Greetings from the Chair...

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

We started the academic year, 2009-10, with a small cohort of new graduate students full of talent and great promise. These seven students came to town just as the recession tightened its economic grip on the globe, the nation, the state, and the university. Due to the sound management of department resources by former chairs, we have so far mitigated the ill effects of this financial meltdown. We have honored all of our contracts despite the cuts in our budget. The next two to three years will be even more challenging, but I am confident we will weather the storm and come out of this stronger. I would like to thank our students, the faculty, and friends and alumni for their support during this trying time.

Despite the gloomy job market our graduates have done quite well and many have landed in tenure-track and established professional jobs. We also had several very sad and untimely losses. Mei-Ling Hsu, who was not only a superb scholar but also the department’s first female full professor and first women chair, passed away. We have been in touch with her family via one of our doctoral students, Catherine Chang, who was in Taiwan last summer. We deeply appreciate Catherine’s kindness for being the key link with the family. Mei-Ling lived in the country of her birth, Taiwan, since she retired from Minnesota. We also experienced another major loss in our geography family. Our esteemed colleague, Dean and Professor Fred Lukermann passed away on September 1, 2009.

On the sunny side, the University recognized the achievements of two respected colleagues. Professor Helga Leitner was awarded the University’s “Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Award” and Professor Judith Martin earned the President’s Outstanding Service Award. We honored these colleagues by hosting a departmental lunch held at our Coffee Hour venue. Prof. John Adams presided over the ceremony and did superb job narrating the contributions of these two colleagues. CLA Dean James Parente took part in the celebration as well.

Another remarkable celebration took place at the AAG in Las Vegas. Professor Hart was honored for his 60 years of membership of the association. Hurrah to Professor Hart. As usual, a number of colleagues were away on fellowship and teaching assignments in the USA and overseas. Regents Professor Eric Sheppard was appointed as the new Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change (ICGC, former MacArthur Program) – walah Eric! Urban Geographer and valued colleague, Prof. Karen Till, resigned and joined Virginia Tech. We will miss Karen, but wish her well on her new journey.

Our graduate students continue to lead the discipline in the number of research presentations at the AAG and West Lakes. Many have garnered annual paper awards and the department and college continue to support these activities. It has now become a Minnesota tradition for our students to win at least one of the best graduate student paper awards at the AAG every year. Hats off to our talented young colleagues. On the job front 2009 and 2010 were two of the toughest years in memory, but contrary to the gloom and doom ten of our newly minted PhDs out-classed the competition for faculty, professional, and post-doc positions.

The faculty continues to be productive in all areas of our endeavor: research, teaching and service. Several members received prestigious grants and fellowships, and Prof. Helga Leitner was selected as CLA’s “Scholar of the College.” We continue to rebuild our faculty ranks and hired a world-class biogeographer, Prof. Scott St. George (Ph.D. Arizona), who joins us this summer. We also hope to search for one of two positions in urban and health geography this coming year.

The department continues to flourish. We currently have 68 doctoral and master’s students in geography, 55 MGIS students, 130 geography undergraduates, 87 urban studies majors, and 435 BSE majors. Thus our collective enrollment is over 775, which put us in good stead. Thanks to the generosity of Profs. Fred and Barbara Lukermann we have established a fellowship/scholarship for students, and we are in the process of launching another fellowship carrying the name of Prof. John S. Adams. Despite retiring several years ago, John continues to put his time and talent at the disposal of department, the university and the community. We are deeply grateful to John for his devotion to geography and the civic fabric of our communities.

We relish your ideas and support and would appreciate it a great deal if you can keep in touch with us by telling us about your own milestones, your accomplishments, and how to best keep you informed about the department and the Minnesota geography family. We wish you a wonderful and rewarding year.

Nabad Gelyo (peace).
Abdi Samatar, Chair

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A Life in Full

by Tim Brady, CLA

With his full head of silver hair swept back from his brow, and his ever-present bowtie worn over a crisp white dress shirt, John Fraser Hart is obviously a man who knows a thing or two about sartorial effect. It’s safe to say, however, that he doesn’t give a fig for fashion. After teaching in the Department of Geography at the University of Minnesota for forty years, Hart has earned the right to do things in his own style, and that’s precisely what he does.

The results have been impressive, to say the least. Hart has long been one of the most esteemed professors of geography in the country. The author of more than a dozen books and 250-plus articles, Hart is a past president of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) and the only geographer to present papers at both the 50th and 100th anniversaries of the AAG.

At 86 years old, John Fraser Hart still lectures at the University of Minnesota on the geography of the United States and Canada—a course he’s been teaching since shortly after his arrival at the U in 1967. Since he has always lectured to large classes, and for most of his career on the quarter system, Hart estimates that as many as 40,000 students have attended his classes over the years; and he doubts that any other professor on campus can claim as many.

Hart has not been swayed by the modern era of digitized maps and images. Since 1972, his U.S. and Canada lectures have been illustrated with his own slides: 85 to 100 per lecture; four to five thousand images in total, all taken by him. “Slides are like toothbrushes,” he says. “You don’t want to use someone else’s.”

While it would be easy to assume that Hart is slowing down in his ninth decade, instead he fully intends to present a paper at the 150th anniversary of the AAG. Since the turn of the millennium, Hart has published a study of the
Ringing in the Old

Tucked away in a ground floor corner of the Social Science Tower on the West Bank of the University of Minnesota is a lab filled with sticks—core samples of trees—stored in file drawers against a wall and resting, with an assortment of microscopes and an imaging system, on a large work table in the center of the room. These dowel-shaped bores have been drilled from a variety of forests in North America, polished to a sheen, and range in length from the radius of a very large oak to the more modest-sized, but older, whitebark pines. Some of the samples are ancient and some merely old, but all are beautiful in their symmetry. Plainly evident along the length of the bores, the tree rings tell a story of place, time, and climate that not only recall past ecological events, but hint at what the future may hold for the forests of North America.

Kurt Kipfmueller is as at home here, in the U's Dendroecology Laboratory, as he is in the landscapes from which many of these samples have been culled. Kipfmueller, assistant professor in the Department of Geography, arrived in Minnesota in 2003 by way of the University of Arizona, where his studies in dendrochronology—the science of tree-ring analysis—led to his studies in geography and dendroecology, in which he applies his work to research on climate change and the reconstruction of historic eco-systems in the mountains of the western United States.

Kipfmueller's doctoral studies took him to the forests of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area in Idaho and Montana, where he worked in high elevation ecosystems where disturbances are infrequent. The lack of catastrophic damage to the trees makes for lengthy tree ring samples—the better to examine climate change over extended periods of time. During his dissertation work, Kipfmueller dated more than 2,000 trees, mostly subalpine larch and whitebark pine, the species that were the focus of his research. In the process of collecting all these bores, Kipfmueller sampled the oldest known whitebark pine in the world, a tree dated precisely back to 721 A.D.

The heart of Kipfmueller's studies, however, revolved around what he calls "the dendrochronology trifecta": I was reconstructing disturbance patterns using fire-scarred trees; reconstructing climates by examining ringlets from high elevation trees; and reconstructing vegetation patterns by measuring birth and death rates within a given stand. Essentially, Kipfmueller says, "I was coring everything. Taking samples from hundreds of trees at a time—800 for the climate study alone."

Each of those samples tells a long story of drought and disturbance—years of good growth and bad. Taken together, they create a history of climate that extends back to well before the years of weather recordkeeping. "Every summer since I moved here," says Kipfmueller, "I've been up in the Boundary Waters collecting core samples from trees to reconstruct climate. The development of these growth rings—the markers of this reconstruction—sort of serves a couple of purposes: on the one hand, it provides a record of climate variability, which allows us to look at how particular aspects of the climate have varied at time scales predating the historical record; it also places the last 100 years of record-keeping in a longer term context. It enables other studies to build off of the record from those years."

