

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

James Fraser, *Professor and Interim Chair*

February 12, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write a letter of recommendation for John Press.

I first met John Press when he enrolled in my course in the History of Education in the United States in the fall of 2006. It quickly became clear that he was a student with a very strong background as an historian and also as a history teacher. He knew basic information that the rest of the class simply did not know—both historical data and effective ways of teaching history. At the same time I was very impressed with his willingness to challenge me and his class colleagues. His challenges were always polite and respectful but also firm and clear. Such challenges are what make any class the most engaging for all concerned. Even as we disagreed—and we did—we both learned, and I believe that others in the class learned from our interactions. John's presence certainly helped make the class an interesting one and a success in my own eyes.

Since that time I have stayed in close touch with Mr. Press. I am also a faculty member in the history of education program so we see each other at various events. During the summer and fall of 2007, John Press was one of the two key graduate student organizers of the annual meeting of the History of Education Society. The meeting actually took place in Cleveland, Ohio, but the society's president-elect was a NYU faculty member and so our department was responsible for the program. John was quite extraordinary as a conference organizer. He kept track of many multiple details, he reminded and politely prodded people who had promised to do things, and he made sure that the program and the conference was tightly organized and everyone had crucial information in a timely way. The behind the scenes work done by John Press and his other student colleague made the meeting one of the most successful in the society's history.

Finally, because of my respect for John I invited him to teach a section of the undergraduate course, "Inquiries Into Teaching and Learning" that I coordinate. Inquiries, as we call it, is the foundational course in the teacher preparation program at NYU. I have overall responsibility for the course but each section instructor has significant responsibility for their section. This is not a lecture/discussion course but rather each section operates in a fairly autonomous way within the organizational structure that I create. My invitation to John to teach in this program is a sign of my respect for him.

I hope that this recommendation is helpful as you consider John Press as a candidate for any professorship position that may arise..

Sincerely,

James W. Fraser
Professor of History and Education
Interim Chair, Department of Teaching
and Learning