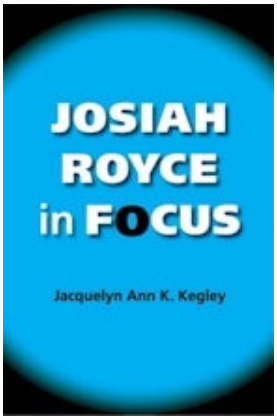
"I Am an American Philosopher"

—An Interview Series with John Capps—



Jacquelyn Kegley is Professor of Philosophy at California State University Bakersfield. She is the author and editor of several books including *Josiah Royce in Focus*, *Persuasion and Compulsion in Democracy* (with Krzysztof Piotr Skowronski), and *Genuine Individuals and Genuine Communities: A Roycean Public Philosophy*. Over her career at CSUB she co-founded the Kegley Institute of Ethics and received both the Wang Family Award for excellence in teaching and the CSUB's President's Medal for academic leadership. She is a past-president of SAAP and was awarded the organization's Herbert Schneider Award in 2006.

What does American philosophy mean to you?



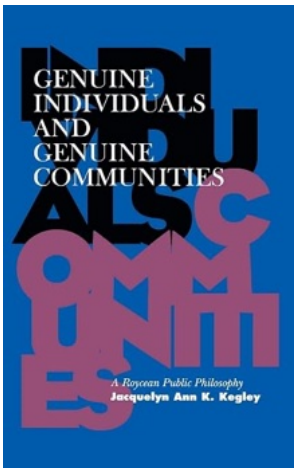
American Philosophy embodies a philosophical stance with which I identify. I especially identify with the emphasis on community and the desire to connect philosophy to the everyday life of selves and communities. I also identify with the social activism of American philosophy which is concerned to apply philosophy to solve everyday problems of selves and communities. American philosophy also includes an open-ended notion of science and of logic seeing both as important aspects of philosophy as well as foundational in developing a vision of reality as open-ended and constantly changing and evolving.

American philosophy to me embodies these themes: a rejection of Cartesian certainty; an emphasis on fallibilism, a radical type of empiricism, and a belief in the continuity of science and philosophy. James' notion of meliorism and Royce's emphasis on community are particularly important to me. Various American philosophers have also tackled issues of racism and sexism and promoted respect for all selves and communities.

How did you become an American philosopher?

My entry into American philosophy was via two routes. From an early age I developed an avid interest in American literature as well as futurist literature. I did my high school senior

thesis on Aldous Huxley. I also strongly identified with social activism and followed the activities and thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jane Addams, Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez. My other entry into American Philosophy occurred when my advisor, Justus Buchler, suggested that I explore the philosophy of Josiah Royce as the subject of my doctoral research.



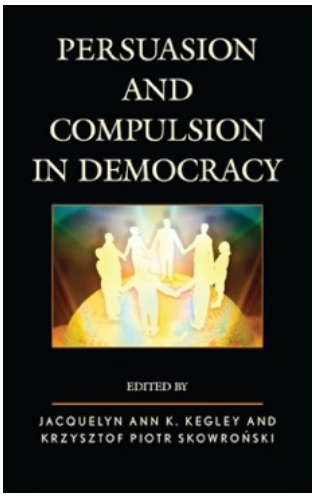
How would you describe your current research?

Currently I am working on a book on the concept of Loyalty, partly based on the work of Josiah Royce, but focused on the concept of loyalty as it is being practiced today, arguing that this is not loyalty but blind obedience.

I have also been reviewing other philosopher's works. I recently reviewed *Open Casket* edited by George Yancy and Todd Franklin. This is a gripping and highly illuminating set of recollections on the killing of Emmett Till. I recommend this as a needed read.

What do you do when you're not doing American philosophy?

When I am not doing philosophy I love spending time with my family traveling to various places around the world. Currently our focus is on Costa Rica and in December we plan a cruise through the Panama Canal.



What's your favorite work in American philosophy? What should we all be reading?

It is difficult to name a favorite work in American Philosophy. I do recommend Royce's *Philosophy of Loyalty* as very relevant today. For a fun read I'd recommend Royce's *Pussy Blackie's Travels* which he wrote as a youngster.

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