From the Department Head, Chuck Martin

Welcome to the 2019 K-State Geography Alumni Newsletter, an opportunity for us to share news and happenings from the past year with alumni and friends of the Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences! Yes, as of September 2019 we have a new department name, one of the big events of the year. Regarding the newsletter, thank you to Dr. Lisa Harrington for taking the lead again this year in collecting information and putting it together in the newsletter. The 2018 newsletter was fantastic; I’m sure the 2019 one will be, too.

The last year has been productive, but also challenging, for the department. Since last year, Dr. Abby Langston’s position changed from a non-tenure track research assistant professor to a tenure-track assistant professor. Dr. Arnaud Temme earned tenure and Drs. Jeff Smith and Marcellus Caldas were promoted to full professor in 2019. In October 2019 Jennifer Marcus (BS 1994) was honored as the department’s Distinguished Alumna and in April 2019 John Guinotte (BS 1996, MA 1999) was honored as an Alumni Fellow from the College of Arts and Sciences by the K-State Alumni Association. Budget cuts have been a constant theme for the department and university over the last few years, and fiscal year 2020 was no exception. We were forced to cut 4%, or nearly $69,000, from our base budget for the current academic year. That meant reducing our operating and GTA budgets and paying for part of a faculty member’s salary using other department resources (in our case, department-earned through teaching online courses). Declining enrollment at K-State, and especially in the College of Arts and Sciences, has placed significant financial constraints on the College and the department. In addition to the base budget, we are fortunate to have funding raised through the teaching of online classes and alumni donations to help cushion the impact of the cuts.

The department’s new GIS Teaching and Research Lab (GeoSMART) opened in Seaton 3014 in August 2018 and we continue to increase the number of work stations that are available for our students enrolled in geospatial classes. Before the move to this new space, enrollment in geospatial classes and labs was limited to 15 students; now, those same classes and labs have an enrollment capacity of 26 students and that number should increase later in 2019 to 31 students with the addition of another table and five computer workstations.
The Introductory Physical Geography Teaching Lab moved from its long-time home in the basement of Seaton Hall earlier this year to the old GISSAL lab space. In the room used for the old teaching lab, a new earth systems science research lab, funded by a generous donation from former department head Dr. Richard A. Marston and using funds provided by the College of Arts and Sciences and by several geography faculty members, is being constructed in fall 2019. We expect this lab to be “up and running” by the end of the calendar year.

The members of the faculty and students in the department enjoyed remarkable success in 2019, as you will see below and in the highlights on subsequent pages. The Steven Kale Scholarship Fund, endowed through the estate of the late Steve Kale, continues to provide scholarships to geography undergraduate and graduate students to pursue research in the summer and fall. The department’s other Foundation funds continue to prosper thanks to the wonderful generosity of our alumni. In 2019, funds from geography Foundation accounts and other sources provided several thousand dollars of travel support for undergraduate and graduate students to attend professional meetings and workshops. In addition to financial support, our alumni generously contribute their time and expertise, whether serving on the Geography Alumni Advisory Board, visiting in the classroom with students, or contacting the department about job and internship opportunities. One of the more visible alumni events again this year was the 2019 Geography Career Day in February. The event continues to assist our undergraduate majors and graduate students in securing jobs and internships and provides them with valuable experience in preparing resumes and conducting interviews.

Faculty Highlights: Members of the Geography faculty completed a very successful year in research, teaching, and professional service during 2019. Since 1 July 2018, faculty members of the department have secured more than $217,000 in new extramural research funding. Geography faculty members served as lead or co-editors of national and international professional journals, were appointed to editorial and scientific boards of national and international journals, elected officers of professional organizations, and served as chairs and members of scientific committees for professional meetings and conferences. In 2018, Geography faculty published 1 edited monograph and 34 refereed journal articles or book chapters, made 48 presentations at professional meetings, and secured 4 newly funded extramural research grants, a remarkable accomplishment considering that all members of the faculty taught undergraduate and graduate courses and participated in a variety of departmental, university, and national service. As the personal summaries and highlights on the following pages attest, K-State geography faculty members are a diverse, dedicated, and highly productive group of scholars and teachers.

Student Highlights: The Geography Department had a strong group of graduate students and undergraduate majors in 2019. As the 2019 Fall Semester began, the department counted 13 PhD students, 10 MA students, 25 geography majors, and 10 geography minors. Slightly more than 2500 students enrolled in Geography classes in academic year 2018/19.

So far in 2019, one student completed the PhD degree and three completed the MA degree in geography. The very successful GIS certificate programs continue to flourish. Seven students finished the undergraduate certificate in GIS so far this year.

Our students and alumni are making a positive impact in business, industry, government, and academia. The annual survey of our graduates during the 2016/17 academic year by Career and Employment Services at K-State indicates that 45% are employed and 36% are enrolled in a graduate or professional school. Those numbers are a testament to the quality of our program.

Current students have been selected for an astonishing array of awards outside the department as well as the annual departmental awards that are presented during our annual Spring Awards Reception. You will read about some of the highlights in the pages that follow.

Staying Connected with You: In addition to our webpage (http://www.k-state.edu/geography/), the K-State Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences has a Facebook page and a KSU Geography Alumni page. I hope you will check them on a regular basis to keep up with events in the department and among our alumni. There are many reasons to be optimistic about the future of the Geography Department and the role it will play in the university. On behalf of my colleagues, I want to thank our alumni, parents, students, and friends for the gifts that support our students and help meet the needs of the department. Your generosity contributes substantially to the education of our students. As always, we welcome your comments about the department and K-State. When you are visiting campus, please stop by Seaton Hall and say “hello.” Thanks to all of you for your ongoing and generous support of K-State Geography!
Personal Updates
Faculty

Marcellus Caldas

The year of 2019 didn’t end yet but it is one of the most exciting for the Caldas’ family. My oldest daughter got married and our family came to see a beautiful ceremony. It was a long journey for all parents that are 85 years old but they wouldn’t miss this. Gabe is working hard to graduate next semester and he is one of the captains of the K-State Rugby team. Lucas is a junior and was very excited to start his soccer varsity game until he broke his wrist in a game. Poor kid!! I hope he can come back by the end of the season.

Martha is busy and working harder then ever in advising undergraduate students and teaching. She was very happy this summer for serving as an instructor in the SEA-PHAGE Howard Hughes Medical Institute Program in DC.

On the professional side it couldn’t be different for me. I became a full professor and I am surviving with multiple tasks. Administration has been a gratifying experience and although it takes a great portion of my time, my administrative position has helped me to work with a fantastic group of colleagues. On the academic side, I was invited to give talks around the world (e.g., Czech Republic, Finland, Brazil). I was honored with an invitation to open the PhD program in Agribusiness and Development at the State University of Sao Paulo (UNESP) in August and I will be a keynote speaker in the XVII National Meeting of the Brazilian Association of Regional and Urban Studies that will occur in Rio de Janeiro.

I continue working on my research in Brazil and Kansas, and I am developing new collaborations in Indonesia and Vietnam. Also, my team of students is growing. I now have three PhD students (Rebecca Lima and Ricardo Aranha from Brazil and Dong Luo from China)! That’s right: I am only 10% in Geography but advising graduate students is a passion.

To finalize, I want to congratulate my Postdoctoral, Gabriel Granco, for his appointment at the University of California at Pomona. I am sure he will make us proud!

Doug Goodin

Another year is in the books, and it’s time once again to summarize activities. For last year’s report, I chose “Back to the Future” as my theme, because the work I did was in many ways a resumption of research from earlier in my career. If I chose a movie to be this year’s theme, it would be “Nothing New Under the Sun.” My main research efforts this year are essentially the same as they were last year, but the good news is that there is some measurable progress. My collaborative research on the Emerald Ash Borer (an invasive pest that threatens ornamental ash trees) has progressed to the point where my colleagues and I are ready to start reporting results. One of the interesting lessons I’ve learned from switching to trees as a research subject is that they grow and develop very slowly, and one must be patient in order to accumulate results. By this time next year, I hope to have some publications to report.

In the classroom, I continue to teach the remote sensing, spatial analysis, and geocomputation courses, and have also resumed teaching some climatology courses. In the current semester, I’m teaching Geog 535, Introduction to Climatology, a course I developed way back in the early ‘90s when I arrived at KSU, but rotated away from teaching for several years. It’s only mid-semester, but I can say that I’ve been enjoying the class immensely. I have restructured it to feature climate change much more prominently, and feedback from my first group of students has convinced me to emphasize this important topic even more the next time I offer the course. It’s always good to learn something new, and I’ll be looking forward to seeing what next year’s movie theme will be.

