

ZENITH

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY





DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY
College of Arts and Sciences

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Letter from the Department Head

Dear Alumni and Friends of Geography,

Campus is getting busier as we near the end of the summer and prepare for the fall semester. We are so excited to welcome our new and returning students! In spite of the challenges we faced last year, we have much good news to share. Here is a snapshot of some of highlights and news from the department.

I am delighted to report that we received an awesome response to our call for donations to our Susan Shaull Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. Your generosity made it possible for us to endow that fund and provide a monetary award to our graduate student award recipients. Susan was a longtime staff member and administrative assistant in our department. She was an outstanding employee and colleague who continually went above and beyond in her duties. How awesome it is to honor her legacy with this endowment!



This past spring, after 27 years as a faculty member in the department, Professor Dale Lightfoot retired. During that time, he also served as Department Head for 17 years. He taught a wide variety of courses in the department over the years. His Middle East course became a staple offering, as did his study abroad course to Morocco. His research educated us all on the topic of qanats—underground tunnels in arid lands that convey water via gravity flow to settlements. Speaking of water, we are still using the stream table that he and colleague Dr. Tom Wikle designed and built for our physical geography lab. Dr. Lightfoot, we wish you all the best in your retirement.

As a result of the pandemic and Governor Stitt's establishment in Stillwater of the Oklahoma Pandemic Center for Innovation and Excellence last October, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Glen Krutz, led a special search to hire an interdisciplinary cluster of faculty with expertise in the area of infectious disease. Six faculty were hired in departments across the College, including one in Geography. Dr. Tao Hu joined us this August and comes to OSU from the Center for Geographic Analysis at Harvard University where he worked as a postdoctoral fellow. He brings expertise in health geography, geospatial big data, and location-based social media.

We are also excited to welcome two new visiting assistant professors: Dr. José Torres and Dr. Rafiq Islam. Among other classes in their schedules, Dr. Torres will be teaching Regions and Nations (formerly World Regional Geography), and Dr. Islam will be teaching Meteorology and coordinating our Physical Geography labs.

Faculty research continues apace. As I write this, we have nine funded research projects from sponsors such as NASA, NSF, USDA, and other agencies. These projects involve many of our students and provide excellent career preparation for them as well as critical support for faculty discoveries.

One of our goals for this year is to rejuvenate our social media presence. We hope you will follow us on Facebook (@OSUgeog). Best wishes to all and stay in touch!

Alyson Greiner

Professor and Department Head



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Scholarships

Alumni Support: We Appreciate You!

So many of you have contributed to our different scholarships. Your support during the pandemic has been incredibly helpful.

This year, your generosity enabled us to reach the endowment level on the Susan Shaull Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. As a result, we were able to give a cash award to the Shaull Award recipient!

We hope to receive funding in the future to:

- Endow the outstanding senior award.
- Create and endow a scholarship to support a student focusing on GIS.

Thank you

Congratulations to Our Spring Awardees!!

The Department held a masked and in-person ceremony to recognize our student award winners.



Outstanding Senior
Monique Walker



**John F. Rooney Jr. Scholarship
and Outstanding Junior**
Caitlin Brooks



**Stephen W. Tweedie Endowed
Travel Scholarship**
Clayton Lucas



**Dr. Robert E. Norris Memori-
al Scholarship for 1st Year
Graduate Student**
Ofuje Amune



**Jerry Croft, OSU Professor
Emeritus and Family Award in
the Teaching of Geography**
Stephanie Grace

All awardees are shown with Dr.
Greiner.

Not pictured:

**Susan Shaull Outstanding Graduate
Teaching Award**

Jaryd Hinch

**Alyson L. Greiner Undergraduate
Travel Scholarship**

Mike Lampkin

Graduates of the 2020-2021 School Year:



2021 commencement ceremony for undergraduates in Boone Pickens Stadium.



Congrats!

