



William L. Urban

Biography of William L. Urban

William Lawrence Urban was born on December 31, 1939, in Louisiana and spent portions of his childhood in Oklahoma and in his beloved Lucas, Kansas. He graduated from Shawnee High School in Shawnee, OK, in 1957 and attended Baylor University for two years before transferring to the University of Texas at Austin from which he earned a BA in 1961, an MA in 1963 and a Ph.D. in history in 1967. At UT he studied under Archibald “Archie” Ross Lewis and wrote a dissertation entitled *The Baltic Crusade of the Thirteenth Century*. The Baltic and the region’s crusades have remained for him a life-long research interest, as demonstrated by the twenty books on this topic which appear on his lists of publications. In Austin he also met Jacquelynn Juvenal whom he married on March 28, 1965, in Hamburg, Germany, while he was studying at the Universität Hamburg.

Following a year as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 1965–1966, Urban moved to Monmouth College where he taught for the next 49 years and where he and Jackie raised their three children.¹ His initial teaching duties at Monmouth were five sections of western civilization, along with courses in Greek history, Roman history, and Medieval history, with more than 300 students each year. Over the years, he added many other courses to his repertoire, including Family History, “War and Peace,” and “The New Individual.”

Urban was also involved in many extracurricular activities at Monmouth. He rarely missed a home football, basketball or soccer game. He coached the men’s soccer team from 1968 to 1981 and his players helped start the local YMCA youth soccer program. He served as advisor to a women’s club in 1992 and 1993 and helped the college start the women’s NCAA soccer team in 1994. In addition, he was the founding advisor of the Monmouth chapter of the men’s Zeta Beta Tau fraternity from 1968 to 1974 and received a certificate of merit from the fraternity in 1971.

Urban traveled widely and often during his career, especially in Europe and North America, many times with students. He directed Associated Colleges of the Midwest programs in Florence, Italy, in 1974–1975, in Yugoslavia in 1986, and in the Czech Republic in 1994. He also taught one summer in Tallinn, Estonia, and for several summers accompanied art students across Europe for Eastern Michigan University.

Urban has been the recipient of numerous research grants, including Fulbright-Hays senior research grants in 1964–1965 and 1974–1975 and a *Deutscher Akademische Austauschdienst* (DAAD) grant in 1983. He has participated frequently in academic workshops and summer programs, including: National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminars in 1977, 1981, and 1988; a Global Awareness program in Russia in 2002; and the United States Military Academy’s Military History Workshop in 1985. From 1989 to 1994 he was editor of *the Journal of Baltic Studies*.

¹ For Urban’s reflections on his arrival in Monmouth in 1966, see “Arriving in Monmouth,” *Monmouth Review Atlas* January 4, 2022, accessed September 22, 2025, <https://www.reviewatlas.com/story/opinion/columns/2022/01/04/william-urban-arriving-monmouth-1966/9082211002/>.

His many academic awards and honors include: the Dr. Arthur Puksow Foundation Award for original Research in 1983;² the Illinois State Historical Society Harry E. Pratt Memorial Award in 1998 for the best article on Illinois history during the preceding year;³ the Vitols Prize of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies for the best article published in the *Journal of Baltic Studies* in 1998;⁴ the first Burlington Northern Foundation Faculty Achievement Award for Teaching Excellence at Monmouth College in 1985; and the Hatch Distinguished Scholarship and Research Award. Monmouth College in 2007. In 1994 he was named Monmouth College's Lee L. Morgan Professor of History and International Studies.

Over the years Urban served not only as Chair of the History Department but also, occasionally, as acting Chair of the Classics Department. As he prepared to retire in the spring of 2015, Urban gave a speech at the college entitled "People I Have Known"⁵ in which he talked about some of the memorable people he worked with at Monmouth over the years, including: philosopher Sam Thompson; pianist Gracie Peterson; English professor Eva Cleland; professor of history Mary Crow;⁶ the Monmouth College President's secretary Eileen Loya;⁷ and Latin professor Bernice Fox. In 2016 he gave the 31st annual Bernice L Fox Classics lecture, entitled "America A New Rome?: Reflections on Decline and Fall."⁸

Following his retirement, Urban and his wife chose to remain in Monmouth, where he has continued writing and has enjoyed traveling, gardening and spending time with family and friends.

² Awarded for *The Livonian Crusade* and "The Nationality of Balthasar Russow," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 12/2 (1981), 160–172.

³ Awarded for "The People versus Nicholas P. Earp," *Illinois Historical Review*, 90 (Fall 1997), 173–190.

⁴ Awarded for "Victims of the Baltic Crusade," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 29/3 (Fall 1998), 195–212.

⁵ Available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J3I9Ik17kw>.