By comparing tree ring samples of both living and dead specimens through this matching of their shared climate history, researchers are able to extend their knowledge of climate patterns beyond the age of the samples. This method, called overlapping, allows one of Kipfmueller's subalpine larch chronologies, for instance, to extend all the way back to 12 A.D. Dendrochronology thus helps paint lengthier portraits of changing ecologies and geographies than is told in one given tree ring sample; it also reveals long-term patterns that help predict climate changes and, consequently, the future of the forests and landscapes from which these samples come.

Born and raised in Michigan, Kipfmueller developed an early appreciation for the woods through summer visits to a collection of family cottages in the upper reaches of the state. He was one of eight siblings, and the Kipfmueller clan spent its vacations blazing trails through the state forest that surrounded the property. "The cones of a whitebark pine don't open on their own, and they don't open with fire," says Larson. "The pines have really big seeds, which have food value. The beak of a Clark's Nutcracker just happens to be perfectly shaped to reach into the cone and pluck out the seeds, which the birds then bury in a food cache. They bury the seeds at just the perfect depth for these seeds to germinate. The seeds that don't get eaten by the birds grow up to be the next generation of whitebark pines."

Larson, who did his geography graduate work under advisor Kurt Kipfmueller, grew up in Milaca, Minnesota, on the edge of the Rum River State Forest, where he learned early to appreciate the woods and wilds. He went off to Willamette College in Oregon intent on playing football, but found out he preferred camping in the northwestern woods to scrimmaging on the field. Larson quit football and concentrated instead on his environmental sciences studies. During a summer research program in central Oregon, he examined the fire history of a stand of ponderosa pine and presented a paper on the topic at the 2002 Association of American Geographer's meeting.

On the strength of that report, Larson was recruited to study in the master's program at the University of Tennessee in biogeography and dendrochronology. While studying in Knoxville, he wound up back west doing field work, this time in Montana, where he began his whitebark pine research.

It was through these studies that Larson discovered Kipfmueller's work. Kipfmueller had been studying subalpine larch and whitebark pine in forests near where Larson was doing his own studies. Larson e-mailed him with some questions...
Department Overview

The Most Challenging Higher Education Environment in Recent Memory

CURRENT FACTS AND TRENDS

A major planning effort is underway at the University. This effort was triggered by serious financial challenges, but it also provides a powerful stimulus to examine our overall operation.

State funding for post-secondary education will not increase in real terms in the First World (and in Minnesota) in coming years; in fact, it may decline in current dollars. But costs of operating our colleges and universities will continue to increase at rates exceeding inflation if current structures remain in place and present trends continue.

• Undergraduate tuition has become an increasingly vital element of university finance.
• Development and philanthropy have become increasingly important.

Meanwhile American academia faces increasing competition.

• Governments in the Global South are investing heavily in post-secondary education, but largely for vocational goals.
• Proprietary schools (e.g., Cappella and University of Phoenix) are expanding rapidly, especially in online, low-cost undergraduate education, and in undergraduate and post-graduate vocational and career training.

Universities in the West will no longer be rationalized as contributing to national/territorial culture, but rather in terms of their global competitiveness in markets for new knowledge.

• Universities will increasingly be valued in terms of their ability to "commodify" (i.e., market and sell) their product (i.e., knowledge), while contributing economic value to society.
• University educational workforces will increasingly be segmented into long-term tenured professors, temporary instructors, and student assistants, with the second two often substituting for the first as a means both to achieve flexibility in what is taught and to lower the cost of instruction.

University enrollments may not increase from today’s level for at least decade, and when they do the student body will be different: increasingly composed of diverse new immigrant populations.

• High school graduation rates nationally and statewide continue to slide, eroding the size of the cohort of students prepared for post-secondary schooling.
• If K-12 schooling were to improve, and graduation rates were to rise, the size of the college-going cohort might rise, but present trends are discouraging.

Geography, along with other liberal arts disciplines, is threatened in this environment:

• Programs must show that they contribute something invaluable to the University mission.
• Departments must be well led and well managed.
• Departments must retain the presence and commitment of their most reputable faculty members.

The University of Minnesota—along with state and local governments generally—is in a long-term structural financial squeeze, with a "cliff" anticipated in 2011.

• The present plan is to reduce the scope of University activities, and redirect resources saved to a few "global elite" learning centers.
• The College of Liberal Arts has suspended its strategic planning initiatives, and has lost control over vacant positions to the Provost.

In September 2010, the Geography Department will be between two and six faculty positions (10-30%) below the 21 Geography faculty lines occupied in recent years; this is the worst time to be short, because chances of regaining “full strength” in the near future are small.

SOME CENTRAL CHALLENGES

Like several other professions—e.g., medical and hospital care, legal services and the courts, government at all levels, banking, casualty insurance and financial services, K-12 schools—higher education is coming under increasing public scrutiny. Questions are being raised about what we do, what we don't do, how we operate, and why we cost so much. Complicating the debates over how to respond to the challenges about mission, organization, leadership and budgets, experts and citizenry alike find it difficult to agree on what should comprise "general education" in the 21st century.

In a recent book (The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University, Norton, 2010) Harvard English professor Louis Menand argues that it’s hard to provide a general collegiate education curriculum because top American universities usually insist that liberal-arts education and professional education should be kept separate, and taught in different colleges or schools. And to make matters worse, he continues, besides professionalizing the various professions by this separation, top universities have professionalized the professors themselves, as externally funded research has exploded and teaching responsibilities have declined.

For several decades, our Geography Department straddled this divide between our contributions to the University’s undergraduate liberal arts curriculum, while at the same time providing professional training at all levels, from the Bachelor’s to the PhD. But it’s getting harder to meet the diverse demands placed on our faculty and staff, which is forcing the Geography faculty to think in fresh ways about how to meet our mission in new and more efficient ways.

THE DEPARTMENT’S FUTURE: SOME GUIDING THOUGHTS

We believe that the department should not reduce its present scope of activity in teaching, research and outreach/public engagement.

• The department’s breadth of topic and approach is its distinctive niche within the academy.

However, the department must re-conceptualize and capitalize on its de facto scope.

• Boundaries separating subfields should become more porous.

• The implicit hierarchy separating “core” undergraduate and graduate Geography degree programs (BA, BS, MA, PhD), from what have been seen as “peripheral” degree programs in the department—i.e., Urban Studies (BA, BS), Biology, Society & Environment (BES), and Master’s of Geographic Information Science (MGIS)—should be broken down.

We should begin to think of ourselves and promote our collective enterprise as a School of Geographical Studies, offering a range of “geographical” degree programs meeting different needs, rather than a Department of Geography with a few adjacent or peripheral programs.

To move along this path would mean:

• we would have over 600 total majors in all undergraduate programs—vs. about 130 in geography alone—making the School of Geographical Studies one of the largest contributors to undergraduate education in the College of Liberal Arts;
• maintenance of the various degree programs would become a departmental rather than an individual responsibility;
• each degree program would have core courses regularly taught by our faculty; and
• overlaps in course content between different classes listed under various degree requirements could be reduced, with student movement between the degree tracks encouraged, and efficiencies achieved in offering courses.

Bottom line—the next decade for our University, college and department will be challenging, and sharply different from the past. Depending on how we respond to these challenges, the future can be bright indeed.
Ralph Hall Brown Day 2010

Ralph Brown taught in our Geography Department from 1929 to 1948 and was Fred Lukermann’s favorite and most influential teacher.

We have dedicated Ralph H. Brown Day 2010 (April 23) to Fred, with a panel discussion of Fred’s work and his intellectual legacy. Panel members include four department alumni, who are among the 21 Ph.D. students Fred advised: Trevor J. Barnes (Ph.D. 1983), University of British Columbia, Robert D. Seck (Ph.D. 1970), University of Wisconsin, Theano Terkenli (Ph.D. 1993), University of the Aegean, and panel chair John S. Adams (Ph.D. 1966), Fred’s first Ph.D. student.

Ralph Hall Brown Day 2009 featured Dr. Karl S. Zimmerer, Professor and Head of the Department of Geography, Pennsylvania State University, on “Environment or Nature-Society?—Geographic Trends and Trajectories.”