Fall 2020

Kellen Bullock – M.S. Geography

Spring 2021

Jaryd Hinch – M.S. Geography

Ashlyn Amador – B.A. Global Studies

Cory Austin – B.S. Geography

Larissa Duncan – B.A. Global Studies

Malena Escalante – B.S. Geospatial
Information Science

Adam Littlefield – B.S. Geospatial Information Science

Pecos McDonald – B.S. Geography

Alexander Pritchett – B.A. Global Studies

Ashley Raatz – B.A. Global Studies

Madelaine Stuart – B.A. Global Studies

Monique Walker – B.A. Global Studies

Samayita Bandyopadhyay – Ph.D. Geography

Qinyue (Arlene) Pan – Ph.D. Geography

GIS Certificate earners:

Summer 2020

Jared Alan Elmore

Dusty Swedberg

Fall 2020

Scott Kientz

Hunter Chism

Logan Hager

Kellen Bullock

Spring 2021

Stephanie Grace

Alumni News & Memories

Earl Million, 1974

I retired from the federal government 30 years ago. I completed an Army ROTC scholarship when I graduated from OSU in 1974. I attended my Commencement, after dark, on May 11, when President Nixon addressed us in the stadium, long before it became Boone Pickens Field. The President's hair appeared to be white from the intense stage lights.

My ROTC Sergeant-major asked me what my major was. I answered "Geography." He said I was a perfect fit for "Military Intelligence." My fellow ROTC classmates told me that a government man was looking for teachers to interview about me. They knew he was a government man because he still wore a fedora hat in 1974. I am sure that he interviewed Dr. Rooney and other teachers in the Geography department. It is a standard set of questions including if I have a problem gambling, do I drink to excess, do I have any foreign investments, and, finally: "Would you recommend Earl Million to a position of trust and responsibility with the U.S. government?"

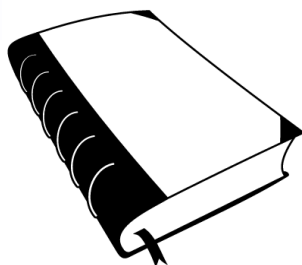
I spent a year in the army intelligence school at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. I spent the next three years in three German cities: Zweibruecken, Heidelberg, and Ansbach. I returned home and performed two army reserve tours at Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Georgia and at Fort Hood, Texas. My military job title was "Imagery Intelligence." Most geography majors can read a map and an aerial photograph better than others can. I taught people that a squiggly line of trees through open fields means it shows where the creek is located on a corresponding map. The rest of my job was identifying the military equipment of "opposing forces" or enemy forces. Later I accepted a job to perform the same task I did in the army with the Central Intelligence Agency.

My best advice comes from the first lines of M. Scott Peck's long running nonfiction bestseller:

The Road Less Traveled:

"Life is difficult. This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see this truth, we transcend it. Once we truly know that life is difficult—once we truly understand and accept it—then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters."

I cannot find a book to quote the next few sentences, but it states yet some people delude themselves into believing that life could be easy—that life should be easy. I am happy to stay in Florida with other former federal employees.



Alumni News & Memories

Bud Kopp, 1986: Following OSU graduation in 1986 and subsequent grad school in Regional and City Planning at the University of Calgary and OU, I practiced both public and private sector Planning in California for 30 years. In 2019, I retired from the City of Rancho Mirage after 12 years, and now live in Lake Arrowhead, CA full time. Lately, I have been volunteering my time to develop a Park Master Plan for the community and hope to get back into the travel mode real soon.

Gail Pickens-Barger, 1986: My daughter's favorite key fob is from her legacy gifts from Oklahoma State. My last daughter might be my only hope for going to OSU!

I was just recently sharing with a friend of mine the opportunity that I had to take Dr. Vitek's geomorphology camp, during the summer of 1980. This past fall I did a little online research into the research that Dr. Vitek did on this topic, and even though I'm retired, still fascinates me to no end that I was somehow involved!

I was one of the undergrad students that got the opportunity to do the training down at NASA's Slidell, LA. I would talk to my fellow Conoco Exploration co-workers about the PDP computing machine with the tapes of the Landsat images. This was the beginning of information systems within the Geography Department.

OSU Geography Department, its teachers/mentors, fellow students, plus my time in the OSU Marching Band, are some of the fondest memories in my college experience!

Go Pokes!



Jennifer Spencer, 2000: For Jen, the most joyful moment of her life happened to coincide with one of the most challenging times the world has seen, she had a COVID wedding. On May 1st, 2021, Jen married Colonel Paul Meagher, USMC in Arlington, Virginia. Jen's best friend, and fellow OSU geography graduate, Darla Hugaboom, served as her matron of honor.

