



Frank Nickell

December 7, 1935 - February 9, 2025

Dr. Franklin Delano Nickell, a former professor of history at Southeast Missouri State University died on February 9, 2025 surrounded by his family. He taught at Southeast from 1969 to 2013. After his retirement he worked for the Missouri State Historical Society then transitioned to his most recent position at the Kellerman Foundation. He established the Center for Regional History and has received multiple prestigious awards locally, regionally, and nationally.

Born on December 7, 1935 Dr. Nickell was raised on a farm near Atwood, Illinois. He received B.S. and M.S. degrees from Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois, and a Ph.D in American History from the University of New Mexico. Dr. Nickell and Gynel Snyder were married September 9, 1956; they were great humanitarians to the community. She preceded his passing in December 2011. Together they established the humane society in Cape Girardeau, MO, now referred to as Southeast Missouri Pets.

Dr. Nickell was the youngest of eight children, born to Leonard Nickell and Orpha Mechling Nickell, all who preceded him in death.

Dr. Nickell will be missed as he was deeply loved by his family, including his foster sons Roger (Thuy) Luethner and Lance Luethner who preceded him in death, his special niece Janet (Kevin) Stewart, as well as many other nieces,

nephews and friends.

A Memorial Service will be held on Friday, February 21, 2025 at 1:00 pm at Ford & Sons Funeral Home-Mt. Auburn with the Rev. Tim Koehler officiating.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to the following are suggested to honor his memory: Franklin Nickell Scholarship, Southeast Missouri State University
Southeast Missouri Pets of Cape Girardeau, MO.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 21. 1:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Tribute Wall

DP

“ I just found out that my dear professor passed away. I'm at a loss for words by this loss. He was a very intelligent, sweet, smart man, that me and my family both loved. He will truly be missed. Rest in peace friend and we'll see you on the other side.

Dawn Patton - May 10, 2025 at 06:31 PM

DM

“ Frank was a great gentleman. So sad to learn of his passing. His true legacy is he made a difference not only in the lives of his countless students and colleagues, but also the world in which he lived. So glad to have known him.

David McElreath - April 30, 2025 at 08:34 PM

SH

“ He was a dear former History Dept. Chair where I was a student worker for 3 years back in the 80s. I still have the typed letters he sent me congratulating me on life events. He was so special and one of a kind and will be greatly missed.

Sherry Holder - February 26, 2025 at 11:47 AM

DC

“ He was loved, and will be remembered...

Deborah S Cooper-Hoeller - February 24, 2025 at 01:44 PM

RC

“ A memorial tree was planted was your sweet uncle. Praying for your family today

Randa Christian - February 21, 2025 at 08:54 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Frank Nickell.

February 21, 2025 at 08:49 AM



“ Maria Ward purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Frank Nickell.



Maria Ward - February 21, 2025 at 04:21 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Frank Nickell.



February 19, 2025 at 10:55 AM



“ I met Dr Nickell in 1975 as a freshman at SEMO. Working on a BS in Social Studies I had him for many classes. I was so enamored by his depth of knowledge, teaching style, and genuine kindness. As a student, not only did I take content notes of his lectures, but in the margins of my papers I took note of his delivery style. I so much wanted to teach like him.

He was a great mentor of mine for the past 50 years. His example of knowledge, artful lectures, patience, and inspiration are all hallmarks of the essence of a master teacher. I was very lucky to have him as a mentor. Sadly, it seems like it was almost yesterday.

Steve Richardet - February 18, 2025 at 10:54 AM

ML

“ Janet, we were so sorry to hear of your loss. You are in our thoughts.

Mike & Andrea Little - February 16, 2025 at 09:54 AM

KR

“ Dr. Nickell was the most significant teacher I had in high school and professor I had in college. His emphasis on the significance of events in history and way of teaching made me a true student of history and gave me an absolute understanding of the foundations of our country. He had a profound effect on me. He will be sorely missed.

Keith Robinson - February 15, 2025 at 11:50 PM



“ Dr. Nickell was a the best history professor I had at SEMO! I took every class he offered and could never get enough. He made history come to life. As a history teacher myself, I aspire to tell a story to my class the way Dr. Nickell could! When I graduated with my B.S. in high school social studies education, he helped me to secure a T.A. position to work towards my masters. He would do anything for anyone! He will be truly missed!

Emily Hill - February 15, 2025 at 10:05 PM

MH

“ I had Dr Nickell as a returning Nursing (BSN) student in 1988. His classes were awesome and I looked forward to listening to his lectures. He was one of the best professors I had.

Maria Hanschen - February 15, 2025 at 05:03 PM

EC

“ Dr. Nickell was my graduate advisor and the reason I became a history professor. I owe so much to the man. He was a friend and mentor. He loved animals and his students. I am very sad.

Edward "SCott" Cracraft - February 13, 2025 at 07:53 PM

DJ

“ Dr. Nickell's sphere of influence and respect radiated beyond the 1000s of students he inspired over decades, to the Cape Girardeau community and Southeast Missouri region. How lucky were we to have been acquainted with him? When you dialoged with Frank, he made you feel you had sole command of his attention (and he yours). This gentleman of the ages was one to be emulated, and I have tried since the early 1990s after I thoroughly enjoyed his instruction in historic preservation...and folklore specifically...at SEMO. My life will never be the same, and I am honored to carry his memory and spirit with me ever more. ~David W. Jackson SEMO HP alumnus, 1993

David Jackson - February 13, 2025 at 03:44 PM

CH

“ Frank Nickell enriched the lives of so many - family, students, and colleagues. His enthusiasm for life, care for his students, and deep commitment to education will be remembered. In the late 80s, I was Frank's graduate assistant for three semesters. His influence on me continues to this day. ... My deepest sympathies go to Frank's family. I recall him speaking fondly and frequently of his niece.

Cathy Burke Harbison - February 13, 2025 at 03:24 PM

JF

DOCTOR NICKELL WAS A KIND AND ONE OF THE MOST HELPFUL MAN I HAVE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF HAVING BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE. HE WAS ALWAYS THERE TO GIVE A HELPFUL SUGGESTION. WILL BE MISSED!

Jesse Francis - February 14, 2025 at 11:11 AM

JF

“ Dr. Nickell and I worked in the same building on campus for a few years. I won't forget how he made it a point to come welcome me to the building and share with me memories he had about my cousin, Jimmy Froemsdorf, who had also been his neighbor. I treasure those conversations. I'm so sad to hear of his death.

Johannah Froemsdorf - February 13, 2025 at 09:13 AM

VH

“ He was a wonderful teacher and humanitarian.

Vera Huffman Hayman - February 13, 2025 at 08:13 AM

BG

*“ Janet I'm extremely heartbroken to hear of franks passing. I loved him deeply and I love you just as deeply. Praying for peace and comfort for you and Kevin
Brittany*

Brittany Gerber - February 12, 2025 at 11:57 PM