Lisa M. Butler Harrington

The move to southwest Washington is suiting me quite well. Love the environment, and adjusting to place through involvement in a couple of organizations (and taking some art classes). Summer included two professional meetings, the Eighth Quadrennial Conference of British, Canadian, and American Rural
Geographers, for a week in Vermont, and the Colloquium of the International Geographical Union’s Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems (lead by alumna Holly Barcus), for a week in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Both included great field experiences, and the Vermont meeting participants included two of our alumni (Ryan Bergstrom and Bill Wetherholt) and two current PhD candidates (Christy Jean and Avantika Ramekar). All gave really good presentations, and I was able to make the lead presentation so I could focus on everyone else.

John and I have been able to attend some coastal ecology and rural livelihood (oyster farming) meetings, and will be putting together an invited paper following up on the IGU meeting. I’m squeezing in some place name work as I can, for an invited chapter, as well as weekly e-meetings with my current graduate students, both of whom should finish in the spring. I’ll also be teaching GEOG 340 online the first half of next semester.

With the passing of our 20-year-old cat, Ruby, we’re now at two cats (Cisco and Zelda) and two dogs (Moose and Jacques). I’m still working on ‘civilizing’ Jacques (Butler Briards Never a Doubt). We’ve made a lot of behavioral progress, so we’ll try the show ring again soon. (With several dog pics for this newsletter, I nearly added cats for a little balance.)

I actually had a veggie garden this year—only got half of the intended area planted, but still ended up with a lot of edibles. I’m also starting back to artistic endeavors, and was happy to receive an honorable mention (mixed media) in a spring art show, which let me know I shouldn’t be too embarrassed by my entries.

Unsurprisingly, Ian was awarded first in the mixed media category; he’s preparing for a gallery show where he’ll be one of two featured artists late next year. Colin joined us in Washington after finishing all on-campus classes at Manhattan Tech, and completed his degree over the summer. He achieved Cisco certification on the first try last year, and is actively looking for employment in computer network management.

**Shawn Hutchinson**

With the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester, I’m starting my 19th year as a faculty member in the department. It really is amazing how quickly time passes when you are doing something you enjoy! I’m pleased to be able to say that the new geoSMART Spatial Science and Technology Learning and Research Laboratory on the third floor of Seaton Hall’s west wing is running smoothly and is excellent new space for the department. Many of our GIS, remote sensing, and programming classes take advantage of the expanded capacity and are now offered in a studio format rather than the traditional lecture/lab design. My office also moved upstairs (Seaton 3018) and across from the classroom/lab. I’m pleased to report that because I’m up and down three flights of stairs several times a day, I’ve lost weight!
It has been very fulfilling to see geoSMART progress from an idea to a reality over the past couple of years. We’ve now turned our attention to developing a proposal for the Kansas Board of Regents that will create a new major in Geographic Information Science & Technology. Fingers crossed, we hope to have this new undergraduate program active for the 2020-21 academic year. All of this, combined with our recent department name change, make for exciting times and what I hope is an even more prosperous future for our department. Stay tuned for even more positive changes!

On a more personal note, it was an uneventful summer for me with not much travel outside of a short trip to Montana. However, I am planning to make up for and another flyfishing trip to Alaska next summer. This time I’ll be floating the Arolik River.

The Hutchinson family continues to hum along. Stacy accepted an offer this summer to become the Associate Dean for Research in the College of Engineering and is phasing out of teaching but will continue her own research program. Our son Mitch graduated this spring from Manhattan High and is now a freshman in Computer Science and proud member of the Theta Xi fraternity here at K-State. It is very strange – but fun – to see him, and other former high schoolers that I know very well, on campus. Just another sign of getting older, I suppose. The last human kid in the house is our daughter Marleigh, a junior at Manhattan High. She is a varsity center back on the girls soccer team – 3rd place in the State of Kansas last year – and will represent Kansas at the 2019 Global Youth Institute in Des Moines this October, with the goal of earning a Borlaug-Ruan International Internship. Finally, our labs Mocha and Maizy are still healthy and happy. They remain the most important members of the household!

Finally, I’d like to say a special thank you to all of the alumni who have stopped by to say “hello” over the past year. I very much enjoy learning about what our former students are doing after graduating. If you happen to be on or near campus in the future, please do visit!

Audrey Joslin

It has been a productive year with adventure and hard work. I have focused on further developing a project in southern Kansas examining the interaction of wildfire and Conservation Reserve Program lands. Rose Micke, an undergraduate geography student who graduated in May 2019, was a great research assistant on this project over the spring months. Rachel Cannon, who will graduate May 2020, stepped in over the summer months and has been my assistant on the project since then. Among various activities over summer 2019, I traveled to Meade, Clark, and Comanche counties to interview ranchers about their experiences and responses to the 2017 wildfire. It was great to become familiar with another part of Kansas, and I am looking forward to expanding this project in the coming year in collaboration with colleagues Marcellus Caldas and Jason Bergtold. We were recently awarded a Global Food Systems Seed Grant from Kansas State University to support the work.

Otherwise, I’ve enjoyed working with my MA student, Michael Molloy, in further developing his project examining adaptation strategies and policy of communities and in southern Louisiana. I am also excited for the upcoming dissertation defense of PhD candidate Avantika Ramekar. I look forward to seeing where their work will take them in the future.

On the personal side, I was excited to get engaged in April 2019 and am busy planning my wedding for next year. My fiance is also an Assistant Professor, and we met through mutual friends at K-State. About a week after proposing, my new fiancé and I went on a two-week trip to Argentina. We enjoyed getting a glimpse of the local jazz scene as well as going to a tango show in Buenos Aires, biking around the vineyards of Mendoza and attending wine tours at the foothills of the Andes, and visiting the spectacular Iguazu Falls that have been a ‘bucket list’ item for a couple of years now.

Audrey and Michael in front of the Argentine presidential mansion, the Casa Rosada, in Buenos Aires.

Abby Langston

This has been a big year for me and my family. We welcomed a baby boy, Alexander Laurent Langston Temme, to our family in December 2018. He is an
absolute dream baby and loves to clap his hands and explore the world by putting everything he can into his mouth. I’ve also had a busy and productive year professionally. In the spring of 2019, I started work on an NSF EPSCoR grant for early career faculty development. The grant will fund six months of collaboration and training at the Desert Research Institute in Reno, NV, on using single grain luminescence techniques to interpret geomorphic processes. In March 2019, I went to Buffalo National River with my collaborator from DRI, Amanda Keen-Zebert, to collect sediment samples from the modern floodplain for analysis in the DRI luminescence lab. From May to July 2019, my graduate student Abbey Marcotte and I worked in the luminescence lab at DRI on the Buffalo River samples and a test sediment sample from Konza Prairie that will be included in Abbey’s Master’s thesis. My family came out to Reno, NV, with me for the summer and we all enjoyed the camping, hiking, and biking in the Sierra Nevada!

Another professional highlight that had been in the works for a long time is the publication of a modeling component that I wrote for lateral bedrock erosion in the Landlab modeling environment library (http://landlab.github.io/#/). My lateral erosion component is now part of the main Landlab release and freely available for anyone to use. I am excited to share that my paper (co-authored with Arnaud Temme), titled “Impacts of lithologically-controlled mechanisms on downstream bedrock valley widening,” has been accepted to the journal Geophysical Research Letters. I think this paper will be an important foundational part of my research on how rivers shape the landscape and create wide bedrock valleys. I was delighted to begin my first year as a tenure-track assistant professor in August after three years as a research assistant professor. This fall, I’m teaching Fluvial Geomorphology (as I have for the past three years), and I plan to teach Earth Systems Science (Intro Physical Geography) and an undergraduate level Surface Water Hydrology class this coming spring. I look forward to many more semesters of teaching our awesome students and working with my amazing colleagues in the Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences.

In the last year or so, service responsibilities have afforded me opportunities to visit or revisit several places in the US and East Asia. I was in Xiamen, Seoul, Chengdu, and Hangzhou late last October and December for Confucius Institute-related meetings, and in five cities in the US this year to attend other meetings or teach workshops. This year’s AAG annual meeting in DC in early April coincided with the peak bloom time of cherry trees. Strolling around the Tidal Basin to enjoy the cherry blossoms was quite an experience.

I directed K-State’s Confucius Institute in the last four years. As some of you may know, the CI’s mission is to promote understanding of the Chinese language and culture and to enhance exchanges between the United States and China. To that end, the CI offered practical Chinese language classes and sponsored the popular annual Chinese Culture Fair, as well as various cultural and educational events. We worked with USD383 and K-State’s Modern Languages Department to create a new session of Chinese language class for Manhattan High
School students. In May, the CI sponsored eight K-State professors, including Professors Bimal Paul and John Harrington, to China’s Jilin University to teach 3-week long summer courses. As I write, K-State is in negotiations to renew the institute.