Jen and her husband moved to O'ahu in June 2021 for his next military assignment. She will continue to work as a Department of the Navy Civilian at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in public affairs and community relations.

Jennifer Spencer and Darla Hugaboom
Photo courtesy Chris Ferenzi Photography.

Alumni News & Memories

Anil Raghavan, 2004: I currently live in St. Louis, Missouri, and work for Proagrica (<https://proagrica.com>). I spent a decade as the Database Team Lead for SST/Proagrica, building a robust cloud platform for the Precision Ag industry. Our cloud platform, named agX hosts millions of acres worth of agricultural data of the USA, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, etc. It is a 38 TB database with billions of rows of geospatial data, close to half a million lines of code and many complex processes, websites and APIs built on it. I was recently promoted to the role of agX Delivery Manager. In my free time, I am a semi-professional photographer, shooting wildlife, landscapes and portraits.



Top: One of my passions is competitive badminton.

Bottom: With my fiancé, before a helicopter ride over St. Louis.



Matt Summers, 2009: I have been working at the Georgetown–Scott County Planning Commission in Georgetown, KY for the past seven years, with the past four as Senior Planner. I have many fond memories of my time at Oklahoma State University and my time studying Geography. My degree prepared me for a career in analyzing geospatial data and applying it in real world situations. My wife and I had our first child in the past year, and we look forward to one day bringing her to campus.

Stephanie Heald, 2018: Currently creating courses & course content so that students can earn a minor in Geography from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Loving and enjoying teaching and coaching at my (other) alma mater! I also have been enjoying teaching online at Seminole State & OSU recently.

Favorite memories:

- Working for Mike Larson with the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Society Inventory for 4 summers.
- Laughing with Kim Johnson Maier and other classmates.
- I also really enjoyed taking the Resource Management Class with Dr. Lightfoot and quantitative classes with Dr. Comer.

Haley Best, 2020: I am a GIS tech at OGE and I work on their LED conversion project for energy efficiency. They're also doing some awesome grid modification for Oklahoma and working to bring our infrastructure into the 21st century. I'm happy to work at OGE, it's been an awesome experience and the team is really nice. I also love that I am a part of improvements for Oklahoma and its people. I miss the OSU Geography Department so much. I am still in contact with many of the friends I made in the Geography Department and I am grateful for their friendship and can talk to them about any GIS issues. I am also thankful for all the staff and faculty that I had while at OSU, I truly wouldn't be where I am without their support.

OSU Geography Undergraduate Mentors Program (GUMP)

By Don Colley

In 2020, the Geography Undergraduate Mentors Program had two students successfully complete their research. Monique Walker, our Outstanding Senior, worked with Dr. Thomas Lavanchy to present on the value of education in developing countries at the 2020 Virtual Meeting of the Southwest AAG. Jacob Shepherd worked with Dr. Steve Stadler to present on public reactions to wind farms in rural Oklahoma. He also presented at SWAAG. This year, Caitlin Brooks is working with Dr. Thomas Lavanchy and will present in 2021-2022.



In Memoriam

By Jacqueline Vadjunec

Tim Collver, OSU Geography graduate (2008), mandolin player extraordinaire, muddy boots philosopher, lifetime Philmont scout, colleague to many and friend to all passed in November 2020 after battling a chronic illness. Our hearts go out to Tim's friends and family.

In honor of Tim, a community organizer and leader, we are working on creating an undergraduate scholarship in his name for geographers doing community engaged geographic research. More details coming soon. In the meantime, you can contact me at jacqueline.vadjunec@okstate.edu. I would appreciate any stories and photos you might have.

I leave you with one of my favorite poems by the 13th c. Sufi mystic, Jalaluddin Rumi. Tim's spirit can still be found outside. It can be witnessed in every breeze and sunset, where his heart always felt most at home.

*I give you this one thought to keep –
I am with you still – I do not sleep.*

*I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.*

*When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.*

*Do not think of me as gone –
I am with you still – in each new dawn.*

-Rumi



Tim at the Kenton Museum in Kenton, OK in 2008. Tim returned to Kenton many times to join us in the field when he could.



Tim (middle) at "Spider Rock" in New Mexico with fellow GPS Field Techniques students.