Among the honorees were:

Senior Paper award winner (for papers completed calendar year 2008) - $100 cash prize: John Dewey. His paper is titled: “Imagining North Korea’s Collapse: Problematic Conceptions of Labor Mobility in Korean Reunification Discourse”

Outstanding graduating senior winners - $100 cash prize: Aaron Knoll and April Rog

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) grant winners for the past year:

Matthew Jacobson working with Kurt Kipfmuller on a project titled: “A Comparative Analysis of Tree Ring Measurement Techniques”

Steven Malech working with Kathy Klink on a project titled: “Snow Effects on the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Urban Heat Island”

GIS/LIS scholarship and paper award winner (in October 2008): Jeremy Moore

Winner of the undergraduate student poster competition at the 2008 North American Cartographic Information Society conference in Missoula, Montana: Mehmet Berker

Geography Endowment and Development

Over the years, faculty, alumni, students, staff, and friends of the Department of Geography have established a series of endowment funds, proceeds from which have supported our students and a range of student activities as they pursue their degree objectives. Currently there are seven funds managed by the University of Minnesota Foundation, each with donor-designated purposes:

#6385: John S. Adams Scholarship
To provide financial assistance to undergraduate students majoring in Geography and/or Urban Studies at the University of Minnesota.

#2308: Ralph Hall Brown Fund
Will support and encourage graduate and undergraduate research and study in Geography at the University of Minnesota. Specific means of accomplishing the mission are reviewed and may be altered by the faculty members.

#2507: Darrell Haug Davis Memorial Fellowship
Income to be used for a graduate fellowship or scholarship, for a publication prize for graduate publication and/or research, or for similar graduate grants established in the future. Designation of use among the options listed and of the recipients is to be made by the Chair of the Geography Department.

#6063: Department of Geography Alumni, Faculty, and Friends Graduate Fellowship Fund
This endowed graduate research fund is designed to recruit exceptional candidates seeking a Ph.D. in geography. Recipients of the fellowship will work closely with a geography faculty mentor in their intended field of concentration throughout their course of study at the University of Minnesota.

#6701: Abler Adams Palm Geography Field Research Fellowship
To provide support for field research projects by graduate students pursuing their M.A. and Ph.D. in Geography, for a full-time graduate student who submits a field-research proposal and budget. To be used for payment of field research expenses that contribute to the successful completion of the degree program.

#6737: Fred and Barbara Lukermann Geography Fellowship
To provide fellowships to full-time graduate students according to the following guidelines:

The Brown and Davis funds were established in the 1950s and 1960s from the estates of faculty members Ralph Brown and Darrell Davis. Later funds (6063, 6701, 6737) were established during recent University capital campaigns. Barbara’s name was added to the Lukermann Fund upon her death. The newest fund is the John S. Adams Scholarship, established on the occasion of his official retirement from the University. This is the first award of its kind offered specifically to undergraduates in Geography and Urban Studies. After these funds reach $25,000, their annual earnings are matched by the University’s “21st-Century Fund.”

The funds are supplemented each year by a flow of contributions from faculty, alumni, and friends. Contributions arrive throughout the year and are added to funds specified by the donors. If no fund is specified, the money is added to the Brown Fund.

A 9-month, half-time graduate student fellowship pays $9,000, and the rest pays tuition, fees, and health-care insurance. Typical summer field-research awards run between $2,500 and $4,000, and yield great impact on the quality of students’ thesis and dissertation work, and in speeding up progress toward degree goals.

During fiscal year 2010, the total principal in the funds (down about 22 percent in Fiscal Year 2009, but recovered in part since then) was about $1.4 million. In recent years, the endowments collectively have yielded about $70,000 per year to support students, their programs, and the Map Library.
Barbara Louise (Fenton) Lukermann died on 23 March 2009 at the age of 79, after a 6-month battle with lung cancer. Barbara grew up in England and entered the Master’s program in the Department of Geography in the early 1950s, following her graduation with First-Class Honors from the University of Cambridge. She worked as a research assistant with John Weaver who taught in the department from 1946 to 1955, and subsequently married Fred, who was a full-time instructor in the department.

Nepotism rules at the University in those days dictated that Barbara had no chance to become a full-time instructor on the faculty, so she completed her Master’s degree and entered the city and regional planning profession, where she excelled. (Incidentally, the same nepotism rule prevented Hildegard Binder Johnson from being hired at the University when her husband, Palmer Johnson, took a position teaching statistics at the University. Hildegard subsequently led the Geography Department at Macalester College for many years.)

Until the University’s Master’s program in planning was established in the School of Public Affairs in the 1970s, the Master’s degree program in Geography served for many graduate students—especially those studying with John Borchert—as the University’s de facto planning program. Barbara was much loved for her devotion to her community and to her students. From 1982 to 2008, she was a Senior Fellow and faculty member in the Humphrey Institute’s Master’s in Planning Program. She also was Senior Research Associate with the University’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). She chaired the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission, was a board member of the St. Paul District Energy utility, and was President of the Citizens League.

Retired colleague Philip W. Porter submitted the following, which was read at Barbara’s memorial service:

“Pat and I live six months of the year (November through April) at a continuing care retirement community in Hanover, NH, and from May through October at Lake Sunapee, NH. It was only by chance that we visited the Sunapee cottage on Friday, April 10th, and I first learned, in a message from Carla, the sad news about Barbara. Oddly enough, a few minutes later in going through a file, I came across a limerick I had written for Barbara many decades ago on the occasion of her becoming a Metropolitan Waste Control Commissioner, at a time when there were serious problems with the St. Paul stockyards and runoff near Pigs Eye. I thought those gathered to celebrate the remarkable life of this cherished friend and valued colleague might like to hear it.

The newly appointed commissioner, For sewers told every parishioner. Re: Pigs Eye effulgence. We crave your indulgence. Perhaps next year’s rain will conditioner.”

Fred E. Lukermann, Jr., passed away on September 1, 2009. He fell, breaking several ribs, while returning home from his beloved cabin on Lake Vermilion, and subsequently suffered a series of strokes. A Minneapolis native, born December 9, 1921, Fred graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1940 and entered the University of Minnesota the following fall. After U.S. Army service in the Medical Corps, he returned to the University, earning his Bachelor’s, Master’s, and eventually his Ph.D. (1997).

Fred joined the Geography faculty in the early 1950s as an instructor, and was an intellectual leader as the department steadily achieved national and international eminence. He nurtured a pervasive spirit of wide-ranging and creative intellectual inquiry within the department and became well known across the University.

Over the years Fred assumed several leadership and administrative roles at the University: chair of the Department of Geography (1964-66; 1977-78); Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) (1966-67); Assistant Vice President for Academic Administration (1967-73); and Dean of CLA (1978-89). Fred was instrumental in establishing the Departments of African American & African Studies, American Indian Studies, Chicano Studies, the Urban Studies Program, the School of Public Affairs (later renamed the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs), and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. He retired in 1992.

Along with his inspired teaching, generous advising of graduate students and creative scholarly output, Fred pursued a life-long interest in proto-geography in Classical Greece, in the development of modern geographic thought and practice within the history of science, in the historical geography of North America, and in cultural pluralism.

Fred was preceded in death by his wife Barbara, his son Bruno, his parents (Fred E. Lukermann and Swedish-born Amy Regina Portensia (Anderson) Lukermann), and is survived by a sister, daughters Carla Lukermann and Kathryn (Warren) Praisance, and grandsons William and Eric Praisance.

Among the tributes to Fred submitted for his memorial service were the following:

Former student, Deborah G. Martin, now on the faculty at Clark University, wrote:

“I have been remiss in a million ways, but I wanted to let you all know how sad I was to hear of Fred’s death, and that I’m sorry I can’t be at the memorial but am thinking of him.

