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Swenson Center News

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Swenson Center News

I am pleased to announce that Dr. James E. Erickson of Edina, MN has become the new editor of *Swedish American Genealogist*. He succeeds Dr. Nils William Olsson, the founder and editor of SAG since 1981, who will become editor emeritus.

James Eldred Erickson was born in Stambaugh, Michigan 1 December 1949, the third of four children and only son of C. Eldred and Jennie L. (née Solander) Erickson. He grew up in this small mining and logging community located on the west side of Iron County in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Since the age of five, friends and relatives have called him by the nickname "Fritz," which was his paternal grandfather's name. He attended Stambaugh public schools and was confirmed in and a member of Grace Covenant (formerly the Swedish Mission) Church in Stambaugh. Jim's family moved to Chicago in the fall of 1966, and the following spring he received a high school diploma from North Park Academy.

Jim matriculated at North Park University (then North Park College) in the fall of 1967. While at NPU he was a member of the College Choir, the Chamber Singers and the tennis team. In the spring of 1971 he graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. degree in Biology.

From 1972 to 1977, Jim attended graduate school at the University of Minnesota. He received a M.S. degree in 1974 and a Ph.D. degree in 1977, both in Zoology. His doctoral dissertation focused on the life history of a stream fish called the banded darter (a diminutive relative of the yellow perch). Jim has taught in biology departments at the following institutions: Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI (1977-82); Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN (1983); St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN (1983-88); University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN (1988-89); and the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies (Summer Faculty), Mancelona, MI (1987-93). Since 1990 he has been a tenured Biology Instructor at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, MN. During Winter Quarter 1998, Jim was hired as an adjunct assistant professor to teach an Ichthyology class in the Ecology, Evolution and Behavior Department at the University of Minnesota.

Jim's interest in Swedish American genealogy and personal history was kindled in the late 1970s, when he first saw the Erickson family bible, which had belonged to his paternal great-grandparents. During the 1980s his interest burgeoned into an avocation, which ultimately led to an association with Dr. Nils William Olsson and *Swedish American Genealogist*. In addition to being a frequent

contributor to *SAG*, Jim has served as *SAG's* contributing editor (1991-94) and *SAG's* associate editor (1995-1997). Jim is also a member of the Publications Committee of the Swedish-American Historical Society (1995-) and the Advisory Committee of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center (1997-). In 1996 he was the recipient of a stipend from the Swedish Emigrant Institute (*Svenska Emigrantinstitutet*), which enabled him to spend the months of November and December in Växjö, Sweden, working on a long-term research project, "The Swedes of West Iron County, Michigan."

On 9 September 1972 Jim married Margaret (Peggy) Sue Bell, a native of Minneapolis and a 1972 graduate of North Park University. Jim and Peggy celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary last September. They have two daughters, Laura (a senior at NPU majoring in International Business and Swedish) and Rachel (a freshman at NPU).

Jim enjoys the outdoors, traveling "home" to the U.P. whenever possible, classical music, Ellis Peters mysteries, Tom Clancy novels, and spending time in historical societies, libraries, archives and cemeteries. He is an active member of Bloomington Covenant Church, and has served as this congregation's vice chairperson (1993-94), chairperson (1995-96), and deacon board chairperson (1997). He also sings tenor in the church's fifty-voice choir.

The Swenson Center is very pleased that Dr. Erickson has assumed the editorship of *Swedish American Genealogist*, and we look forward to many issues of interesting reading.

Dag Blanck, Director
Swenson Center

Salt Lake City Genealogical Tour 25 October - 1 November 1998

If you plan to attend the Eighth Annual Genealogical Seminar in Salt Lake City, UT, 25 October - 1 November 1998, sponsored by *Swedish American Genealogist*, it is not too early to begin planning for this event. Space will be going fast and we can only accommodate a limited number, so please forward your application form as soon as possible. If you have not received an application by this time, please call the office of the Swenson Center and request one. The telephone number is (309) 794 7204.