Chuck Martin

As I noted last year, most of my professional life is dedicated to serving as department head in geography, and that has been even more the case in 2019 as the university slowly moves to a new RCM (Responsibility Centered Management) budget model. Under this model, which will go into effect fully for the university next fiscal year, the College (and ultimately departments) will be responsible for managing their own revenues and expenditures. In spite of all the planning and meetings as we transition to this model in the “shadow year” of 2019, I did find some time to continue my research on heavy metals along the Lahn River of central Germany and teach one class each semester (Human Impact on the Environment in the spring and Geography of Kansas in the fall). As I wrote a year ago, my normal research trip to Germany in August 2018 was cancelled at the last minute because of emergency surgery to repair a detached retina in my left eye. With normal vision restored to that eye following cataract surgery earlier this year, I was able to go to Germany in March and complete most of the field and lab work that had been scheduled for August 2018. I am now back on the normal schedule of research there in the summer following a visit this past July.

My wife Sabine continues to work at her own “pace” for her own consulting company, traveling about every six weeks or so. Daughter Christine is still a student at Northeastern University in Boston, but spent the summer on a research internship at the Von Karman Institute for Fluid Dynamics in Brussels and is spending the fall on an industry internship with an engineering firm near Duesseldorf, Germany. She continues to major in mechanical engineering with a focus on aeronautical engineering. Son Nicholas has been working during the last year at an engineering firm on Long Island that provides aerospace and related engineering services to a variety of clients. I visited him for a long weekend in June, spending a day in New York City and catching a Mets game at Citi Field in the Queens. We all gathered late last year in the Flagstaff area to celebrate Sabine’s 60th birthday (see photo). My turn comes next September.

Kendra McLauchlan

The major news from this year is that I am continuing to serve as a rotating Program Director at the National Science Foundation in Alexandria, VA. I am responsible for overseeing the merit review process for hundreds of proposals each year, making award and decline decisions, and ultimately helping manage a $20 million research portfolio in Ecosystem Science in the Division of Environmental Biology. Some of my favorite parts of the job include talking with prospective PIs, reading interesting proposals, running panels, and working with colleagues across the foundation. Despite the government shutdown earlier this year, we remain a group of passionate, smart people dedicated to advancing US science through public service.

Overall, it has been a fantastic year filled with professional development, cultural immersion, and several adventures. Being in Washington, DC, has offered many opportunities, including the AAG meeting (and attending the KSU social event!) this spring. I also attended the American Geophysical Union meeting in December 2018, along with 24,000 other Earth scientists. I am maintaining my research and mentoring responsibilities at KSU, including two large research projects about fire history and ecosystem consequences. My M.A. student Barrie Chileen graduated this spring, but I continue to run the PaleoLab from afar through my capable lab manager Jennifer Roozeboom, new undergraduate researcher Dylan Darter, PhD student Colleen Gura, and former postdoc David Pompeani. All is well with my family. It’s hard to believe, but my son Micah just started high school and my daughter Isabel just started middle school! Maybe some of you
remember when she was born, right after I completed my first academic year at K-State!

3-D printed pollen grains from a PaleoLab project.

Kate Nelson
I can hardly believe how quickly my first year at K-State flew by. I was very happy to successfully publish a set of papers on sustainable resilience and another paper in an exciting new research area for me that investigates the relationship between landscape diversification and crop production in the US. While most of the summer months were dedicated to paper and grant writing, we managed to get away for a relaxing mini-vacation in Colorado.

Tuan, Mira, and Ella Nguyen at Rainbow Lakes

I was quite fortunate this year to receive both a university small research grant to help propel my research on social vulnerability forward and an engagement incentive grant to further enable research collaborations and engagement with the community on local storm management issues. These grants allowed me to hire a part-time summer graduate research assistant and have allowed me to build a small, but excellent and highly engaged, team of undergraduate research assistants. I was also honored to be selected as a 2019-2020 KSU Civic Engagement Fellow. I look forward to strengthening my ties with the community and learning how to best conduct deliberatively engaged research throughout the remainder of the academic year.

Bimal Paul
This has been one of the busiest years for me. I am completing the editing of two volumes of Encyclopedia on natural disasters, which are scheduled to be published early next year. These two volumes include 115 entries, including description of 20 humanitarian organizations. Each entry of Volume 1 is 5000 words long, while each entry of Volume 2 is 2000 words. In addition to contributing nearly 50 entries for these volumes, I published one paper in a refereed journal, and one book chapter. I am also preparing chapters for my forthcoming book entitled “Disaster and Death: Trends, Causes and Determinants.” It is scheduled to be published in the middle of next year.

In May 2019, I offered a three-week course on Disaster Management at Jilin University, Changchun, China. I also presented five papers in professional meetings held in Canada, China, and the United States. I served as external committee member for three dissertations from Australia, Canada, and Thailand.

On the family front, our two daughters and son have been living in Overland Park, KS. All of them are working in the Kansas City area. Our eldest daughter recently changed her job and our son was promoted to the rank of senior analyst.

Jeff Smith
The last year was good for me. I submitted my portfolio for Full Professor, and in Spring I heard from the Office of the Provost that my application had been approved. What a great feeling. I have stayed busy teaching and conducting research. I have begun a new project that examines places that restore a healthy spirit. I call these places Restorative Places, modeled after the work of Bill Wyckoff and Lary Dilsaver. I’m taking the topic for a ride and we’ll see where it heads. As part of that research project, I’ve been doing background research on various National Park units (Parks, Monuments, Historic Sites, etc.). One of the places I visited was Rainbow Bridge National Monument. I forgot how beautiful the area is. I’m learning a lot, but I’ve got a lot more to do. As usual, if you find yourself in Seaton Hall, be sure to stop by and say hello.
**Arnaud Temme**

Personal updates: Abby and I took our two small kids to Reno over the summer. Abby has an NSF grant that took her to the Desert Research Institute, and I split my attention between a blissfully empty office, focusing on my list of unfinished business, and the mountains surrounding Reno, focusing on pretending that I am 30 years old. I am now fully recharged for a new year in KS.

Professionally: During the stay in Reno, I got a USDA grant to start working on disaggregating large polygon soil maps over the next two years, together with our very own Dr. Shawn Hutchinson and a new graduate student, Jordan Watson (MA). Two more graduate students have arrived this summer to start their studies: Nathan Brownstein (MA, hilly soils) and Nick McCarroll (PhD, landscape evolution). My two existing students worked hard over the summer, with Michael Stumpff performing heroic fieldwork measuring properties of rocks on the surface in blazing hot Konza Prairie and Colleen Gura controlling her unique weathering dataset.

Fun fact: I was awarded a certificate early in the summer because two of my students’ papers were in the top twenty downloaded papers of the journal *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*. Thank you all for downloading those for me 😊.

**Jida Wang**

I started the academic year of 2018-19 with an amazing trip to the Azores Archipelago of Portugal. I traveled to these mid-Atlantic islands to attend a symposium that celebrated the 25th anniversary of satellite radar altimetry. In this symposium, I presented a paper that I coauthored with Fangfang Yao, about lake water budgets on the Tibetan Plateau. During this conference, I learned that another paper of ours, which had been reviewed for about nine months, had been accepted. I believe this meant a good start. I always enjoy traveling to conferences overseas. Through each of these trips, I meet old and new friends, and begin to understand a new country. I guess this is one of the perks of being a professional geographer.

I published another six peer-reviewed papers in this academic year, two of which were coauthored with my graduate student. I hope I can keep this momentum in the coming years.

During the summer, Jordan and I spent a week together in the Philippines. I just have endless love and respect for this country and her beautiful people. We had a tour around Luzon Island. Much of the time was spent in the mountains. I never knew Philippines was so mountainous. We were particularly amazed by the Banaue Rice Terraces, which is listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. We did a half-day hike in the terraces. Absolutely unforgettable experience! I here share a couple of pictures.
On the way back to the US, we stopped in Taipei, Taiwan for a couple of days. This was my first time to be in another region (except mainland China) that also speaks Mandarin as the official language. We went to the Square of Freedom, the Presidential Hall and then up to the observatory of Taipei 101. It is such a beautiful city. Taiwan is the first Asian country/region that legalized same-sex marriage (in May 2019). I am very proud of Taiwan, and feel happy for the people there.

Emeritus Faculty

John Harrington

Greetings from the Pacific Northwest. I am doing well and enjoying my new learning experiences, which include gaining a better understanding of the weather patterns of the Pacific Northwest and related forecast challenges. The 2019 warm season was much more enjoyable than 2018, which welcomed Lisa and I with its above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. An additional topic of learning involves moisture characteristics and flavor intensity of the fresh fish varieties available in the local markets.