Meet Our New Faculty Members

Dr. Tao Hu received his PhD in Cartography and Geographic Information System at Wuhan University, China. He worked as a postdoc research fellow in the Center for Geographic Analysis at Harvard University and the Department of Geography at Kent State University before joining our department. His research interests include geospatial big data analysis (i.e., social media), health geography, human mobility, and crime geography. Dr. Hu's current research aims to build an open data repository for sharing public health-related data, to facilitate interdisciplinary research, education, and training. In addition, his research applies GeoAI (Geospatial Artificial Intelligence) analytics to study the post-pandemic human mobility, environmental, and mental health topics. Dr. Hu has published more than 30 peer-reviewed articles with 2 ESI Highly Cited papers (top 1%) in geoscience. He is also invited to be a reviewer for over 20 journals. Dr. Hu is a new Assistant Professor.



Dr. Rafiq Islam obtained his PhD in Geography from Kent State University in 2020. His undergraduate and master's degrees are from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Before coming to OSU, Dr. Islam worked as an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Geography and Earth Science at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse. Dr. Islam's research focuses on the South Asian monsoon using a synoptic climatological approach to this important climate system. He specifically incorporates the self-organizing maps (SOMs) technique, which utilizes unsupervised neural network algorithms to determine and display the distribution of a multidimensional dataset along a two-dimensional array. His research contributes to an understanding of the evolution of the monsoon system. Future research will apply this approach to get a better understanding of the genesis of tropical cyclones, monsoon depressions, and local storms in Bangladesh. Dr. Islam is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Physical Geography.



Dr. José Torres is originally from Puerto Rico, and before joining the Department at OSU he was an instructor at Weber State University in Utah. He earned his master's degree in Geography from the University of Florida and his doctorate in Geography from the University of Connecticut. His master's specializations include tourism, urban and regional development, and Latin America, and his minor field is Latin American studies. His doctoral specializations include tourism, urban and regional development, sustainability, and Europe, and his minor field is Human Rights. His single author research focuses on sustainable urban tourism and urban redevelopment, focusing on Lisbon, Portugal. His collaborative research work focuses on the interaction between the Blue Economy, environmental justice, and tourism in the Caribbean. Activities that Dr. Torres enjoys include traveling and fine dining in cheap restaurants. Dr. Torres is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Human Geography.



Staff Updates



Barbara Goodnight is the Administrative Assistant for the Department of Geography and is here to help. She does New Hire packets and manages payroll for students as well as faculty and staff. She works closely with the department head, Dr. Greiner, and Laura, the Administrative Support Assistant. If you have a question, she will find the answer for you, just email her or stop by the office.



Laura Kreutzer is our new Administrative Support Assistant. She grew up in Tahlequah, OK. She received her BS in Human Development from Brigham Young University (BYU.) Laura has enjoyed getting to know the graduate students, faculty, and staff in the Geography Department. She has also enjoyed copyediting the *Zenith* and looks forward to helping with social media this school year.



Michael P. Larson: November 2021 will start Michael's twenty-sixth year with the Department of Geography. While Michael performs cartographic work for the faculty members and students of the Department of Geography, he also continues to support faculty, staff and students from other departments on campus as well as work for various entities, large and small, public and private, off campus. This past year, Michael's focus encompassed several major project areas, including his work as Co-PI on the RMP-GIS Oklahoma State Parks grant, his work and role assisting on Dr. Vadjunec's Land System Vulnerability and Resilience to Drought research grant, and his role as Co-PI directing the data update and cleaning for the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Oklahoma Landmark Inventory (OLI) database update.

Continuing his role as an educator, spring 2021 was Michael's twentieth year teaching the Computer Cartography/Mapping in Modern Society course. In addition to teaching, Michael continues to be involved with students in a variety of ways such as being the co-advisor for the undergraduate Geography Club.

When he is not involved in Departmental and geospatial business, Michael enjoys spending time with his wife and family and time permitting, watching his garden turn into an uncontrolled jungle.