I wish I could physically be there to join you all in sharing our sadness and condolences about Fred. But I too share in the joy and celebration of his long life. I came to Minnesota Geography for graduate study right at the time of Fred’s retirement, but that meant that I was able to participate

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Fred and Barbara

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in three seminars with him (!): one historical proseminar co-taught by Fred and Roger Miller ..., and two directed readings on "hermeneutics" with graduate-student peers including Bill Lynn, Paul Pheter, and Paul Roebuck. Fred had a tremendous impact on my intellectual growth at Minnesota, and I frequently invoke him to graduate students here at Clark. His knowledge of the discipline and of philosophy has influenced how I teach all of my courses, especially my graduate courses. I recall countless times that in class or just standing at the desk in the main office, Fred would make a comment or ask a question that would pique my interest, challenge and stretch my brain (sometimes that would make me feel as though my brain were going to explode!). He embodied the engagement and questioning that the doctorate of philosophy in our discipline represents. He was a kind and thoughtful mentor. I write now to celebrate that inspiration, and to say, "Thanks Fred!"

Former University President Kenneth H. Keller submitted the following:

"Fred Lukermann was a large man who was always in search of large ideas. He was a true scholar, constantly looking for generalizations, patterns, meta-structures. He certainly helped me to see the richness and multi-disciplinary nature of geography, but his world was not limited to that one field.

It was ideas that fascinated him. When he and I had formal meetings, he as Dean of CLA and I as Academic Vice President, to talk about budgets, it was Roger Benjamin, his Associate Dean, who dealt with the numbers; Fred wanted to talk about the essence of liberal education, the role of a public university.

When I visited him last spring, it was only a few moments after our initial greetings that the familiar words came out, "What do you think about...?"

Fred personified the soul of the University as I like to think of it. He was also my friend for more than 30 years and the person who most influenced my own decision to take on administrative roles. His passing marks the end of an era."

Ward J. Barrett

Ward was born on 11 August 1927, in Jersey City, New Jersey, and died of kidney failure on 13 June, 2007, in Minneapolis. He grew up in Suffern, NY, was a WWII veteran (Navy), received his B.A. (1948) and M.A. (1949) from Columbia University, and Ph.D. (1959) from UC-Berkeley. He joined the University of Minnesota geography faculty upon completing his doctorate, and spent his academic career at Minnesota, chairing the geography department, 1971-74.

Following a departmental tradition established by Darrell Haug Davis, and continued by John Borchart, Ward taught his introductory physical geography course as a course on natural resources, and published the Manual for the Geography of Natural Resources (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1963). His upper-division and graduate courses focused on Latin America and Oceania.

Ward was an expert on the Spanish colonial economy in Mexico and published two well-received monographs on his research specialty: The Sugar Hacienda of the Marqueses del Valle (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970); and The Efficient Plantation and the Inefficient Hacienda (Minneapolis: The Associates of the James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota, 1979).

Mei-ling Hsu

Mei-ling Hsu passed away on 23 May 2009 in Taiwan, following a long illness. Born in 1932, she received her B.A. from Taiwan Normal University (1954), M.A. from Southern Illinois (1956), and M.A. (1959) and Ph.D. (1966) from the University of Wisconsin. She came to the University in 1962 as Director of the Geography Department's Cartographic Research Laboratory, and joined the faculty in 1965.

As a student of Arthur Robinson and others at Wisconsin, Mei-ling became a superb cartographer, with additional specialties in population geography, quantitative methods and geographic information systems, East Asian studies and the history of cartography.


Mei-ling served as chair of the department from 1994 to 1997. She chaired the East Asian Studies Program at the University, 1979-80, and then served as the first director of the University's highly successful China Center from 1980 to 1985.

John Graham Rice

John was born 16 April 1934 and taught in the Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, from 1966 until his retirement in December 1999. Previously, he held positions at the University of Manitoba, Gustavus Adolphus College, the Library of Congress, and the University of Pennsylvania. He was also a visiting professor at the University of Umea, in Sweden, in the academic year 1971-72. He died of cancer 17 February 2007.

John's gifts were many. He was a superb and popular teacher. He came from a humanistic tradition and infused his courses with rich historical and cultural detail. He wrote with remarkable clarity and grace. His ability to master foreign languages was uncanny. Hans Aldskogius, of the University of Uppsala, where John earned his doctorate, commented on the amazing speed with which he learned Swedish, but he also had a fair to excellent command also of Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, German, Spanish and French. Outside academia, John was an avid traveler, concert-goer, cook and gardener, as well as a voracious reader.

John's topical specialties in geography were human and population geography. But most of his associates remember him for his regional interests, foremost among which was Norden. From 1985 to 1988 he chaired Minnesota's Department of Scandinavian Studies. His former colleague there and later University President, Nils Hasselmo, commented fondly on their close association. John also taught courses on Europe, the British Isles, the Celtic lands, and the Soviet Union. His 2004 text, The Europeans, co-authored with his former student, Robert Ostergren, University of Wisconsin, won high praise and quickly went into a second edition.

From among the letters received from John's former colleagues and students, the trait most frequently mentioned was his generosity. His friends have warm memories of his gracious hospitality at Swedish-style dinner parties he often hosted. In recalling these events, Robert Sack requested his readers to imagine John's guests "lifting a glass of akvavit, taking a sip, and lowering it to the center of [their] chests over the heart, at the spot of the third button on the Swedish military uniform, and saying, 'Skol, John.'"
Faculty News

Retired Faculty

John Adams retired in 2007 and then worked part-time with Judith Martin as co-director of the University Metropolitan Consortium through Spring 2010. He also served as interim associate dean for academic programs in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 2007-08. Helen and Dwight Brown live in Falcon Heights. Pat and Phil Porter spend winter months at a continuing care retirement community in Hanover, NH, and summer at the old homestead at Lake Sunapee, NH. Rebecca and Earl Scott divide their time between the Twin Cities and Arizona, where it's warm in winter. Mary Jo and Dick Skaggs remain in Roseville. After Bob McMaster was appointed vice provost and dean of undergraduate education, Dick helped manage the Master’s Program in GIS on a part-time basis.

John Webb and wife Judith returned to Minnesota following John’s retirement from his deanship at SUNY Albany. They live in St. Cloud. Russ Adams is in failing health and in a nursing home in Minneapolis. He is visited regularly by Joe Schwartzberg.

Joe is in the Emeritus Faculty office in the department most days, continuing his work on a variety of projects focused on world affairs and the United Nations. In 2009, he received the All-University Award for Global Engagement, given to faculty and staff members — active or retired — in recognition of outstanding contributions to global education and international programs in their field, discipline, or the University.

Connie Weil is on phased retirement until January 2011, and divides her time between the Twin Cities and Costa Rica. Phil Gersmehl retired in May 2009. He and wife Carol had been working on curriculum development with the New York Public Schools in Harlem. This year, Phil is spending time at Western Michigan University with Joseph Stoltman and the Michigan Geographic Alliance (MGA), working in partnership with the New York Center for Geographic Learning, which Phil and Carol established at Hunter College.

Eric S. Sheppard

Eric was awarded a Regents Professorship in 2009, the University’s most prestigious award for faculty members. The award recognized Eric’s outstanding record of scholarship, teaching and advising, and service to the University and to the geography profession nationally and internationally.

In spring 2010 he agreed to serve as Co-Director, with Dr. Karen Brown, of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change (ICGC) effective June 2010, following an internal search process. Eric and Brown, as Co-Directors, will replace Regents Professor Allen Isaacman, who is stepping down in June as ICGC Director after 20 years of distinguished leadership to ICGC.

Eric was involved with ICGC for many years, serving as Associate Director and chairing or serving on ICGC and other international committees. He has worked extensively across colleges and units, notably with programs in the College of Liberal Arts, the Center for Transportation Studies, and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Under the leadership of Sheppard and Brown the ICGC will continue to play a critical role as a catalyst for international research and education on our campus, working with the Office of International Programs. The ICGC’s focus on interdisciplinary and global scholarship includes the continuing ICGC Scholars fellowship program that has supported and trained more than 300 outstanding graduate students in the social sciences, natural sciences and humanities. From the beginning of the scholars program, our Geography Department has been a major participant.

In collaboration with the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, the ICGC has also recently launched a new Master of Development Practice program with several partner academic units, again including Geography.