As a ‘morning lark,’ I tend to have the house to myself for several hours before sunrise each day. I am finding that “retirement” is allowing me the time to read those scholarly publications (e.g., Annals articles) that I did not fit into my busy schedule while working full-time. Current efforts include an attempt to put together an essay on changing climatic thought and a second on the characteristics of human-environment thinking (which include systems thinking, complexity, and the scaling issues related to connecting the local with the global). Every 8 weeks I continue my efforts to donate to the available blood supply. Contributions passed the 4 gallon level this year.

My sister and her husband visited in autumn 2018 and we did a wonderful day-hike along Siouxon Creek in Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The nearly level hike beneath an evergreen forest canopy with an open understory provided the sounds of a rushing stream and a number of places to stop and view waterfalls. In addition to the waterfall hikes, we took advantage of a sunny late afternoon to drive the Spirit Lake Highway toward Mt St Helens from the west to get great late season views of the snow at upper elevations on the volcanic peak. With access to the cultural amenities available in Portland and Seattle, Julie and Paul are thinking that the Pacific Northwest might be a good place for retirement. The region is likely to be a respite from many of the extremes of global climate change.

Siouxon Creek.

Mount St. Helens.

Another cataract that Lisa and I visited was Beaver Creek Falls near Cathlamet, OR, which looks underfit during the dry season.
October 2018 had me back in Manhattan to load my office ‘stuff’ into a U-Haul for transport to Kelso and/or Bay Center. In December 2018, I again flew back to Manhattan to hood my last PhD student, Dr. Thomas Larsen, and to help my youngest son, Colin, move from Manhattan to Kelso. Colin and I were very fortunate to have dry pavement in December and just a few snow showers for the 1,800 mile drive west.

Our attendance at the 2019 AAG in Washington, DC, was productive and very busy. It was great to see many of our geography colleagues and catch up on everyone’s happenings. For me, the Washington AAG meetings marked the 44th consecutive meeting that I have attended. Lisa and I took advantage of a wonderfully warm and sunny April afternoon for a nice walk to visit the National Cathedral, a very impressive physical and cultural structure.

In May 2019, I went to Changchun in northeast China to teach a three week course on Climate and Climate Change for students at Jilin University. I was able to present the important ideas in English. Good questions from the students suggested that my efforts were valued. Away from the university setting, it was a major challenge to communicate in English in Changchun. Fortunately, some had a cell phone app that allowed me to speak in English and then provided a readout in printed Chinese characters. One weekend day while in China, a group of us international instructors took the high speed train to Shenyang (formerly Mukden) to see the sights. We had a very smooth ride with speeds exceeding 300 km/hour at times. We visited the Qing Dynasty Imperial Palace, the tomb of the second Qing emperor, and the 9.18 museum (which documents the horrors of the 1931 Japanese takeover of Manchuria).

My research collaboration with current and former students continues and a good number of publications are being added to my C.V. I just presented work on precipitation seasonality with Dr. Ian Howard (who did his MA with me) at the 10th Pacific Northwest Climate Conference in Portland. Lisa and I drove to Flagstaff in October for the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers annual meeting. At APCG, I presented my thoughts on “Differing Perspectives on the Characteristics of Human-Environment Geography.” November travel plans have us in Austin, TX, for the National Council for Geographic Education annual meeting, where I will be presented with the Miller Award. That trip also will allow us to visit family living in Texas.

Dave Kromm

Dave and Bobbie Kromm continue to age in place in our Manhattan home. We both turned 81 this year. Travels took us to a family reunion in Pennsylvania and a long road trip (for us) to see friends and family in Chicago, Michigan, Cleveland, and Indiana. Photo shows us on the docks at Port Sanilac, Michigan, the picturesque coastal village on Lake Huron where Dave’s father and aunts and uncles were born. Dave’s paternal grandfather was the town miller.
Dick Marston

Four years have passed since I retired from K-State Geography, since which time I have resided on the Balboa Peninsula in Newport Beach, CA. The end of 2018 marked the completion of my 20 years as co-editor-in-chief of the Elsevier journal, Geomorphology, having handled 3355 manuscripts over that time. I remain active in the American Association of Geographers as a presenter at the annual meetings and performing service on AAG committees. I am currently authoring an encyclopedia article, a journal article, and a textbook on geomorphology for Cambridge University Press. This fall I presented an invited talk to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Cal State University at Fullerton on my research in the Himalayas of Nepal, India, and Pakistan; and an invited talk (with two former students as co-authors) at the 50th Annual Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium in Denver on “Portable Field Experiments to Resolve Human Impacts in Geomorphology.”

Nancy and I took an amazing two-week long National Geographic trip to Santiago, Chile, and Antarctica, in February 2019. The Antarctic weather was quite mild and the wildlife exceeded our expectations, as we spotted four species of whales (humpbacked, minke, orcas, blue), along with three species of penguins, plus seals and more. The glaciers and icebergs were spectacular. The NatGeo naturalists on board the ship added much to our experience. After the 2.5 day journey across the Antarctic Ocean, daily excursions were organized on zodiac boats with landings and/or close-up encounters with whales. I even took the “polar plunge” by jumping into Antarctic Ocean, which had a temperature of 29°F.

At Oregon State University, where I completed graduate studies in Geography 1974-1980, I recently established the “Chuck Rosenfeld Muddy Boots Fellowship,” named after my graduate advisor, to support graduate level field studies in physical geography. This mirrors the “Marston Muddy Boots Award” at K-State, named after my paternal grandfather for the same purpose.

My former graduate students from K-State Geography are all gainfully employed in the profession. My son, Bryce (PhD K-State Geography 2017) is employed by the US Forest Service in Wyoming, and my daughter, Brooke (who also has two degrees in Geography), continues to work for the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues within the US Department of State in Washington, D.C. I very much appreciate hearing all the good news from K-State Geography faculty and alumni...keep it coming!

Current Students

Nathan Brownstein (MA student)

This is my first semester as a Master's student at K-State. I have a B.Sc. in Geology (w/Honors) from Millsaps College in Jackson, MS, and a minor in Archaeology. Much of my undergrad research experience was in elemental analysis, archaeological field research, and oil sorbent testing. I am very interested in near surface processes and soils: particularly how soils form, their relationship to landscapes, and the impacts agricultural activity has on them.
**Rebecca Lima Albuquerque Maranhao (PhD student)**  
I’m in my second year of the PhD program and it has been a long learning process! I have to say the last two semesters were substantial in terms of developing my academic skills (Thank you, Dr. Marcellus Caldas!). This year I’m glad to be the Graduate Student Liaison in the Department: I believe it’s important to strengthen the communication between professors and students. In November, I am pretty excited to present my research entitled “The water volume change in Lake Sobradinho in Brazil” in the Graduate Climate Conference in Massachusetts. Since the access to water is a recurring concern for people living in the Northeast of Brazil, developing methods that use remote sensing to estimate the extent and volume of water bodies such as Lake Sobradinho are relevant to better water management activities in this region. I’m glad about this work that came from a project that I did in Dr. Jida’s Remote Sensing of Water class (Thank you!)  
I’ve been working on the LULC change caused by agricultural dynamics in the Brazilian Cerrado and its impacts on fragmentation of habitats, crop vulnerability to pests, and drought disturbances. I’m taking Landscape Ecology and Agricultural Climatology classes to help develop my dissertation. I highly recommend these if you are interested in ecological processes, including dispersal and movement behavior, and population distributions/dynamics, as well climate models (Dr. Kimberly With and Dr. Xiaomao Lin are awesome professors!). I’m also excited that I’m finally going to visit Chicago with my partner during the Thanksgiving break! Busy semester!

**Abbey Marcotte (MA student; BS alumna 2018)**  
This year began with a bang, as I started the year with the trip of a lifetime to the Netherlands. If you are like me and New Year’s Eve is one of your favorite holidays, then I highly recommend you celebrate it in the Netherlands at least once in your life (just Google it if you’re curious). While there, I took a month-long class at Wageningen University called 4th Dimension in Earth’s Surface to learn about Quaternary dating techniques and landscape reconstruction techniques to help me with my thesis research. At the end of the month, I completed a group project reconstructing drift sand activity and evolution of the Laarder Wasmee area in the Netherlands using optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating. All the time in between was spent traveling around the Netherlands with my beloved host family and learning about the Dutch way of life.  
This summer I worked in the luminescence laboratory at the Desert Research Institute in Reno, NV, to learn the fundamentals of single grain luminescence dating techniques and to perform research for an NSF grant that my advisor, Abby Langston, received. I also got to prepare and analyze some samples of my own from Kings Creek (in Konza Prairie) for my thesis. Aside from work, two months with the Sierra Nevadas in my backyard provided me with a host of the best hiking and camping adventures I’ve ever had. Overall, 2019 has been a pretty spectacular year of travel (mostly for science!), finishing up coursework, and making headway on my research. It’s hard to believe that graduation is just around the corner!