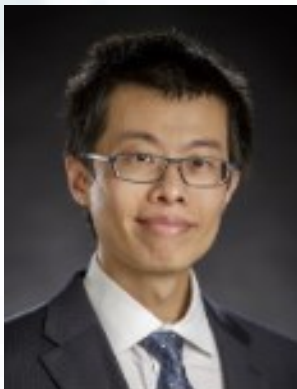
Staff Updates



Kellen Bullock: Greetings from Stillwater. The State Historical Preservation Office of Oklahoma has decided to continue my employment as a full time staff member. My responsibilities are now developing an overarching website application to house the Section 106 submission system, the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, and the National Register. You might ask: where does geography come into play with this application? Each system will have an interactive GIS map to mark the location of the historical properties. The best advice I can give to any upcoming geography student is learn structured query language (SQL) as fast as possible. Y'all take care now!



Jing Wang has obtained her Remote Pilot License and has been working on a couple of research projects using Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS's). The research projects focus on monitoring vegetation conditions and harvests and the results will help farmers and agricultural professionals to utilize remotely sensed data for better decision making. Besides continuing her role as the State Coordinator of Oklahoma View, she is also part of the Earth Sensor Research Committee of America View. She helped migrate the department website to a new platform and redesigned and published the website for Oklahoma View.



Hank Yang: I am a GIS Specialist graduated from North Carolina State University. I am originally from Taiwan and came to North Carolina State University for a Master's degree in Geography Information Systems in 2011. Previously, I had an internship with Colas USA (a transportation infrastructure, construction, and maintenance company) making informative business maps for executive management to make operational strategies from June 2011 to January 2013. After graduation from North Carolina State University, I worked in the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources as a GIS Analyst from June 2013 to August 2016. I was involved in the San Juan Basin Water Resources project, evaluating the water volumes of aquifers potentially impacted by hydrofracking technology. In addition, I also designed the interactive web mapping application (ArcGIS for JavaScript), displaying geological, water, mineral, and energy resources. Currently, I am involved in the Resource Management Plan GIS Project, working with Drs. Greiner and Canedy, students, and Oklahoma State Parks. I usually spend my spare time with my children and wife either in outdoor activities or partaking of different cuisines.

Faculty Updates



Don Colley began teaching a new version of our Geography of Music course starting in Spring 2019 and its popularity led him to teach a section of Geography of Music online. He continues to teach Geographies of New Media, Intro to Cultural Geography, World Regional Geography and specializes in teaching Honors Cultural Geography on the topics of geopolitics, race and racism, and neoliberalism.

When he's not teaching, he is the head of the Curriculum Committee and Undergraduate Committee and oversees changes to our academic programs as Undergraduate Coordinator. He also served as Department Assessment Coordinator for all four undergraduate degrees and various minors. At home, he's happily raising his almost 2-year old daughter, Nova, and spends his free time in the outdoors.

Dr. Jon Comer completed his 27th year at OSU in May 2021 and is not looking forward to a second straight summer with no European adventures. His only travel between March 2020 and May 2021 has been monthly trips to DFW to visit family, but he is going to the Indy 500 in late May 2021, his 27th race to attend.

He remains Associate Head but relinquished the reins as Graduate Coordinator last summer, ending 25 consecutive years serving as an advisor in the department (15 as Undergraduate Advisor and 10 as Graduate Coordinator). He continued teaching the usual classes (World Regional and all the analysis classes), and is close to completing a new geography of Europe course for online offering. He was heavily involved in facilitating the online Applied Geography Conference in October 2020 as a Board Member and Secretary.



Dr. Carlos Cordova is on sabbatical leave this fall. He is working on two projects in Russia and Mexico. The one in Russia deals with a finding (found by Cordova himself) of evidence of early human presence at high latitude in the Volga Region. The finding is located at 55° N. Yes, that is a hell of a long way north for the genus Homo, especially during a glacial period. Homo sapiens was the first one to reach the highest latitudes in Eurasia, which eventually led their way to the Americas via the Bering Strait. The Mexican project deals with the archaeology of the former lakes of the Basin of Mexico, the seat of several civilizations including the Aztecs.

During the past year, like everybody else, Cordova struggled with the adversities and restrictions imposed by the pandemic. However, some achievements resulted from the hard times. He and a band of teaching assistants created an online version of GEOG 1114 lab and brought the in-person labs to the benefit of the new generations of students. He, Jaryd Hinch, and Mike Larson are working on a hard copy of the GEOG 1114 lab manual. Finally, do not expect any new stories this fall (2021), as he will be busy with research projects, and away from the sources of inspiration.