Kudos

Helga Leitner was recognized for excellence in teaching and advising by receiving the 2008-09 Award for Outstanding Contributions to Post-baccalaureate, Graduate, and Professional Education.

This annual all-University award recognizes the significance of excellent teaching by inducting the award recipients into the Academy of Distinguished Teachers.

Academy members provide important leadership to the University community, serving as mentors, advisers, and spokespersons for the University’s mission.

Judith A. Martin received the 2009 University of Minnesota President’s Award for Outstanding Service.

This all-University award was established in 1997 to recognize faculty and staff who have provided exceptional service to the University, this award is presented each year in the spring.

It honors active or retired faculty or staff members who have gone well beyond their regular duties and have demonstrated an unusual commitment to the University community.

Selected Faculty and Student Publications


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New Faculty

K. Valentine Cadieux

joined the Geography faculty as a Postdoctoral Associate in 2008 following studies at Harvard/Radcliffe (A.B. 1998), and Toronto (M.A. 2001, Ph.D. 2006), and was a Yale Agrarian Studies Visiting Fellow (2006-08). Valentine works on the cultural geography of land-use change and the politics of environmental decision-making, particularly at intersections of urbanization, environmental policy, and food systems and agriculture activism. Her recent projects have explored land use and ideology as understood through everyday material, representational, and social practices that produce urban “working” landscapes. Her current keyword list includes concepts of landscape, nature, modern pastors, subsistence politics, critical evaluation, praxis, knowledge production around green infrastructure, and epistemological issues involved in studies of nature-society relations.

Robert Edsall

joined the Geography faculty in 2008. He studied at Kenyon College (Music, B.A., 1991), and Penn State (Meteorology, M.S., 1995; Geography, 2001), then taught at Arizona State prior to coming to Minnesota. Rob is a cartographer working on human, cognitive, societal, and technological aspects of geographic visualization and geovisual analytics. Most of his research and publications deal with issues of human interaction with representations of geographic phenomena. Here at Minnesota, he is supervising research projects on the creation of novel interaction modes and media with the GeoWall, the development of Web-based experiments in dynamic multimedia cartography, and the review and evaluation of the potential to incorporate active learning exercises in large-lecture settings. Current work focuses on theories and applications of sound and music to maps and interfaces, on explorations of the authority vested in maps by science and the public, and questions of culturally specific connotations of interface and cartographic elements.

R. Scott St. George

joins the Geography faculty in fall 2010 from the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC). He completed his studies at the University of Winnipeg (Geography, B.S., 1995), University of Western Ontario (Geography, M.S., 1998), and the University of Arizona (Geosciences, Ph.D., 2007), and recently was Project Leader for Paleoenvironmental Records of Climate Change, in the Climate Change Geoscience Program of GSC at Natural Resources Canada. Scott studies environmental variability at timescales that range from several weeks to hundreds of years, with the goal of producing scientific information that addresses the needs of decision-makers responsible for water supplies, renewable energy and natural hazards. He has worked with researchers from diverse of backgrounds, including geographers, geologists, archaeologists, botanists, and engineers, and values the opportunity to examine topics that cross disciplinary boundaries. His research approach is problem-based, and focuses on producing knowledge that makes communities safer and more resilient to climate and environmental change.

Brenda Kayzar

joined the Geography faculty in 2007. She completed her M.A. in Geography (2001) at San Diego State University. She continued her studies with Dr. Larry Ford as her main advisor in the Joint Doctoral Program at San Diego State/UC-Santa Barbara (Ph.D., 2007). Brenda teaches graduate courses in Geography and undergraduate courses in the Urban Studies Program. As an urban geographer her interests stem from a desire to comprehend the economic, political, and social aspects of urban change. Issues related to revitalization efforts in central cities have been at the core of her most recent work, in which she examined the impact of policy on downtown redevelopment. Two current projects focus more specifically on how perception and expectation shape resident behavior in mixed-use, post-industrial landscapes, and the role arts and culture are encouraged or expected to play in the revitalization process. Her interests also encompass issues related to housing provision. In a recent McKnight Foundation-funded project she asks: what do foreclosures in peripheral communities tell us about the soundness of long-range plans, and how might planners re-envision long-range goals in light of shorter-term market and demographic shifts?

Former Faculty

Larry Knopp, former Professor of Geography and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, left the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 2009 and moved to a position as Director of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences at the University of Washington, Tacoma. He writes: “It’s been a real pleasure being a part of the Geography Department “extended family” for the past 20 years, including as Adjunct Professor for the past 15. Our connection has been a crucial lifeline for me, even if I didn’t get down from Duluth to see you all very often in recent years. I wish I could have been at Brown Day in 2009 to say an “official” goodbye, but it just wasn’t possible.

Since moving to the Graduate School 2-1/2 years ago my visits were so rare that I never really got to know some of the newer faculty, staff, and students at all. But the connection to all of you has remained a terribly important constant in my professional and personal life, regardless of the frequency (or recency) of my visits. It’s something I will miss a great deal. I hope we can stay in touch despite the greater distance and lack of common institutional affiliation. In the meantime, thanks to EVERYONE for the warm welcome and strong support that you have shown me over the years. It’s been a privilege. With all best wishes.”

Bryan Shuman

took a position in the Department of Geology & Geophysics at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, where his wife Cynthia Weing accepted a position in the Department of Botany.

Karen E. Till

left the University in 2010. She has been teaching in the Department of Urban Affairs & Planning at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Virginia Tech is the state’s land grant state university.

Yi-fu Tuan

retired from the University of Wisconsin, and continues to live in Madison.
The MGIS program: approaching fifteen years of foresight and success...

by Tim Brady, CLA

Fifteen years ago, the letters G-I-S held no great meaning to most of the world beyond academia. Even for those who had some clue about the nature of geographic information science, the study was a relatively new phenomenon, though its myriad functions and usefulness were fast emerging. As a major urban area with a number of industries, educational entities, and state agencies interested in GIS applications, the Twin Cities had a burgeoning need for professionals who understood its workings and possibilities. It also had (and has) one of the outstanding departments of geography in the country at the University of Minnesota.

From that mix of needs and circumstances emerged one of the first master of geographic information science programs in the nation—a professional master’s degree program that offers its students a comprehensive education in the theoretical, technical, and applicatory aspects of geographic information science in a two-year course of study. As it approaches its fifteenth anniversary, the University’s MGIS program remains today one of the best of its kind anywhere.

"It has been a happy surprise," says Robert McMaster, one of the first co-directors at MGIS. "We thought at the start that it would be a great local program, but not only has it served the regional needs that we knew it could, it has grown into a national and even international program."

"This program was really ahead of the curve," says Steve Manson, associate professor of geography. "We’re celebrating the program’s success even as GIS is still taking off as a science."

The successes of MGIS have been built upon terrific faculty work and the program’s setting in a community rich with opportunities for partnerships and symbiotic relationships. Though MGIS has been housed in the Department of Geography since its inception, it’s doubtful that there are many programs with wider applications and linkages throughout the University and the Twin Cities community.

The usefulness of geographic information science has exploded in fields that range from marketing to environmental science; from tracking consumer preferences to studying the range of wolf habitats; from tracking health issues like the geographic distribution of teenage smoking to creating future hurricane evacuation routes from cities along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. To meet such diverse interests and needs, MGIS has an interdisciplinary sweep that includes classes housed in a number of University departments, including forest resources; soil, water and climate; computer science; and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), as well as geography. It’s not surprising then that graduates of the programs have been employed in a potpourri of businesses and institutions that include CenterPoint Energy, Target, the National Weather Service, the U. S. Forest Service, and the Tax Assessor’s Office of the City of Bloomington, to name just a few.

"The majority of our graduates really don't have any problem finding a job," says Susanna McMaster, who as associate director of MGIS oversees the day-to-day operations of the program. "A lot of them come to MGIS from the world of work, looking to enhance their careers with a GIS degree. Many already have a pretty good idea of what they would like to do once they have completed their studies here."

