ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Larry Gragg is a Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus of history at Missouri University of Science and Technology. He taught at S&T from 1977 to 2021. He was chair of the history and political science department for 17 years. He has written 10 books and over 40 articles on subjects ranging from 17th century Puritans to the development of Las Vegas. Most recently, he has published Forged in Gold, Missouri S&T's First 150 years and an article on the desegregation of the Missouri School of Mines and the University of Missouri in 1950 in the Missouri Historical Review.

AVAILABLE PRESENTATIONS

“WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IF A NEGRO STUDENT PRESENTS HIMSELF FOR REGISTRATION IN THE FALL?” MISSOURI COLLEGE PRESIDENTS RESPOND TO DEMANDS FOR DESEGREGATION IN 1950

Drawing upon letters and memos to and from the five state college presidents, the presidents at the University of Missouri, and Lincoln University, and the dean of the Missouri School of Mines, I will talk about the "behind the scenes" discussions of presidents prior to and following Cole County Circuit Court Judge Sam C. Blair's declaratory judgment in 1950 that the Missouri School of Mines and the University of Missouri must admit three African American students who wanted to pursue degrees not offered at Lincoln University, the state's only college for black students. Collectively, the presidents' responses varied from caution to opposition to desegregation. Only Sherman Scruggs, the president at Lincoln University, called upon the state to open the doors of all public colleges to students regardless of race. In large part, the timid responses of these presidents reflected the reality that they led colleges in a deeply segregated state. Ultimately, this will be a talk about how challenging it was in 1950 to desegregate higher education prior to the 1954 Brown decision.

SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION

- Email: lgragg@mst.edu