Faculty Updates



Dr. Allen Finchum: During 2020-21 Allen Finchum continued his longstanding work with the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office as well as working on some other small research projects of personal interest. Allen is still grateful for the support that Co-PI Mike Larson gives to the SHPO project and its ongoing success. He has been working on several small projects/papers with Jesse Andrews (OSU PhD student) on vernacular regions and using online business data in “defining” the region. He and Jesse had a poster for the 2020 ESRI Meeting and had a paper published on the Dixie Highway and the impact it had on vernacular perception in the southeast.



In 2020 Allen and Tanya’s son Curtis continues to work as a high school teacher and basketball coach in OKC. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic Allen has not traveled outside of Oklahoma since 2019. His in-state his travels have been limited to OKC and Tulsa. Even his HS basketball viewing was limited primarily to YouTube over the past season. He is hoping that he will be able to travel during the summer of 2021 as the situation improves.

Dr. Alyson Greiner: In between the numerous adjustments and surprises associated with the pandemic, Alyson Greiner worked on assembling manuscripts for an edited volume on the American landscape. She is a co-editor on the project. She was invited to chair the Social Sciences and History committee of CLEP, the College-Level Entrance Program, for a second year and served again as a reviewer for the Fulbright National Screening Committee for student proposals involving research or study in Australia. She also attended and participated in the virtual SWAAG meeting. She and life partner, Luis, took to practicing Ultimate Frisbee drills to stay in shape, and were able to make a trip to Nebraska and see some of the ruts of the Oregon Trail. They hope everyone is doing well.



Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh will start his third year in the Department in Fall 2021. Over the past two years, he has been working on several research projects; during summer 2021, he started his new project to study grassland biodiversity at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, where he had many encounters with rattle snakes! He has also been enjoying teaching different courses in the department, working closely with the students, and running at OSU’s Cross Country Course (highly recommended).

Faculty Updates



Dr. Thomas LaVanchy has enjoyed teaching and mentoring students despite the many challenges presented by the pandemic. During the 2020-21 academic year, he taught in person and online, learning how to accommodate the various (and often changing) needs of students. Thomas also worked with undergraduate Global Studies major Monique Walker via the GUMP program to develop research on the value of education in developing countries. Monique successfully presented her findings at the Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers annual meeting in September 2020. Thomas also worked with freshman Kailey O'Connor through OSU's Freshman Research Scholar Program to better understand water insecurity and injustice in a township in Cape Town, South Africa. He was nominated for the Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award in the College of Arts and Sciences. Although the pandemic has prevented Thomas from international travel and fieldwork, he was able to publish three articles and two original book chapters during the past academic year. Two articles appeared in *Water International* and one in *Hydrogeology Journal*. One book chapter appeared in *Global Groundwater: Source, Scarcity, Sustainability, Security and Solutions* (Elsevier) and the other in *Environmental Justice in the Anthropocene: From (Un)Just Presents to Just Futures* (Routledge). Thomas and his wife Courtney continue to introduce their two daughters (10 & 12 yrs.) to the wide variety of outdoor spaces across Oklahoma.



Dr. Rebecca Sheehan: In the last year, I continued to do work in geographies of memory, both in teaching and research. I taught a new course, OSU-Tulsa based, called Black Geographies: Memorialization in the Landscape. This course was organized around Black memory associated with slavery, the Civil War, civil rights, and the Tulsa Race Massacre in the United States. Students explored not only texts but also landscapes of Oklahoma. My article (with Jordan Brasher and Jennifer Speights-Binet) "Mobilities and Regenerative Memorialization: Examining the Equal Justice Initiative and Strategies for the Future of the American South" will be published in the August 2021 special issue of the *Southeastern Geographer*. This paper develops a regenerative memorialization paradigm for a socio-spatially just future for U.S. South by examining the multiple networks of memory that the Equal Justice Initiative engages. In addition, I co-organized (with Mark Rhodes, Derek Alderman, and Jordan Brasher) multiple sessions concerning memory-work around the world (Memory and Geography (I): Narratives in Space and Place, Memory and Geography (II): Ruins and Rights - Urban Memory Politics, Memory and Geography (III): Racial Justice, and Memory and Geography (IV): Innovations and Intersections) for the fifth annual Memory Studies Association conference (held a year late due to the pandemic) virtually in Warsaw, Poland. I also continued to do other research related to public space in the South. In summer 2021, I traveled with my partner, Emilie, to the Galapagos and Mindo Cloud Forest in Ecuador as well as the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu in Peru among other places in these two amazing countries – a trip of a lifetime!



