

GRIT & GLORY

South Dakota Historical Society History Conference
June 1-3, 2026 - Fort Pierre, SD



conference schedule

Location: Drifters Event Center at 325 E. Hustan Ave., Ft. Pierre, SD
All times are in Central Daylight Time

Monday, JUNE 1

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM **Registration**
Drifters Event Center

6:00 - 8:00 PM **Trivia Night: History Smackdown**
Drifters Event Center
Hosted by the South Dakota Historical Society Museum Staff
Put your historical know-how to the test! Join history fans and curious minds for an evening of trivia covering South Dakota and American history. Bring a team or come solo, we'll place you with other players. Compete for bragging rights and fabulous prizes!

Tuesday, JUNE 2

7:30 - 8:30 AM **Registration**
Drifters Event Center

8:00 - 8:30 AM **Kickoff & Key Info**
Dr. Benjamin F. Jones, Director of the South Dakota State Historical Society & State Historian

8:30 - 9:30 AM **Session 1: From Statehood to the Ballot: The Constitutional Story of South Dakota**
Professor Patrick M. Garry, USD School of Law, local resident expert on the South Dakota Constitution.

9:30 - 9:45 **Morning Mingle** - meet & treat

9:45 - 10:45 AM **Session 2: Meanwhile in the Black Hills...the Founding Principles Live On**
Mario Gonzales, has served as legal counsel to the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and has devoted much of his career to Indian legal issues.

Tuesday, JUNE 2 cont.

- 10:45 - 11:45 AM **Session 3: U.S. Constitutional Law & American Indian Rights**
Hon. Frank Pommersheim, Emeritus Professor of Law at the University of South Dakota School with more than forty years of experience in the area of Indian Law and Policy.
- 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM **Lunch**
- 1:00 - 2:00 **Session 4: Wintercounts: Recording the Revolution**
Christina Burke, Curator, anthropologist, and independent researcher.
- 2:00 - 3:00 PM **Session 5: Civic Education in our Republic in Grit & Glory**
Dr. Christian D. Pirlet, Assistant Professor of Educational Technology, Northern State University
- 3:00 - 3:15PM **Afternoon Swoon - meet & treat**
- 3:15 - 4:15 PM **Session 6: Sioux Falls, the Queen City & the Founding Women Who Shaped It**
Podcast host Lori Kent, aka "Local Lou," shares her love for history with South Dakotans and beyond.
- 5:00 - 7:00 PM **History Unwinded Networking Social**
Cultural Heritage Center, 900 Governors Dr, Pierre
Hosted by the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation
Enjoy an evening sipping and snacking, connecting with friends, and sharing stories...followed by a sneak peek of one of our new exhibits as you stroll through the gallery led by Francis Whitebird, David Grabitske, and Dan Moeckly. And don't miss the Curator's Nightcap!

Wednesday, JUNE 3

- 7:30 - 8:30 AM **Registration**
Drifters Event Center
- 8:00 - 8:30 AM **Welcome Back & What's Next**
David M. Grabitske, South Dakota State Historical Society Assistant Director & Museum Director
- 8:30 - 9:30 AM **Session 7: Little Houses of Liberty: Laura Ingalls Wilder, Rose Wilder Lane, and the American Revolution**
Dedra McDonald Birzer, Director and editor-in-chief of the South Dakota Historical Society Press and a lecturer in history at Hillsdale College.
Sponsored by Americans for Prosperity
- 9:30-9:45 **Morning Mingle - meet & treat**

Wednesday, JUNE 3 cont.

- 9:45-10:45 AM **Session 8: South Dakota's First 4th & other 4ths**
Dr. Benjamin F. Jones
- 10:45-11:45 AM **Session 9: The Northwest Ordinance Informs South Dakota**
Paul Finkelman is an American legal historian and is currently a visiting professor at the University of Toledo College of Law
Sponsored by State Bar of South Dakota
- 11:45 AM - 2:00 PM **Session 10: Awards Luncheon and Keynote Speaker**
1776 and All That: The Road to American Independence
Dr. Bradley J. Birzer, American historian, Russell Amos Kirk Chair in History at Hillsdale College and Fellow of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.
- 2:00 PM **Conference concludes**
- 3:00 PM **South Dakota State Historical Society Board of Trustee Meeting**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
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