The MGIS program at the U not only provides assistance to students looking to boost their job prospects, it also broadens horizons. "A lot of master’s programs are very focused," says MGIS faculty member Mark Lindberg. "Students come in and have a pretty prescribed curriculum. Ours is not like that. We get a lot of students from varied backgrounds, who are looking to use GIS as support for a really wide variety of professional pursuits. Our strength is our flexibility."

As the number of MGIS degree programs at U.S. colleges and universities grows—including online—competition for students has escalated. Marketing the U of M program on a limited budget remains a challenge, and the faculty is often stretched thin; but the solid foundation of MGIS at the U—its ties and access to the rest of the University and the public and private sectors of the greater community—continue to be great assets.

"We’re aided by the students who come through here," says Lindberg. "When we put 30 or 40 graduates out [in the community] with our degrees, they promote the program better than anyone else could. We not only have former students hiring current students, they’re also encouraging people with an interest in GIS to look at what we have to offer."

There have typically been about 65 students in the program at any given time. MGIS is not only a self-supporting program: its students provide research assistance to a number of departments; and through...
GRADUATE STUDENT ADMISSIONS

In the past four years, our graduate enrollments dropped sharply as the Graduate School required all Ph.D. programs to offer longer-term support to those admitted. This policy responds to certain programs, for example in the humanities and history, which compete with wealthy private research universities that offer top applicants long-term financial support and other benefits.

This policy frustrates many programs in the sciences and engineering, which have competed well using various forms of graduate-student support, and it caused difficulties for geography because most of our main competitors for top candidates are other major public research universities like Penn State, UCLA, Berkeley, Washington, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Toronto, and UBC.

Our M.A. enrollments dropped from 37 in fall 2006 to 15 in fall 2009. Our Ph.D. enrollments fell from 81 in fall 2006 to 54 in fall 2008. In sum, total graduate enrollments fell from 118 to 69. The drop has meant an occasional shortage of available graduate students to serve as teaching and research assistants because our undergraduate enrollments remain robust, and our faculty have been successful in obtaining external grants and contracts, which employ our graduate students. The drop in our graduate-student population also has meant that, with our wide range of specialties, it is harder to populate some of our advanced graduate courses and seminars. The University recently appointed a new Dean of the Graduate School, and we are working to adjust current policies to reflect the different circumstances facing each of our graduate programs.

DEGREES AWARDED AND PLACEMENTS

In the past four academic years (July 2006-June 2010), we will have awarded 28 M.A. degrees and 44 Ph.D.s., an excellent record. The stature of a graduate program correlates highly with the number of doctoral students completing their studies and successfully employed. In addition, the continuing strength of our M.A. and M.G.I.S. programs complements the vigor of our Ph.D.

Unlike doctoral programs in certain other fields, the demand for top-quality geography Ph.D.s remains strong. In the 2006-07 academic year our newly minted Ph.D.s found positions at UW-Milwaukee, St. Mary's University, Syracuse University, University of Colorado-Denver, San Francisco State, University of Hong Kong, Miami University (OH), College of Charleston, and the University of Singapore. In addition, we continued our long-standing tradition of placing top graduates in government and the private sector. One is senior editor and acquisition editor for the American Planning Association, one is workforce manager, City of Minneapolis Employment and Training, and one is a GIS/IT specialist in Pierce County, Washington.

In the past three academic years, Ph.D. graduates were appointed at Middle Tennessee State University, University of Dar es Salaam, York University, University of Singapore, University of Lethbridge, UW-Platteville, University of Missouri, Kent State, Framingham State College (MA), Mid-Sweden University, Brown University, and Middlebury College. Outside academia, graduates were placed at the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, City of Portland (OR), the International Labor Organization, and the Department of Community Development, Ft. Meyers (FL).

GRADUATE STUDENTS ENTERING

Our new graduate students continue to enrich our M.A. and Ph.D. programs with a wide range of academic backgrounds and national origins. The reduced numbers entering recently reflect Graduate School policies discussed elsewhere.

Entering Fall 2009


Kevin Dyke. Truman State University. B.A. History. Interests: historical and community GIS, genocide studies.


Sara Nelson. Tufts University. B.F.A. Studio Art. Interests: globalization and uneven development; Southeast Europe.

Hillary Waters. Wheaton College. B.A. Political Science. Interests: local-global processes, urban, development, political.


Basil Mahayni. Iowa State University. B.A./M.A. Political Science. Interests: political, human-environment, South America, Middle East.


Zoran (Zok) Pavlovic. South Dakota State University. B.S., M.S. Geography. Interests: cultural, South Asia, former Soviet Union, Europe.


Entering Fall 2008


Selected Faculty and Student Publications

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Kudos

Ozan Karaman was awarded an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) post-doctoral research fellowship for next academic year.

Chris Crawford is the recipient of the 2010 Chimbaborazo Student Research Grant Award, given by the AAG Mountain Geography Specialty Group (MGSG) for his research titled “Assessing Multi-temporal Seasonal Snow Cover Variability across the Northern Rocky Mountains using Landsat Remote Sensing.” The Chimbaborazo Award is given to a graduate student who proposes outstanding research that promises to support the mission of the MGSG.

This year’s AAG Economic Geography Specialty Group (EGSG) dissertation award winner is Marion Werner, for her Ph.D entitled “Global Displacements: Geographies of work and industrial restructuring in the Dominican Republic.” Marion completed her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, and is currently with the Department of Geography, SUNY Buffalo.

The MGIS Program

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their varied interests and many links to other departments and colleges, MGIS boosts course enrollments and provides resources across a wide swath of the university.

That influence extends beyond the University. At the core of the program is civic engagement and experiential learning. Aside from GIS faculty and faculty from allied departments, MGIS brings in teaching specialists from the state departments of natural resources and transportation, among others. These professionals not only provide real-world cases and perspectives from the field, but help link students to the larger GIS community.

In the words of Bob McMaster, MGIS has served as a “pedagogical model” for programs across the country, yet no one is resting on laurels. The approaching anniversary offers a good opportunity to evaluate the program and make sure it stays ahead of the competition. “How do we modify?” says Steve Manson. “How do we meet new demands? We’ve helped define the field over the past several years, now it’s time to assess how it should be defined in the years to come.”

The guiding spirit of the MGIS program remains forward-looking, and answers to Manson’s questions are already being posed within the department. There will be wider connections with more areas within the university, and more entities without. The utility of GIS will continue to grow, and masters’ students will likewise continue to see the merits of studying at one of the premier graduate programs in the country. This decade promises to be as fruitful as the first.
When he went off to college at Central Michigan in his hometown of Mt. Pleasant, Kipfmueller was interested in history as well as biology and ecology. He was having trouble seeing how he could join these studies until he took a course in the geography department that looked at human impact on the environment. “I’d always liked maps, but I just didn’t see the broader possibilities in geography. Then I discovered a sub-field called environmental analysis. It incorporated GIS systems, resource perception and utilization, the sociology of natural resources, and classic cartography classes. It also drew upon ecology courses. I suddenly realized that this was what I wanted to do.”

Kipfmueller decided to follow his bliss and study geography. He wound up in the master’s program at the University of Wyoming, where a budding interest in dendroecology began through studies of fire disturbance and suppression in high elevation systems.

Kipfmueller was offered an opportunity to continue his research at the University of Arizona, which had the largest tree ring laboratory in the world. He would be working in high elevation forests, which was an important and positive consideration. Not only did he like working in the mountains, but “ever since I was a kid,” he says, “I’ve been uncomfortable about poisonous snakes. They aren’t found at the sort of elevations that I had been or would be working at.”

Despite returning to the snaky lowlands, his job at the University of Minnesota has brought Kurt and wife Kara happily back toward the Great Lakes and the Upper Midwest. The focus of his work remains on understanding spatial and temporal variations in climate and vegetation. Whether in the mountains or in Minnesota, Kipfmueller is still out collecting his core samples and reconstructing climate patterns, changes in the land, and environmental disturbances based on what he sees in the rings. And doing dendrochronology studies by canoe in the Boundary Waters has its own rewards.

It’s also good to be back in hockey country for this inveterate sports fan. On the Dendroecology Lab Web site, Kipfmueller lists one of his research activities as “the spatial and temporal distribution of slapshots in the NHL since 1940 as a function of technological advancement.”