Faculty Updates



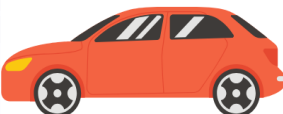
Dr. Steve Stadler: After 41 years with the Geography Department, Steve Stadler is retiring October 1, 2021. It is time! Instruction and other interactions with students will be missed but the increase in his time is eagerly anticipated. Steve will retain his office and work as a Board member of the Oklahoma Geographic Alliance to improve K-12 geographic education and as a Steering Committee member of Oklahoma's weather and climate Mesonet. Then, there are a few research results to write up.

Steve and Barb plan to spend retirement in Stillwater where they will be located near friends, church, the Geography Department, OSU sports, and reasonably close to their son, John's, family in Jenks. That's a picture of 5-year-old grandson Jacob who is a proud pre-K graduate.



Dr. Jackie Vadjunec: The past year saw a lot of changes for everyone, including me. I was promoted to Full Professor and returned from my two-year stint at the National Science Foundation (NSF) as a visiting scientist in August 2020. While I was content to be back in Stillwater, COVID made hands on learning philosophies, especially teaching fieldwork a bit challenging, so I had to get creative! I really appreciated the enthusiasm and patience of all of my students over the past year, as we all learned together how to do something even close to fieldwork in the "new normal." I continue to work with colleagues from OU and NMSU on our farmer/rancher adaptation to drought research in the 3 states/3 county area of Cimarron County, OK, Union County, NM, and Las Animas County, CO. We finally published our long overdue Platt analysis of Dust Bowl Survivability in Cimarron County, OK in the *Annals AAG*! You can find the related story map [here](#).

In what can only be explained as a response to COVID cabin fever, I spent part of the summer doing "windshield geography" on an epic 3,000 mile road trip to OH, PA, DC, VA, MD, and TN seeing family, friends, and even a few colleagues. The second part of the summer was spent in the field after a 2-year hiatus to insure the protection of human subjects. It was very lovely to be back! I spent a lot of time talking to ranchers, farmers, and small business owners about how the pandemic has impacted their operations. I was also happy to see my good friend, "Cimmy the Dinosaur," at the Cimarron Heritage Museum in Boise City, OK. In the past few years of intense changes, it's refreshing to see that some things never change!



Faculty Updates



Dr. Tom Wikle remains busy in his capacity as Associate Dean for Instruction in the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2020 he published two articles on GIS topics. One article appeared in *Professional Geographer* (with former OSU colleagues Todd Fagin and Adam Mathews.) The other appeared in *Transactions in GIS* (coauthored with UCGIS Executive Director, Diana Sinton). In lieu of May/June 2020 international travel, Tom and colleague Dale Lightfoot drove to national park sites and other points of interest in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. They're planning a similar trip to locations in New Mexico and Arizona for May 2021. Tom and his wife Missy welcomed the birth of their second grandson in November 2020. Both of their children (Paige, married to Joey, and Garrett, married to Addi) live in Dallas, Texas. Tom continues to serve as a part-time flight instructor. In 2020 he added bicycling as an evening and weekend activity.



Dr. Hongbo Yu gradually adjusted to cope with the pandemic situations in life and work in the past year. Equipped with newly gained course delivery skills, he was able to successfully teach his courses through various channels (e.g., in person, online, and livestream) to accommodate the different needs of his students during the pandemic. To say the least, it has been quite an adventurous journey. In the middle of 2020, Hongbo started to work on the USDA National Animal Health Laboratory Network Enhancement Grant project, which aims at developing a GIS-based interactive spatial agrometrics tool to provide information on the estimations of cattle, swine, and poultry populations within the proximity of a selected point of interest. Stephanie Grace, a graduate student in the department, works as a GRA on this project to assist him in completing the related tasks. Towards the end of 2020, Arlene Pan, one of his PhD students, successfully defended her dissertation, which investigates the varying influence of urban forms and time constraints on job opportunity accessibilities between men and women in a metropolitan area. Arlene is slated to officially graduate in the spring 2021 semester and starts her new journey as Dr. Pan.



