

Presentation & Panel Bios and Abstracts

November 2026 General Meeting

*As of 9/17/2026: Check back for updates

Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery

Christa Breault Dirkshiede

Christa Dierksheide is the Brockman Foundation Jefferson Scholars Foundation Professor of History at the University of Virginia, where she directs the Center for the Study of the Age of Jefferson. She is the author of *Amelioration and Empire: Progress and Slavery in the Plantation Americas* (UVA Press, 2014) and *Beyond Jefferson: The Hemingses, the Randolphs, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century America* (Yale, 2024). Her most recent book, co-authored with Nicholas Guyatt, is *Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery* (Harvard, 2026). Before returning to academia, she was a historian at Monticello, where she curated and contributed to numerous exhibitions including *Sally Hemings: A Life* (2018).

Nicholas Guyatt

Nicholas Guyatt is Professor of North American History at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of many books, including *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation* and (with Christa Dierksheide) *Jefferson's Wolf: A Founding Father's Troubling Answer to the Problem of Slavery*. He is also the editor of the *Oxford Illustrated History of the United States*, which was published in June. He has written about American history and politics for many publications, including the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Review of Books*, and the *New York Times*.

Brent Staples

Brent Staples cultivated a national audience for his essays on race, class, culture and politics while serving as a member of *The New York Times* Editorial Board from 1990 to 2025. In 2019, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for writing on the legacies of slavery with "extraordinary moral clarity." Staples holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago and is author of the memoir "Parallel Time," finalist for The Los Angeles Times Book Award and winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. Harvard University selected him to deliver the W.E.B. DuBois Lectures, a three-day address honoring those who have made distinctive contributions to African American history and culture. His current research focuses on African Americans in 19th century New York City

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The Foundational Role of Botanical Collections to Biodiversity Knowledge on our Rapidly Changing Planet: Insights from the Harvard University Herbaria

Jeannine Cavender-Bares

Jeannine Cavender-Bares is a plant evolutionary ecologist, Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, and Director of the Harvard University Herbaria. She champions natural history collections as foundations for understanding biodiversity, and her work bridges centuries of botanical history with modern technology. Her research utilizes herbarium specimens, manipulative experiments, and field observations to gain insights into plant evolution, ecological adaptation over time, and the functioning of ecosystems that serve as our life support systems. As the director of the NSF-funded ASCEND Biology Integration Institute and the International Herbarium Spectral digitization working group (IHerbSpec), her team integrates biodiversity collections with spectral biology to study what reflected photons from plants can tell us about the variation in plant life on Earth. This innovative and collaborative approach transforms static historical specimens into dynamic tools for mapping biodiversity change. Through her leadership and research, Cavender-Bares demonstrates that herbaria are not just archives of the past, but critical infrastructure for protecting the future of our biosphere.

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Karl Spencer Lashley Award and

The Lascaux Rectangle and the Cognitive Origins of Geometry

Stanislas Dehaene

Professor Stanislas Dehaene PhD, is a French mathematician, psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist. He holds the Chair of Experimental Cognitive Psychology at the Collège de France in Paris, and is the scientific director of the NeuroSpin center in Saclay, south of Paris, France's advanced brain imaging research center. In 2018, he became the president of the newly created French Scientific Council for Education, which advises the French government on scientific approaches to learning and teaching. Stanislas Dehaene is recognized for his pioneering studies of “the number sense”, the brain circuits that we share with other primates and that allow us to understand

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numbers and mathematics. He is also a specialist of reading and uncovered the function of the "visual word form area", a left-hemisphere region that specializes for letters when we learn to read. He is also one of the authors of the global neuronal workspace theory of consciousness, and has also discovered several "signatures of consciousness", patterns of brain responses that are unique to conscious processing and can be used to diagnose coma and vegetative-state patients.