![Rebecca](image1.jpg)  
**Abbey (2nd from right) and her group from the 4th Dimension class before presenting their poster to the Soil Geography and Landscape group at WUR.**

**Avantika Ramekar (PhD student)**  
I began 2019 by traveling to five counties, three in Kansas and two in Oklahoma, to interview public officials for my research. Summer began with transcribing these interviews, followed by two meetings: one in Washington, DC, and the other in Vermont.  
In Washington, I got a chance to attend the American Association of Geographer’s 18th Annual Geography
Faculty Development Alliance (GFDA) Workshop. It was a week-long workshop catered towards helping early career faculty succeed in our careers. I got valuable feedback to improve my teaching skills, and found a community of fellow geographers to support and help by establishing networks and connections for teaching, research collaboration, and service. More importantly, sessions on strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance helped in getting useful guidance beyond academic life.

After the GFDA workshop, I traveled to the northeastern US. I spent some time with a former colleague and his family, exploring the country’s first National Highway in western Maryland. Since both of us were presenting at the Quadrennial Rural Conference, we decided to drive from Maryland to Vermont. We stopped at several locations on the way but the two most exciting for me were Crown Point on Lake Champlain and one of the best rock exposures in Maryland, a textbook syncline called Sideling Hill on Interstate 68.

This was my first time visiting this part of the country. Driving through the beautiful Adirondacks and seeing several Appalachian towns on the way is a dream come true for the rural geographer in me! To add to my excitement, I was one amongst only 4 other graduate students presenting at the conference from a total contingent of 32 members including some UK, Canadian, and Australian rural geographers. In Vermont, we had several field visits, including a dairy farm, a farm to table initiative, community farming, maple syrup making, a ski resort and a community performing arts center.

_Hilda Onuoha (PhD student)_

As I keep growing my teaching skills (while teaching Human Geography) this year, I spent most of the summer and beginning of fall taking my doctoral program candidacy qualifying exams and advancing to candidacy. Dr. Hutchinson and I were awarded a small research grant by the KansasView program. Also, my research group at my job at the National Space Research and Development Agency, Abuja, published a paper late last year on a project that was carried out two years ago identifying potential hotspots for desertification for intervention in a rural state in Northern Nigeria:


On a more personal note, I have a first grader and preschooler! Even though they struggle with some special needs, we are learning to take it slow and breathe.
Alumni

Jeremy Aber (MA 2007, PhD 2012)

It really doesn’t feel like it’s been seven years since I graduated from KSU Geography! Since finishing my PhD in December of 2012, I worked just down the road for one year at Emporia State University in the Earth Science program. Following that, I found a tenure-track position in geography at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, and my wife Amy and I have been living there since. I’m working in a Geosciences department combining Physical Geography, Geology, and Environmental Science. I teach GIS, Cartography, and our introductory Physical Geography GenEd course.

Since leaving Manhattan, I’ve been fortunate to have many opportunities to return for visits. Each summer I lead a field course to Colorado and we always stop to see the Flint Hills and other points of interest. Presenting research has also brought me back, in the sense that attending the AAG annual meeting allows me to connect with some great K-State people, always a good time! I also had the opportunity to travel and present work in New Zealand. Naturally, we took a little time to see the sights of Auckland while we were there, and since then I’ve become mildly obsessed with the kiwi bird!

I’ve been slowly but surely drifting toward the application of my GIS and remote sensing skills to the study of local environmental justice issues, primarily surrounding the problem of solid waste. My work has manifested itself both in research involving students and in community activism working with local government. However, the biggest academic news for us happened this past August when I got confirmation that I’ve been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor! It’s been a great experience to work with many excellent people in Tennessee, and my graduate experiences at K-State were foundational in helping to get me to where I am!

Ryan Bergstrom (PhD 2012)

It’s been a “full” year as we like to say in our household. Milestones on the homefront included learners’ permits, half marathons, ballet performances of the Nutcracker, shoulder surgeries, and a second birthday. Career milestones include participation in the Eighth Quadrennial Conference of British, Canadian and American Rural Geographers. Highlights of the conference included visiting a sugarhouse and sleeping on a twin mattress in a dorm room (one highlight exceeded the hype, the other fell far short). This fall I will be participating in an early career workshop in Cedar Falls, Iowa, for Arctic scholars, and I am hoping to parlay this into an invitation to a conference in Arkhangelsk, Russia, this coming summer.

Rob Briwa (MA 2015)

Greetings, all. On June 30th I left Montana to move to San Angelo, Texas, where I am now a tenure-track assistant professor of Geography within Angelo State University’s Department of History. Along the way I was glad to spend a few days in Manhattan and catch up with Jeff Smith, Kevin Blake, Avantika Ramekar, and the Konza Prairie. It was a fulfilling road trip: I took two weeks, passed through six states, and drove state and county routes whenever possible. It turns out there are still roadside cafés and diners where a tired geographer can buy a slice of (good) pie and two cups of (bad) coffee for $2.50...and pick up some friendly recommendations about what to see along the next stretch of road, too.

My position at Angelo State University officially started in August. I’m thrilled to be instructing in the class room again and excited to see where this new leg of my professional journey takes me. On September 3rd I was back in Bozeman, Montana, to defend my dissertation completed under the mentorship of Dr. Bill Wyckoff, entitled “Geographic Perspectives on State-Directed Heritage Production in Twentieth-Century Montana.” I passed! With the dissertation defense now in the rear-view mirror, I look forward to immersing myself more fully into the new position, the Angelo State and San Angelo communities, and into West Texas landscapes and places.
Johnny Coomansingh (JC) (PhD 2002)
Community Engagement and A Struggling Village in Trinidad

Having agreed to write a book chapter for a handbook titled *Community Based Tourism Management: Concepts, Issues & Implications* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis), I found myself in Trinidad walking about in the northern village of Grande Riviere. I needed to do on the ground interviews and observations to satisfy the requirements for my chapter, “Saving the Leatherback Turtle in Grande Riviere, Trinidad: Community Engagement at Work.”

Abstract

In 1921, Grande Riviere, a coastal village on the north coast of Trinidad staggered to survive under the pressure of soft cocoa prices on the world market. Grande Riviere was once a dominant cocoa-producing area. Without the money garnered from the cocoa industry, Grande Riviere fell by the “wayside.” The culture gradually changed to *survival of the fittest* mode. Since then, the village sought to sustain itself through subsistence farming and a little fishing. Most of the villagers resorted to “hunter-gatherer” exploits. The included the poaching and slaughter of the leatherback turtle and their eggs (*Demochelys coriacea*) for food. This situation led to a serious reduction in the numbers of turtles coming to nest on the Grande Riviere beach. In 1970, the leatherback sea turtle among others was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Conservation Act. Slaughtered for their eggs, meat, skin, and shells, sea turtles suffer from poaching and over-exploitation. Nevertheless, in 1990, the tourism industry slowly began to take hold on the village. With a tiny population of just 334 people, Grande Riviere made a valiant effort in saving the leatherback turtle with a view of luring tourists to the area. With increased environmental awareness at the local, national, regional, and international levels, the leatherback turtle in Grande Riviere has made a wonderful and exciting comeback with hundreds of turtles returning to lay their eggs every night during the turtle watching season March 01 to August 31. Today, the villagers and other supporting governmental and non-governmental agencies have declared the non-consumption of the meat of the leatherback turtle and the Grande Riviere Beach as a protected area. Many jobs in Grande Riviere now depend on the presence of the leatherback turtle. This research seeks to furnish historical and ethnographic data with respect to community-engagement in the saving of the leatherback turtle. This bit of research proves clearly the danger in monoculture and the lack of diversification in the economic system of any place. What was interesting though was the quantity of vacant hotel rooms among all the hotels in Grande Riviere. Quite a few hoteliers found it bizarre this year that the turtles have stopped nesting since early July 2019.

Presenting a copy of my book, ‘An Understanding of the Trinidad Carnival,’ to the Cordettes Steel Orchestra, Sangre Grande, Trinidad. Receiving the book is Keston Bengochea, captain of the orchestra. Also in the picture are students and teachers from Ohio involved in a cultural immersion program in Trinidad. (Used by permission. Photo by Ray Assing)

Apart from my ongoing research, I will soon be publishing my next book: Fifteen Christmas Poems and Some... where I have put together several poems about Christmas. I have been writing these poems between 2003 and 2019. Complementing the poems are some stories about how Christmas is celebrated in Trinidad, in essence, “Trini Christmas” culture (preparation, music (parranda), cuisine, religious pageants, etc.).