⁶ Urban, William (2022) "Remembering Mary Crow," *Monmouth Review Atlas* August 24, 2022, Accessed September 22, 2025, <https://www.reviewatlas.com/story/opinion/columns/2022/08/24/william-urban-remembering-mary-crow-at-monmouth-college/65415921007/>.

⁷ Urban, William (2013) "Remembering a Fabulous Person," *Monmouth Review Atlas* June 20, 2013, Accessed September 22, 2025, <https://www.reviewatlas.com/story/opinion/columns/2013/06/20/urban-remembering-fabulous-person/44351110007/>.

⁸ For more information about this lecture, including a program and abstract, see <https://www.tomsienkewicz.com/classics/Department/FoxLecture/FoxLecture2016.htm>.

Books by William L. Urban

- Juvenal Juvinall Juvenile; a family history.* Danville, Illinois: Interstate, 1972
- The Baltic Crusade.* DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1975. 2nd edition revised and enlarged. Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Study Center, 1994.
- The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle.* Translation with Jerry Smith. Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Publications, 1977. 2nd edition. Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 2001.
- A History of Monmouth College through its fifth quarter century.* With Mary Crow, Charles J. Speel, II, and Samuel Thompson. Monmouth, Illinois: Monmouth College, 1979; revised 2010–11.
- The Prussian Crusade.* Washington: University Press of America, 1980. Revised and enlarged second edition Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 2000.
- The Livonian Crusade.* Washington: University Press of America, 1981. Revised and enlarged second edition. Chicago: Lithuania Research and Studies Center, 2004.
- Narcissus and the Faceless Man, reflections on Individualism and Conformity.* Monmouth College, 1984. Revised edition 2003, acceded August 1, 2025, <https://department.monm.edu/history/urban/books/narcissus.htm>.
- Readings for the New Individual, selections on individualism and conformity.* Monmouth: Monmouth College, 1984.
- The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow.* Translation with Jerry Smith and Juergen Eichhoff. Madison: Wisconsin Baltic Studies Series, 1988.
- The Samogitian Crusade.* Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Study Center, 1989. 2nd edition, enlarged and revised, 2006. Lithuanian translation by Ovidijus Stokys: *Kryžiaus karas Žemaitijoje.* Vilnius: The Science & Encyclopedia Publishing Institute, 2005.
- Dithmarschen, a medieval peasant republic.* Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 1991.
- Salomon Henning's Chronicle.* Translation with Jerry C. Smith and J. Ward Jones. [Wisconsin Baltic Studies Series] Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt, 1992.
- The Independence of the Baltic States: Origins, Causes, and Consequences. A Comparison of the Critical Years 1918/1919 and 1990/1991.* Edited with Eberhard Demm and Roger Noël. Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 1996.
- Translation of Johannes Renner's Chronicle* with Jerry C. Smith and Ward Jones. Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen, 1997.
- Tannenberg and After. Lithuania, Poland and the Teutonic Order in Search of Immortality.* Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 1999. Revised edition: 2002. Lithuanian translation by Ovidijus Stokys and Aldona Matulytė: *Žalgiris ir kas po jo.* Vilnius: Mokslo ir Enciklopediju Leidybos Institutas, 2004.
- Wyatt Earp. The OK Corral and the Law of the American West.* New York: Rosen Press, 2003.
- The Teutonic Knights: a military history.* London: Greenhill, 2003. Hungarian translation by Zvara István: *A Teuton Lovagok.* Budapest: Megjelenés, 2005. Polish translation by Eugeniusz Możejko. *Krzyżacy: historia działań militarnych.* Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 2005. Swedish translation by Per Nyquist: *Tyska Orden: Nordens korsriddare.* Stockholm: Prisma, 2006. Italian translation by Rossana Macuz Varrocchi: *I cavalieri teutonici Storia militare delle*

- Crociate del Nord*, with introduction by Franco Cardini. Gorizia: Goriziana, 2006. Russian translator not identified: *Tevtonskii Orden*. Moscow: AST: Khranitel', 2007.
- Medieval Mercenaries: the Business of War*. London: Greenhill, 2006. Polish translation by Paulina Głuchowska: *Średniowieczni Najemnicy*. Warsaw: Bellona, 2008.
- The Dean Is Dead*. iUniverse, 2007.
- Bayonets for Hire: the Business of War, 1550–1763*. London: Greenhill, 2007. Polish translation by Arkadiusz Romanek: *Nowożytni Najemnicy*. Warsaw: Bellona, 2008.
- The Dean Is Still Dead*. iUniverse, 2008.
- The Dean Is Dead Again*. iUniverse, 2009.
- The Dean Returns from the Dead*. iUniverse, 2010.
- Matchlocks to Flintlocks. Mercenaries in Europe and Beyond, 1500–1700*. London: Frontline, 2011.
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- Dithmarschen*. Heide, Germany: 2023.
- The Teutonic Knights Strike East. The 14th Century Crusade in Lithuania, Poland, and Rus'*. London: Greenhill, 2024.