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NEWS RELEASE

BREATHING LIFE INTO THE PAST, UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON PROFESSOR PREPARES TO HELP LEAD THE URBAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

DAYTON, Ohio — For University of Dayton professor Janet Bednarek, history isn't found in a dusty book on a library shelf. It's in the sights and sounds of urban neighborhoods.

Bednarek was unanimously selected by the board of directors of the Urban History Association to serve as executive secretary and treasurer. The Centerville resident will start her five-year term in January 2005.

"This organization has really kept urban history alive and fresh," Bednarek said. "And, at a time when the University of Dayton is engaging in so many new urban initiatives, I'm excited to be a part of that."

The Urban History Association was founded in 1988 to stimulate interest, research and study in the history of cities during all time periods and in all geographic areas. Bednarek, who has been a member since the organization's inception, is now one of more than 400 members worldwide. "It provides an opportunity for all of us who study urban history to share ideas," she said.

Bednarek, who earned her doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh, joined the University of Dayton in 1992 as an assistant professor in the department of history. She served as department chair from 1999 until May 2004 and became a full professor in August.

Working for a University that places such an emphasis on community partnerships made the Urban History Association appointment an ideal fit for Bednarek. The University of Dayton has long participated in various urban initiatives such as the Genesis Project, a partnership with the City of Dayton, Miami Valley Hospital and others to revitalize the Fairgrounds neighborhood near the University campus. The Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Center for Leadership in Community also initiates and sustains partnerships with urban neighborhoods.

"This is an opportunity to place a spotlight on the urban initiatives the University is a part of," Bednarek said.

Among Bednarek's responsibilities will be planning the biennial conference for 2006. The 2004 conference was held in Milwaukee and attended by close to 300 members.

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