Chris Dunn (BS 1993, MA 1994)
Christopher W. Dunn, JD [2014] has combined GIS, business, forensics, and law in his company, located in Columbia, Missouri. Visit https://GeoVelo.com for cool stuff or to make contact.

Matt Gerike (PhD 2012)
Since January I’ve been commuting four days a week to downtown Richmond, working with the Virginia Information Technology Agency’s Integrated Services Program (VITA-ISP). ISP supports the Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) and GIS clearinghouse, but also supports 9-1-1 PSAP call centers and GIS for localities across the commonwealth. Most of my time focuses on helping localities prepare spatial data necessary for Next Generation 9-1-1, which leverages geospatial call routing. Virginia’s mandate is to have everyone at “next gen” in a few years. It is a large and satisfying project to contribute to.

The views from the James Monroe building, the tallest in Virginia, are neat, but I also enjoy the views at a York River State Park closer to home.

Brandon H. Haddock (PhD 2016)
The past few years have been of great personal and professional accomplishment for me. Before graduating in 2016 I was appointed the Coordinator of the K-State LGBT Resource Center in Student Life. As a new position and office on our campus, it was challenging and rewarding to build a program that reflected the needs of

Leslie Duram (MS 1991)
I am now Program Director for Geography within the School of Earth Systems and Sustainability at Southern Illinois University (Carbondale). I also enjoy working with students from across campus who participate in our Environmental Studies Minor.
our students, faculty, and staff of minority sexuality and gender identities. Since the opening of the Resource Center in 2010 the office - and University - has been recognized as a leading institution for enacting change for and supporting the LGBTQ community. In 2013 I was awarded the Campus Pride-Voice in Action National Advisor award for my work in Higher Education. And in 2017 I was awarded the K-State Division of Student Life's Putting Students First Award.

In the past few months the LGBT Resource Center and my current position have transitioned from reporting to the Office of Student Life to the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Student Affairs, working with Dr. Debra Bolton in Intercultural Learning and Development. Along with many changes in the structure of our Student Life divisions and administrative responsibilities, the transition has proved to be reinvigorating for my work at K-State as additional responsibilities and opportunities are created.

In addition to my work at K-State I also am an adjunct faculty member in Geography at Highland Community College-Wamego Campus and Cloud County Community College-Geary County Campus. Being able to continue to be an educator and an advocate for the geosciences in conjunction with my passion for equity and justice for our communities has been greatly fulfilling. And in the spirit of continuing my work and enjoying my passion in the geosciences, I continue to work with on-going research projects such as trail erosion rates in Hercules Glade National Wilderness and cave mapping in northwestern Arkansas.

**Jason Holcomb (MA 1994; PhD 2000)**

I made my annual trip to Kansas the past summer, but for a different reason than usual. My mission this time was to learn more about precision agriculture after another twist in the drama of the geography faculty at Morehead State University. Last spring I was contacted by the provost, and after a couple more meetings I learned I was being reassigned to the Department of Agricultural Sciences to begin teaching the brand new and only precision agriculture (PA) class, and then to develop a PA certificate. I now have a different title. Yes, I was surprised.

On my trip to Kansas I visited with a PA instructor at Highland Community College and then met with a John Deere employee I know who trains farmers and does troubleshooting related to PA. I happened to meet said John Deere employee in the same town where the granddaughter of Joe Tucker lives, which was quite a coincidence since I had been communicating with her and others in her family for a couple years about donating their original Massey Harvest Brigade materials to a special collection at Hale Library. Mr. Tucker organized the Massey Harvest Brigade to use Massey-Harris self-propelled combines to harvest the 1944 and 1945 wheat crops. I met with Tucker’s granddaughter a couple of times to get some of these rare documents, photos, and other materials, and then I delivered them to the Morse Department of Special Collections archivist at Hale Library. Had I not been in Kansas to get some PA training, I don’t know when or how we would have delivered these materials to Manhattan. I was happy to be able to get them to the library, and I got to spend about a week in Kansas at no cost to myself! I still miss Kansas.

In other work-related news, I am working on an article with Dr. Stan Brunn of the University of Kentucky about rural abandonment. I presented this research at the Great Plain/Rocky Mountain AAG meeting in Lawrence this fall. In family news, Ian is in first grade. Heather has been in charge of moving us to a new house in the Morehead area.

**Ian Howard (MA 2013)**

It is hard to believe it has been nearly 6 years since receiving my Master’s from Kansas State! Since then, I have been pursuing my PhD in Geosciences at the University of Arkansas, studying tree rings and paleoclimatology with Dr. David Stahle. We spent our first two years in Fayetteville, then my wife was accepted as a fellow into the Arkansas Teachers’ Corp, which
required us to move down to Hope for three years while she taught at the local high school and obtained her teaching license through this alternative method. I received my PhD in the spring of 2019, and this past summer we moved back up to Fayetteville, where I am currently a post-doc continuing my work in the department. My current research is focused on using tree-ring data to reconstruct precipitation variability at the seasonal (to even the daily) timescale in California and Colorado. The study and conservation of ancient woodlands has become an integral component of my academic career, and our tree-ring lab here at the U of A recently published a paper in Environmental Research Communications documenting the discovery of a bald cypress tree over 2600 years old in the swamps of Black River, North Carolina (making bald cypress the 5th oldest tree on the planet).

By far the biggest news of the last couple years was the addition of our first child, Finlee, who was born on March 18, 2018. Having a child completely changes your life for the better, and we are incredibly grateful to have such a happy and vibrant little guy draining every ounce of energy we have. I’m also helping to coordinate Texas State University’s first online master's degree in geographic education, which is currently open for applications. Furthermore, I’ve had the fortune of becoming faculty advisor for TX State’s chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU). At the fall semester’s end, I’ll take a one-month backpacking trip across Europe.

**Chris Laingen (PhD 2009)**

Greetings to everyone! Ten years go by quickly. I’m beginning my 11th year at Eastern Illinois University in the Department of Geology & Geography. The past year was an eventful one, both professionally and personally. I finished my 2nd book project with John Hudson. A couple of years ago we published American Farms, American Food, and our 2nd book, A Geography of Illinois: Historical, Physical, Regional is currently under consideration with Southern Illinois University Press. Along with a couple of other publications, work has been focused on getting back into the swing of full-time teaching after a Spring 2018 sabbatical. With any luck, 2019 will be my last full year as an associate professor, as this coming spring I’ll be putting in my promotion portfolio for consideration for Full Professor. More professional info about me is at: www.eiu.edu/geoscience/faculty.php?id=crilaingen.

Our family is doing well, too. My wife, Sam, and I have two kids: Kenny (7) and Edy (5). They’re active in sports, Jiu-Jitsu, and gymnastics. This past summer we took a 4-

**Thomas Larsen (PhD 2018)**

Situated in the Texas Hill Country at Texas State, I have filmed and edited a series of interviews with professional geographers, in collaboration with the AAG and the National Center for Research in Geographic Education (NCRGE). Powerful Geography videos are available on YouTube for public consumption, and instructors are highly encouraged to integrate them into lectures:

- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjSKJXTxEdE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjSKJXTxEdE)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhKlwCpFvaQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhKlwCpFvaQ)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5rDP3XPUvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5rDP3XPUvM)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n_j3DyatsA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n_j3DyatsA)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWN8g6qIX-A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWN8g6qIX-A)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq4ymvN6i6Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq4ymvN6i6Y)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3h7LkT8Nk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3h7LkT8Nk)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQL0nMrlnMk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQL0nMrlnMk)

**National Geographic Educator Certification workshop, Oct 2019. (Thomas front right.)**
day family trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota. The kids enjoyed it (thankfully), so there's hope for future retreats away from wifi and cellular connectivity. We also took a trip to Australia for two weeks in mid-August with my wife’s former employer, the University of Illinois women’s basketball team. We were able to travel to Melbourne, Cairns (including a snorkeling trip the Great Barrier Reef), and Sydney. I hope all is well with all of the other alumni as well as current students and faculty.

2018, my third (and final) daughter was born and I have been living happily ever after, ever since.

The Laingen family, Sydney, August 2019.

Len Le Blanc (BS 1973)

I got my Master's of Science in Technology and Sustainability (M.S.T.S.) from the American University of Sovereign Nations (AUSN) earlier this year. The thesis was on sea level rise and how nations will cope with shrinking shorelines and relocating populations affected by the rise.

