

The 2004 JAMES PINCKNEY HARRISON LECTURES IN HISTORY

Lyon Gardiner Tyler Department of History



Bertram Wyatt-Brown

Richard J. Milbauer Professor of United States History
University of Florida

"Honor and America's Wars, An Overview"

Monday, March 22, 4:30 PM Andrews Hall 101
"Honor and American War: From Revolution to Mexican Conquest"

Monday, March 29, 4:30 PM Andrews Hall 101
"Honor, Secession, and Civil War"

Monday, April 5, 4:30 PM Small Hall 113
"Honor and War: from Spain to Iraq"

One of the chief principles of military engagement has been the rhetorical and causal elements of an ancient and still persistent ethic--the imperatives of martial honor. Its corollary is the determination of leaders to avoid honor's polarity--the peril of being publicly shamed. To demonstrate weakness and indifference to gross provocation or assault not only diminishes world repute for valorous national action but lowers the self-confidence of the nation itself. No army can long survive without inculcating honor's principles, but ambitions for personal glory have often proved divisive and demoralizing. In our history, untrained volunteers seeking notice for bravery quickly became disenchanted with war's horrors and drudgery. Moreover, authorities have sent men to their death without seriously anticipating the heavy risks or unintended consequences. Yet, how little has been written or thought about this phenomenon. Honor has, however, influenced American foreign and domestic policies, past and present. The lectures will explore the issue from the Revolution to the Iraqi fight.

Professor Wyatt-Brown, Richard J. Milbauer Professor of History at the University of Florida since 1983, a recent Douglas Southall Freeman Professor at the University of Richmond, and past president of the Southern Historical Association, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award (1983). His publications include *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery* (to be featured next fall on PBS American Experience, WGBH); *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*; *The House Percy: Honor, Melancholy, and Imagination in a Southern Family*; *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1890s*; co-editor, *Virginia's Civil War* (forthcoming) as well as over 150 essays and essay reviews. Wyatt-Brown is currently preparing two works: *Lincoln's Assassination: The Undoing of Union Victory* and also *Melancholy's Children, Mental Depression and 20th Century Southern writers*.