarded by the Organization of American Historians. Other books include *Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (University of New Mexico Press, 1989) and *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

In his WHA Presidential Address, "Reconstructing Race," West resurrected his scholarly interest in the South to argue that the link between that region and the West was stronger than historians had thus far acknowledged. His latest publication, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (Oxford University Press, 2009), won the Caughey Prize for the best book on the history of the American West in 2010 and the Western Heritage Award from the Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City.

West lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas, with his wife, Suzanne Stoner. They have five children and six grandchildren.

Source: Elliott West, Curriculum Vitae, University of Arkansas, Department of History website, <http://history.uark.edu/5655.php>

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