Scott Leis (MA 2005)

Since graduating from K-State in 2005, I have been extremely happy with the majority of the events in my life. In the fall of 2005, I joined the US Peace Corps and went to The Federated States of Micronesia where I lived and worked in Yap State. Upon my return in 2007, I spent a couple of months back in Wisconsin visiting with family before moving to Washington, DC, in the spring of 2008 to start a career as a Cartographer for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In 2010, I was married to a wonderful woman from Maryland and our first daughter soon followed (2011). In 2014, my second daughter was born and I took a new position within the FAA as an Airspace and Instrument Flight Procedures Specialist with a team that maintained the FAA’s navigational information database. In 2017, I switched jobs once again to join the FAA’s international operations group, where I am currently responsible for supporting our operational activities in the Caribbean region. In

Lisa Tabor Millsaps (MA 2011)

I am deep in my tenure-track position (year 3!) at the University of Northern Iowa and I love it. This past year has been a whole lot of work that has been very rewarding. Highlights include my service-learning course being successful, my first study abroad to Peru not going as planned but still working out, and proudly graduating my first two MA students. New adventures include taking over as Director the MA in Social Science Education program, planning for a new course in Climate Change and Social Justice, and traveling with my grad students for their thesis fieldwork in Costa Rica over the upcoming holiday break.

On a personal note, my husband Seth and I moved into our first home (our doggo finally has a fenced yard) and we enjoyed our first “real” vacation together in St. Croix, USVI, since the mess of moving about and getting settled that our last few years have been. We are really embracing Iowa right now, so that, most notably, we held an “Iowa” themed get together last week, complete with hamballs, cheesy taters, scotcheroos, Busch Lattes, and a whole lot of polite manners. 😊
**Ramatoulaye Ndiaye (PhD 2009)**

It has been almost 10 years since graduating from KSU (December 2009). From 2009 to 2019, I went back to Senegal and worked as a consultant in a USAID project in Natural Resource Management (2010). After that I taught a MS degree in environment at Dakar University during one semester. During the summer 2011, I was hired at the Senegalese Agriculture Research Institute where I am still working as a researcher in soil science.

I now hold the position of the soil analysis laboratory manager at the regional station of ISRA in Saint-Louis, a small town bordered by the Senegal River and the Atlantic Ocean. I’ve advised two masters students and one PhD student. My first masters student, Sokhna Seck, graduate in 2014, and Tegaye Diop - the PhD student - in 2017. Tegaye is now teaching at the undergrad level at Gaston Berger University of Saint-Louis.

I did training on integrated rice management in Japan in 2014 where I spent 6 weeks at Nagoya and Kagoshima University. I also went to Korea with the KOICA during the summer 2016 for training on integrated fertilizer management in irrigated rice schemes and in salt-affected soil.

I’ve travelled in several African countries for conferences, including Ghana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Morocco, Algeria, and in Asia, including Dubai, Seoul, and Nagoya. Travels have been great experiences for me.

Since last year I am coordinating research in soil fertility map in order to review the fertilizer recommendation according to the soil nutrient deficiency for rice in the Senegal River valley area in collaboration with ISRIC ( Wageningen University). I got married in November 2016 and am now Mrs. Dièye.

![Rama and husband at Gorée Island.](image)

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**Lis Pankl (PhD 2015)**

I’m still enjoying living and working in Utah! So far, I’ve only made it to Arches, but I look forward to visiting other National Parks in Utah soon. Also, I continue to build on my work about Frida Kahlo. I prepared a presentation on the geographies of disability in the work and life of Frida for the GPRM 2019 Regional Meeting at KU.

![Rama in the field installing a rice trial.](image)
**Mike Rawitch (BS 2012)**

This has been another exciting year for the Rawitch’s! My wife (Merritt) and I spent several weeks in Hawaii earlier this year. We were able to explore many of the remote parts of Maui and some beautiful beaches. While in Hawaii, we found out that Merritt is pregnant and we will be getting a baby boy in January! We are very excited to welcome Baby Boy Rawitch into our home to bring our household total to four (including Gunner the labradoodle). Merritt is working as a pediatric therapist for Children’s Mercy Home Health, and continues to love what she does.

Professionally, it has been an extremely exciting year for me at Ramboll. Of particular interest, I have been involved in our corporate innovation program to develop new business service lines. The service line I have been working to develop was selected from nearly 300 original ideas company wide, and involves utilizing remote sensing data, custom built machine learning algorithms, and web-based GIS reporting for environmental and transportation clients across the United States and Europe. The process has given me a great opportunity to be on the cutting edge of several emerging technologies and to learn a lot about the integration of business and emerging technologies. I’ve also had the unique opportunity to continue developing drone-based consulting services for Ramboll, and have continued presenting and publishing on the topic of drone use for the environmental field.

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**John Roberts (BS 1972, MA 1974)**

I first dreamed about going to the Farallon Islands when looking at a map in Thompson Hall, then the home of the Geography Department on the Kansas State University campus. Noting that the islands lay 29 miles west of San Francisco, it seemed exotic and amazing that they even existed. I told myself then that someday, I would go see them. I finally did that, just this late summer, having gotten a seat on a six-person crew using a 41-foot sailboat as our transportation.

The conditions going out were mostly foggy, and we dodged tankers and cargo ships frequently (they really do communicate with horns, a lot, in the fog). The sea was calm. As we got closer to the Farallons, though, the fog dissipated and the wind picked up, which allowed us to put the sails to good use. We arrived at about 3:10 p.m., making this a seven-plus hour trip.

The Farallon Islands are barren, and it is typically windy there. The smell of bird manure is overwhelmingly awful. Currents are unpredictable and strong. There are no beaches. Just steep, rocky shorelines. Onshore island access is nearly impossible and illegal. But we circumnavigated the Southeast Farallon Islands, getting a good 360-degree look.

The sail back was harrowing, with strong wave action, and, as we approached the Golden Gate in darkness, we dealt with a flood tide that stirred things up, making the waves more widely spaced but greater in height. It’s been my experience that coming through the Golden Gate in a following sea is good luck. That’s what we had, and it made me feel fortunate.
We left port in Sausalito at 7:45a, arriving at Southeast Farallon at 3:10p, and we returned to Sausalito at 9:50p. All in all a fabulous trip, and one of my KSU Geography Department dreams was accomplished!

I continue work designing, building and managing nature preserves for a non-profit organization in Sacramento, CA.

Rex Rôbichaux (MA 2010)
The past five years have been eventful, exciting, and expansive as life has taken me and my growing family from Colorado, to California, and finally to Virginia following expanding GIS opportunities. In 2016, I made the move from County employment as a GIS Specialist to accept an analyst position with Esri in Redlands, California on their Enterprise Geodatabase Team. We relocated to Northern Virginia in 2018, while working to expand that team to Esri’s Vienna Regional office. Most recently, I’ve pursued a new opportunity as the GIS Administrator at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in Richmond, Virginia where I have the opportunity to daily apply my interests in environmental science and GIS. We welcomed our daughter Ayen to the world while living in Colorado in April of 2014, and more recently our son Rowen while in California in November of 2018. In our free time, we enjoy getting the kids out to see natural and historical areas, camping, fishing, and astronomy when the skies are clear.

Brad Rundquist (MA 1995, PhD 2000)
On July 1, 2019, I officially assumed the role of Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of North Dakota, following a national search. I had served as Interim Dean since the previous summer. My College houses 19 departments (including Geography & GISc), several special programs, and more than 300 faculty and staff. Each day brings a new challenge, but I have enjoyed it so far. Kristen (MA 2000) was recently promoted to GS-12 and continues to work for the US Air Force in the area of natural and cultural resources management at the Grand Forks Air Force Base. Our son Kendall is getting married in May in Austin, TX. He works as a Requirements Analyst for General Motors in Austin. Son Riley is doing well and works as a Revenue Manager for Hilton Worldwide Corporation in Dallas. Our daughter Ella is a senior in high school and is considering where to attend university. We had the pleasure of showing her around K-State and Manhattan last summer. Daughter Autumn started middle school this year.

Patricia Bennett Solis (BA,BS 1994; MA 1996)
I recently wrapped up a trip to Heidelberg Germany where I gave a couple of talks and posters on YouthMappera at the State of the Map, the global conference related to OpenStreetMap. Here I met my good friend Anne Herberg who now works at the Technical University of Dortmund. She and I met when she was studying abroad at Kansas State in the Geography department in 1994. We’ve been lucky to see each other and our families several times over the years and continue scheming about what location in the world we need will meet! It’s a tribute to how lifelong friends and how life changing these international exchange experiences can be! Go Cats! [Patricia is now Executive Director, Knowledge Exchange for Resilience at Arizona State.]

Patricia Solis and Anne Herberg.