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From Lands to Brands

Angela Riley

Angela R. Riley (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) is the Goldberg Endowed Chair of Native American Law at UCLA where she directs the Native Nations Law and Policy Center and serves as Special Advisor to the Chancellor. Her scholarship has been widely published in the nation's leading legal journals. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of Oklahoma and her law degree from Harvard. Professor Riley was raised on a working farm at Saddle Mountain, Oklahoma located within the borders of the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache Indian Reservation. In 2003 she became the first woman and youngest Justice of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Supreme Court and has served as Chief Justice since 2010. She is also an appellate justice for numerous other tribal courts and has chaired and served on several UN boards. Professor Riley is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Law Institute.

Matthew Fletcher

Matthew L.M. Fletcher is the Harry Burns Hutchins Collegiate Professor of Law and Professor of American Culture at the University of Michigan. He sits as the Chief Justice of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, and serves as a judge for nearly ten other tribal nations. He is a member of the Grand Traverse Band. Professor Fletcher graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1997 and the University of Michigan Law School in 1994. He is married to Wenona Singel, a member of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, and they have two children, Owen and Emmett.

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Lance Morgan

Lance Morgan is President and Chief Executive Officer of Ho-Chunk, Inc. Morgan launched Ho-Chunk, Inc. in 1994 as the economic development corporation of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. Under Morgan's leadership, Ho-Chunk, Inc. has been recognized by a variety of national organizations including: Innovations in Government Award, sponsored by Harvard University and the Ford Foundation; Honoring Nations Award, also sponsored by Harvard; Minority Business Magazine, Entrepreneurial Spirit Award; Distinguished Alumni Speaker, Harvard Law School; Small Business Administration; U.S. Department of State; U.S. Department of Commerce; and the White House. Morgan earned a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Nebraska (B. S. 1990) and graduated from Harvard Law School (J.D. 1993). He is a member of the Minnesota Bar Association. Morgan is an enrolled member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

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The War for America: How the Revolution Was Fought

Rick Atkinson

Rick Atkinson is the author of eight narrative histories about five American wars. His most recent book, *The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Ticonderoga to Charleston, 1777-1780*, debuted as the #1 New York Times nonfiction bestseller. The New York Times Book Review declared, "This is great history...There is no better writer of narrative history than the Pulitzer Prize-winning Atkinson." Ken Burns wrote, "Rick Atkinson takes his place among the greatest of all historians. This superb second volume in his Revolution Trilogy is that rare narrative that keeps you on the edge of your seat." Born in Munich, Germany, Atkinson is the son of a U.S. Army officer and holds a master of arts degree in English literature from the University of Chicago. A former reporter, foreign correspondent, and senior editor at the Washington Post, his many awards include Pulitzer Prizes in history and journalism.

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“More is different”: The Emergent Complexity in Economics and Finance

Jean-Pierre Bouchaud

Co-founder, chairman and chief scientist of Capital Fund Management (CFM), Jean-Philippe Bouchaud is a co-director of the CFM chair of Econophysics & Complex Systems. A member of the French Academy of Sciences, he held the Bettencourt Innovation Chair at Collège de France in 2020. A physicist by training (ENS Paris PhD), Bouchaud worked at CEA-Saclay on glassy systems before founding Science & Finance in 1994. He has received numerous honors including the Onsager Prize (2024) and CNRS Silver Medal (1996). He has authored 400 papers in physics and finance and several Cambridge University Press books on financial markets and random matrix theory.

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Jacques Barzun Prize in Cultural History

Francesca Rochberg

Francesca Rochberg (1952) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received her B.A. in Oriental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and her Ph.D. from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago. She is Catherine and William L. Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Near Eastern Studies Emerita in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures of the University of California, Berkeley. She is a MacArthur Fellow (1982), a Guggenheim Fellow (1993), and was a Member at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, School of Historical Studies (2007). Her recent books include *Before Nature: Cuneiform Knowledge and the History of Science* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), *Worldmaking and Cuneiform Antiquity: An Anthropology of Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) and (edited) *Studies in Premodern Sciences in Memory of Noel M. Swerdlow: Antiquity to the Renaissance. Archimedes vol. 74.* (Springer Nature, 2026).