Between the demands of raising three kids ages ten and under, and the demands of teaching and researching geography, however, there’s just not much time for slapshot work. Perhaps if hockey sticks had rings....

Trees have rings, and each ring represents a year of growth. In 1601, a gigantic volcanic eruption at a mountain called Huaynapatina in the Andes prompted the coldest year in the past 600 in the northern hemisphere. The story of this event is told in the tree rings of the whitebark pine that Evan Larson was studying in Montana. Kipfmueller quickly confirmed Larson’s hunch that he had been looking at a dramatic weather event in his 1601 rings.

When Larson was deciding where to pursue his doctoral studies, it didn’t hurt that Minnesota was his home; that he’d just got engaged to his future wife, Danica, also from the Upper Midwest, and that he won EPA and U of M graduate student fellowships to continue his whitebark studies in Minneapolis. The fact that he and Kipfmueller both spoke the “dendro-” language was also a big plus.

With the support of a grant from the National Science Foundation, Larson researched whitebark pines for his doctoral thesis. Only he then looked at the tree in areas where it hadn’t been studied before: a place called Eagle Cap Wilderness in eastern Oregon; the Pioneer Mountains in southwestern Montana; the Cascades and central Idaho. All are remote regions.

“Whitebark pine areas are a sort of poster child for troubled eco-systems,” says Larson. They draw a lot of attention because they’re prime Grizzly Bear habitat and have been on the decline for years, threatening the lives and livelihoods of that iconic creature. A number of whitebark pine forests have been closely studied in the recent past, but the areas Larson studied have had little or no attention paid to them.

“There are some gaps in the whitebark research that I have been hoping to fill,” he says. “I’ve been finding healthy whitebark pine stands. I’ve been finding regeneration, which is really exciting. One of the big concerns you find in whitebark pine literature is that fire suppression is adversely affecting the species. I’m finding sites where that doesn’t seem to be the case.”

Whether or not that means whitebark pine, and its partner, the Grizzly Bear, have a more promising future than expected remains to be seen. Meanwhile Larson will continue to cock his ear for the loud call of the Clark’s Nutcracker in hopes of answering that question.

Evan successfully defended his dissertation in June of 2009 and accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, where he is Assistant Professor of Geography in the Social Sciences Department, and loving it.
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Robert W. Marx

Robert W. Marx, former Chief of the Geography Division, Bureau of the Census, succumbed to an illness on Monday, September 7, 2009. He was one of our department’s most distinguished and influential graduates.

Bob began his career in the early 1960s while a student in geography and urban planning at the University of Minnesota, studying under John Borchert. To cover educational expenses, Bob worked in the offices of Hodne Associates, Architects and Planners, preparing land-use and comprehensive-plan maps for small communities in Minnesota and Illinois, under the auspices of the former “Section 701” program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In his job, he used the precursor to modern automated GIS methods—Mylar base maps and clear overlays emblazoned with Zipatone shadings and Press Type letters to create the various “views” showing the combinations of information that went into the planning process.

After joining the U.S. Census Bureau in 1966, Bob used those GIS skills to help launch the Census Bureau’s fledgling Metropolitan Map Series being prepared as the base for the Address Coding Guides that covered the 145 largest urban centers of the United States for the 1970 decennial census. Although crude by today’s standards, these two systems—comprising the base map information of streets, street names, address ranges, rivers, lakes and their names, railroads, governmental unit boundaries and names, census tract boundaries and numbers, and so forth—were entered into the Census Bureau’s computers and enhanced with the Dual Independent Map Encoding (DIME) technologies then being developed by the Census Use Study. This evolved into the Geographic Base Files (GBFs) covering the 287 largest urban centers of the 1980 census, and then in a collaborative effort with the U.S. Geological Survey to the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) files that covered the entire United States, Puerto Rico, and the associated Island Areas of the 1990 census and Census 2000.

Bob Marx was a visionary who sought ways to advance the importance of census geography, through new technological developments that were made practical through useful applications. By making spatial data for the nation available, the TIGER effort opened the way for GIS development and created an entire new industry, which continues to grow. Today, the TIGER/Line files—in the public domain for all to use, including the largest and best known of the modern GIS vendors—contain the base map and geographic code linkages that allowed the GIS industry of the United States to mushroom and flourish. Even governments and agencies that had only minimal budgets now could use GIS technology, their various data sets, decennial census data, and the TIGER/Line file base information to do their analyses.

Bob served as Chief of the Geography Division of the Census Bureau from 1983 to 2003 (interrupted by a 3-year period as Associate Director in the 1990s to prepare for Census 2000). During his more than 36-year career at the Bureau, he received several awards for exceptional performance, including the Department of Commerce’s Gold and Silver Medals, and the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award. His URISA Lifetime Achievement Award plaque reads: “Robert W. Marx - Conceiver of TIGER and Champion of Unrestricted Access to GIS Data Nationwide.”

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Jan. They have two grown sons and eight grandchildren.
News from Alumni and Friends

J. Anthony Abbott (Ph.D., 2002)
Tony is Associate professor, Geography and Environmental Science, Stetson University, Deland, Florida. He was granted tenure and promotion in 2009, and among other duties is the Greenhouse Gas Auditing Coordinator for the Four Campus University. He worked with the local Energy Utility (Progress Energy) to install a Geothermal Heat Pump in the new Rinker Environmental Learning Center as a research initiative to assess the energy efficiency potential for the technology.

Frank Barrett (M.A., 1963)
Frank is Professor Emeritus and Senior Scholar, York University, Toronto. He writes: “Greetings to fellow students from so long ago. Kathleen and I celebrated our 50th anniversary in June 2008. We started our married life at Minnesota." He recently published a book on the British watercolor artist: Ernest Ibbetson: Military Artist and Adventure Story Illustrator. (Available from fbarrett@yorku.ca) In 2009 they returned from a month of cruising the waters of South America. The two highlights were 4 days in the Antarctic and a finale of flying from Rio to Iguazu Falls - the widest in the world. Both were unforgettable and highly recommended to all geographers! His family now numbers 21 members, which includes 9 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Best wishes to all alumni and current students.

Mark J. Bjelland (Ph.D., 2000)
Mark is associate professor and chair of geography, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN. He writes: “My son Devin who was an infant/toddler while I was a Ph.D. student is now a teenager who has to shave—wow, they grow fast. Camilla is 10 and as tall as Barb. I joined the author teams for Fellmann, Getis and Getis’ Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities and Getis, Getis, and Fellman’s Introduction to Geography. This past year, I taught a field course on British cities with my wife Barb as the course assistant. Great fun. And to keep things interesting, I have started a new research project on immigrants and religious diversity in cities.”

Nick Boetcher (B.A., Urban Studies, minors in Geography & Mass Communications)
“I’ve been employed full-time with the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC) as Program Representative at our St. Paul, Minnesota, Housing Resource Center since June 2008. I’ve also been busy outside of work with continuing education and community involvement. Thanks for your interest.”

Rob is Adviser to the Chairman, American Airlines, and Principal, AirLearn, Inc. He writes: “Am in year three of independence, consulting a bit for American Airlines and other aviation and travel companies, and doing a lot of teaching - 32 schools last year. Just back from Erasmus (Rotterdam), London Business School, and London School of Economics. It’s great fun, and allows some time for informal fieldwork in various locales - still keenly interested in urban form and development. Youngest child, Jack, is now off our payroll, so we can rebuild our retirement funds smacked down by greedy and incompetent bankers! Visited with fellow geezer-alums Rob Freestone and Tom Harvey in the past year.”

Jae Heon Choi (Ph.D., 1993)
Jae is professor and chair, Department of Geography, College of Science, Konkuk University, in Seoul, Korea.

Philip Fletcher
Phil is Director of Planning for Park County, Montana, and lives in Belgrade, MT.

Kevin Hanron
Kevin is a GIS Product Manager in Wellesley, MA.