Mitch Stimers (PhD 2011)
I am still working as Cloud County Community College’s Chief Information Officer, and teaching on the side. Over the summer I developed an environmental science course for online delivery, and that was offered for the first time in the fall. This marks the beginning of my sixth year as a Phi Theta Kappa advisor (the honor society for the two-year college), and I have taken on two additional roles with the organization. First, the advisor for the Concordia (main) campus left for another job, so I am now senior advisor for the Beta Eta Xi chapter on the Geary County campus as well as for the Upsilon Tau chapter (Concordia). The Beta Eta Xi chapter had a great year in 2018-19, with their honors project, “Voting Habits in the 2018 Midterm Elections,” winning first place at the regional level, named a top-50 project, and winning a PTK Hallmark Award at the international level. It was one of 16 projects (out of 493 entries) chosen for publication in...
the PTK journal *Civic Scholar: The Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Undergraduate Research* (Vol. 2, 2019). The data collected from that project was plentiful, so I, along with the psychology instructor at Cloud, am currently working on a paper dealing with the Dunning-Kruger Effect apparent in those results. My part has been the statistical analysis (and learning some psychology!) while hers has been the writing focused on the psychology.

Starting in 2018 I began a four year appointment as a member of PTK’s Honors Program Council, which develops the honors programming and curriculum for the organization. The first of two two-year-long programs I’ve helped develop launches in January, and is titled: “To the Seventh Generation: Legacy and Inheritance.” Of the seven essays in the programming guide, mine was focused on climate and environmental change; I also penned the sample project for the student guide, and developed the *Roadmap for Student Research* guide. I was named a Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Advisor in April 2019 at the international conference in Orlando, Florida.

Current research in geography has included two recent papers with a former officer and special forces commando in the Sri Lankan army, focused on land use impacts on archaeological sites in southern Sri Lanka, and land use planning along the Nilwala River, also in southern Sri Lanka. Closer to home, I contributed eight entries to Dr. Paul’s two-volume forthcoming work, *The Encyclopedia of Disasters*.

### Carter (Chuyuan) Wang (MA 2012)

Greetings to all the faculties, staff, and students! I finished my PhD in Geography in summer 2018 in the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University. I am currently working as an Assistant Research Professor in the same department. I have been developing and conducting research on urban climate and environment, urban ecosystems, and land use/land cover changes using remote sensing and GIS. I recently obtained a NASA grant to study urban outdoor water use and the urban heat island effect for the Phoenix metropolitan area.

As a geographer, I am passionate about traveling and visiting new places. Since 2010, I have set foot in all the 50 states in the US, including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. I went to Alaska this summer and witnessed the impact of changing climate on glaciers and the landscape. I have been learning new things through traveling, and it drives my curiosity on how geographers can help people better understand the changing world and mitigate the negative impacts from these changes.

### Selected Faculty Accomplishments

**Marcellus Caldas**

- Audrey Joslin, Marcellus Caldas, and Jason Bergtold were awarded $42,795 through the Global Food Systems Seed Grant at KSU for their project, "Agricultural Food Production and the Conservation Reserve Program in the Context of Wildfire: Assessing Rural Perceptions and Land Management in the US Southern Plains;" Oct 1, 2019-Sept 29, 2020.

**Lisa Harrington**

Plenary presentation, 8th Quadrennial Conference of British, Canadian, and American Rural Geographers, July, Burlington, VT.


**Shawn Hutchinson**

- Earned a certificate in *Effective Teaching Practices* from the Association of College and University Educators.
- Assisted regional chair Arnaud Temme in hosting a successful 2018 Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Regional Meeting here at K-State.
- Became a NAUI certified scuba diver!

**Audrey Joslin**

- Co-PI with 10 other researchers: awarded $1 million through the National Science Foundation C-Accel Grant (Award #1937033). Their project is "Building the Federalism Data and Advanced Statistics Hub (FDASH);" Sept 2019-May 2020.
- Audrey Joslin, Marcellus Caldas, and Jason Bergtold were awarded $42,795 through the Global Food Systems Seed Grant at KSU for their project, "Agricultural Food Production and the Conservation Reserve Program in the Context of Wildfire: Assessing Rural Perceptions and Land Management in the US Southern Plains;" Oct 1, 2019-Sept 29, 2020.

**Max Lu**

- Served as a Question Leader at the 2019 AP Human Geography reading in Cincinnati, in June. This year, 233,000 students in the US and elsewhere took the AP Human Geography exam.
- Invited presenter of College Board’s AP Summer Institutes in Buffalo, New York and Grand Rapids, Michigan in July.

**Chuck Martin**

- Article on heavy metal storage in tributary streams of the Lahn and Dill Rivers published in *Catena*, an interdisciplinary journal of soil science, hydrology, and geomorphology.
- Served as member of the Editorial Board for the journal *Geomorphology*.
- Conducted fieldwork along the Lahn River, Germany, in March and July 2019.

**Kendra McLauchlan**


**Kate Nelson**

- Three publications in 2019, including one in *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment* and another in *Risk Analysis*.
- Awarded a Kansas State University Center for Engagement and Community Development – Engagement Incentive Grant, “Building Our Sustainable Future through Community Engagement.”
- Awarded a Kansas State University – University Small Research Grant, “Understanding the Influence of Scale on Characterization of the Social Vulnerability of High Flood Risk Populations.”
Selected as a Kansas State University Civic Engagement Fellow.

**Bimal Paul**


**Jeff Smith**


**Arnaud Temme**

- Interviewed for a Dutch newspaper article about climbing, dangers and climate change: https://www.volkskrant.nl/wetenschap/door-opwarming-van-de-aarde-verkruimelt-de-mont-blanc-langzaam~b832735e/?fbclid=IwAR1HBTUrfM1FQER42GM_Emu3iDxfoGq8mOAJNc7CnQrt7VMfit3Tkl2s4.

**Jida Wang**


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**2019 Graduate Student Theses and Dissertations (completed to date)**

Anderson, Christina. "Resettlement and Adjustment of Bhutanese Refugees in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area." Dissertation (Dr. Max Lu and Dr. Jeffrey S. Smith)

Ding, Meng. "An Improved Geography of Surface Water Abundance in Lakes and Reservoirs." Thesis (Dr. Jida Wang)

Chileen, Barrie. "Vegetation Response to Wildfire and Climate Forcing in a Rocky Mountain Lodgepole Pine Forest over the Past 2,500 Years." Thesis (Dr. Kendra McLauchlan)

Rogers, John. "The Contemporary Scottish Gaelic Linguistic and Cultural Landscape." Thesis (Dr. Jeffrey S. Smith)
Student Awards

Christy Jean and Avantika Ramekar received AAG Rural Geography Specialty Group Travel Awards ($500 each) to participate in the Quadrennial Rural Geography conference. Avantika also received 2019 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Small Grant Program funding to conduct fieldwork.

Md. Abu Sayeed Maroof was awarded the 2019 Student Research Proposal Award by the AAG Water Resource Specialty Group.


The geography department presented awards and scholarships on May 2:

- Vu Vo, junior, Huber Self Scholarship in Geography.
- Ricardo Gonzalez, senior, H.L. "Sy" Seyler Undergraduate GIScience Scholarship.
- Joseph Coleman, junior, William Grimm Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship.
- Rose Micke, senior, Leonard LeBlanc Outstanding Undergraduate Major Award.
- Jakob Hanschu, senior, and Margaret "Meg" Szed, senior, National Council for Geographic Education/American Association of Geographers Excellence in Scholarship Award.
- Abbey Marcotte, master's student, and Avantika Ramekar, doctoral student, Stephen and Susan White Geography GTA Award.
- Abbey Marcotte, Milton and Emma Jean Rafferty Gamma Theta Upsilon Geography Scholarship.
- Michael Molloy, master's student, Mary Dobbs Outstanding Citizen Award.
- Nicholas Winegard, junior, Robert H. Williams Undergraduate Geography Scholarship.
- Michael Stumpff, master's student, Marston Muddy Boots Award.
- Abu Maroof, doctoral student, Geography Graduate Student Leadership Award.
- Abbey Marcotte, master's student, and Colleen Gura, doctoral student, Steven Kale Graduate Research Fellowships.
- Rebecca Lima, doctoral student; Dong Lou, doctoral student; Michael Molloy, master's student; and Michael Stumpff, master's student, Geography Graduate Research Grants.

Note from the editor: Many thanks to those who contributed information and photos. It’s been great to see all of your life changes and activities. Apologies for any mistakes, and for the few omissions I made for length and consistency purposes.

If you were only reached late in the process of putting this together (or not at all), it is likely you are/were missing from our listservs. Please contact us so we don’t lose you! If you have contact information for any other graduates of the department, please pass it along. Keep in touch - LButlerH@ksu.edu.