Jason Jindrich (Ph.D. 2009)
Jason is Postdoctoral Research Associate at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

Cary is professor, University of Wisconsin-Barron County, and Interim Director, University of Wisconsin Colleges Distance Education. He divides his time between an office in Madison and his home (and home campus) in Rice Lake, WI.

Jamesin Lin (M.A. 1961)
I was very glad to receive the Brown Day letter from the Department of Geography, University of Minnesota. I am sorry to say that I cannot come to attend the Brown Day event because of my old age. But I will give you a word about me. I retired from my professorship at National Taiwan University in 1976, and moved to Toronto in 1977. In May 2008 I had three generations (18 persons) of my family together taking a two weeks trip in Spain and a cruise on the Mediterranean Sea. Hello to all my friends.

Danie Meier (M.A., 1990, Ph.D., 1998; M.S.W. 1993)
Professionally: I’m a psychotherapist in private practice and school social worker in the Jackson (MI) Public Schools. The Michigan economy escalated mental health problems in communities beyond anything I’ve seen in 15 years, prompting new levels of my involvement in systemic change and inter-agency bridge-building of safety nets. Coalition work/activism includes the Suicide Prevention Coalition, the Mental Health Summit-Health Improvement Organization; the Real MEN’s Project (Men Embracing Non-Violence), Gay-Straight Alliance, et al. Personally: for those who remember little Nora (born the year I started at the geography department in 1988), she’s now 21, at Loyola University and studied in Rome. My son, Ezra, will likely someday be Master of the Universe, that’s all I can say. In June my wife Dawn leaves her position as Executive Director of the Nonprofit Network and will be working at Allegiance Health in Jackson. We are looking to relocate someday from the Midwest to Hawaii, a Greek Island, or somewhere else that natural beauty surrounds us daily.

Patrick Mangin
Lieutenant Colonel Pat continued in the U.S. Army through 2009, serving as battalion commander, and looking to retire in 2010. He hoped to land a teaching position in or around Hershey, PA.

Bill Mead
London School of Economics 1938-40; 1946; University College London, 1950-81. Former visiting professor.

Thank you for remembering me once more in your annual circular. I still think back to the circumstances that brought me into contact with Jan Broek and his contemporaries a half-century ago, and the subsequent visits.

I was sad to learn of the passing of Fred Lukermann. He did not look so patriarchal when he last visited me in London—a great guy, a “rounded geographer” and wonderful company.

None of you can conceivably remember me (I expect that you have a British Who’s Who in the library if anyone is interested—it even mentions Minnesota). I am approaching 95, still putting a few words on paper. Unhappily I had to give my horse away a few years ago, but I can still sit on a bicycle. The extremities of the anatomy raise problems (the arthritic arm protests when I take up a pen). But the voice still works out for an hour’s lecture. The last publication—University of Minnesota Press—a chapter in Nordic Landscapes on Finnish landscapes. All very nostalgic.

Happy Brown Day to you all and long may his memory be recalled annually. As ever, Bill Mead
Patrick Mendis (PhD, Geography/Applied Economics, 1989)
At present I am vice president of academic affairs at the Osgood Center for International Relations and a visiting scholar in foreign policy at the Johns Hopkins University’s Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC. I recently authored another book, TRADE for PEACE: How the DNA of America, Freemasonry, and Providence Created a New World Order with Nobody in Charge (2009), and reissued the 3rd edition of The Human Side of Globalization: The Political Economy of Globalization as if the Washington Consensus Mattered in Asia, Africa, and the Americas (2009). For each book, the forewords are written by Prof. Brian Atwood, Dean of the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and Sir Arthur C. Clarke, the late science-fiction writer, respectively. For more information see: www.patrickschen.com.

Darrell Napton (Ph.D. 1987)
Darrell continues as Professor of Geography, South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD. Recent publications include an article on the historical geography and land-use implications of U.S. golf courses in the Geographical Review, and one on land changes and their driving forces in the southeastern United States in Regional Environmental Change. In 2009 he was wrapping up a multi-year research leave with the USGS where he worked on the Land Cover Trends Project - assessment of U.S. land change 1973-2000. That project allowed him to work with current and past students, conduct fieldwork across the conterminous U.S., and explore how driving forces influenced regional land use decisions. His wife, Luanne, is winding down 15 years of work as the executive director of the South Dakota Resources Coalition, a state environmental advocacy group.

M. Don Philipp
Thanks so much for taking the time to notify me of Fred Lukermann’s passing last September. It was not only a very sad moment for me personally, but also for the greater Geography community. Please permit me to make a couple of brief remarks on my friendship with Fred. My first graduate academic year was 1952-53, and my second one was 1955-56 when I received my Masters. The 2 “lost” years were spent with the U.S. Army’s Map Intelligence Unit in Tokyo. Fred was a remarkable person: an awesome intellect coupled with a warm, compassionate personality. I think it would bring a smile to Fred’s face for me to recount a shared experience we had in June 1953. Fred was going to transport his 2-year-old daughter, Carla, to her mother in Berkeley, Calif. Since I also was returning to my home there, he invited me to join them. The three of us departed the Twin Cities on a week’s odyssey, traveling from Minnesota through North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and finally California. I still have a photo of Carla at a roadside pull-out on the windy High Plains of North Dakota, sitting contentedly on her personal potty. Adieu mon ami.

Tony is slowly but surely working on a book about geography, astronomy and climatology. He’s also into horticulture, photography, walking & snacking. To see what else simply Google “Tony Rozycki.” He hopes to show his 1947 slides of Hawaii some afternoon at the Geography Department before it’s too late!

Frank Shockey (Ph.D. 2008)
Frank was Interim Community Development Director, Town of Fort Myers Beach, Florida in 2009. He’s been working in city planning since the winter of 2006 on a barrier island in Florida. He gets back to the Twin Cities now and then, so if you see someone who looks like him at Coffee Hour, it might be him. Lately, and not surprisingly, he’s been thinking a lot about what leads people to ‘risk’ large amounts of money on property located only a couple feet above sea level.

Frederick R. Steinhauser (B.S. 1949, Mankato State; M.A. 1951, Chicago; Ph.D. 1960, Minnesota).
At 90 years of age, I have lived or taken field trips on all seven continents. It was a geographer’s dream to see the world. I have gone from teaching in a one-room rural school to thirty years as a full professor at the University of Minnesota. I have gone from a Buck Private to General in three wars in the U.S. military. More importantly, I have been married for 59 years and have raised four children, all graduates of the University of Minnesota. In your spare time try Antarctica, the long Amazon River or the Trans-Siberian railroad.

Ronald W. Ward (B.A., 1992)
Ron chairs the Department of Geography-Geology, Normandale Community College, Bloomington, MN. He writes that graduate students in the department should contact him for adjunct teaching opportunities we have for academic year 10-11. Contact him at the college.

Althea Willette
Althea works in property appraisal services in the Twin Cities. She completed her certification as a Personal Property Appraiser through Appraisers Association of America, New York University, in 2009.

Scott G. Witter
Scott is Professor and Director of the School of Planning, Design and Construction at Michigan State University. Prior to this appointment he served as Chairperson of the Departments of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies; and Resource Development.

John Wolter
John retired from the Map Division, Library of Congress and lives in Salisbury, MD. He writes: “Left Tucson, AZ, after a year as visiting scholar, 2004-5. Repair work on various parts in 2005 and 2008 at Johns Hopkins hospital and Wilmer Eye Clinic. Back at work on the Northern Transcontinental Survey 1881-84 and other projects. Enjoying the friendship of members of the Geography and Geosciences Department, Salisbury University, a very good group of scholars, and the resources of the Blackwell Library and the wonders of interlibrary loans. In contact with colleagues at the Library of Congress and still working with them on the Great Lakes research.”

Daisaku Yamamoto (Ph.D. 2005)
Following grad school I was assistant professor in the Department of Geography at Central Michigan University, and recently took up a position (Geography and Asian Studies) at Colgate University, Hamilton, NY. Obviously I do not terribly mind freezing and snowy weather. It was nice to see some of the familiar faces at AAG Las Vegas in 2009.

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