Dr. Yuting Zhou taught two courses in 2020: Digital Tools for Environmental Exploration and Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems. Dr. Zhou also continued to serve as PI for OklahomaView, which is part of AmericaView, a nationwide, university-based, and state-implemented network that advances Earth observation education. Dr. Zhou published five peer-reviewed papers and attended the 2020 AGU fall meeting as a session Chair. Dr. Zhou actively participated in project activities organized by the NSF Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Besides that, Dr. Zhou submitted two proposals to USDA NIFA. One is about monitoring alfalfa harvests, yield, and quality using remote sensing and machine learning. The other one is about detecting pecan tree damage levels with remote sensing images. Dr. Zhou is also serving as the Guest Editor for a special issue "Remote Sensing in Assessing Responses of Vegetation to Drought" in *Remote Sensing*, https://www.mdpi.com/journal/remotesensing/special_issues/RS_vege_drought.

Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) News

This year, the OSU Chi Chapter of the Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) International Geographical Society initiated six new members: Gabby Boyd, Ofuje Amune, Belem Carrasco Galvan, Maggie Chamberlain, Matthew Dupont, and Clayton Lucas.

The leadership for 2020-2021 school year was Fernanda Ramirez Sáenz (president), Maria Ramirez Sáenz (vice president and historian), and Jesse Andrews (treasurer and secretary).



(L-R) Gabby Boyd, Ofuje Amune, and Clayton Lucas, with chapter president Fernanda Ramirez Sáenz. Not pictured are initiates Belem Carrasco Galvan, Maggie Chamberlain, and Matthew Dupont.

Geography Club News

Unfortunately, the recent pandemic limited our events this past year. Before COVID-19 shut things down, the Club President and Officers included: Parker J. Smith, President; Madahi Lozano, Vice-President; Emily Gile, Treasurer; Ke'Ona Herron, Secretary; and Stephanie Grace, Event Coordinator. New elections will be held this fall and the Club's normal calendar of events will resume with a full slate of events being planned.



Center for Applications of Remote Sensing (CARS)

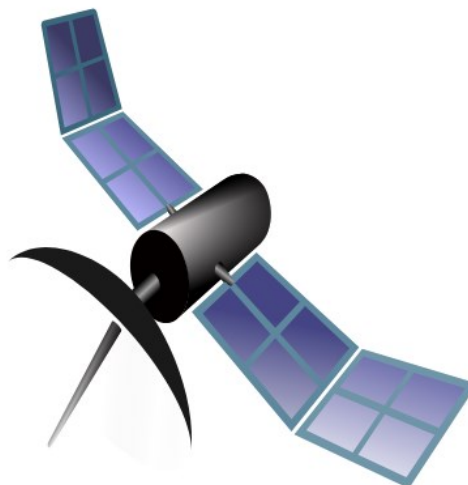
By Jing Wang

CARS has had a fruitful year in research and many other areas despite the global pandemic. Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh (Co-Director) has been leading a few research projects at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve to study grassland biodiversity and the impact of invasive species on prairie ecosystems using remotely sensed data. He also enjoys teaching *Remote Sensing*, *Geospatial Applications for Unmanned Aerial Systems*, and *Applications of the Global Positioning System in Field Research* and working closely with his students.

Dr. Yuting Zhou (Co-Director) continued his role as PI for OklahomaView. In this project, Dr. Zhou and Ms. Jing Wang are working with two other researchers to develop a fact sheet about the applications of remote sensing in agriculture and natural resources. Dr. Zhou has submitted proposals for funding to support the use of remote sensing and machine learning for monitoring alfalfa harvests and for using remotely sensed images for detecting pecan tree damage levels.

Last year when COVID was the most active in the state of Oklahoma, Jing Wang (Coordinator) developed an online platform on the CARS website to report COVID updates in Oklahoma with charts and maps of daily increase of cases and deaths by county, hospitalization, and long-term trend. Since spring 2021 she has been doing more research related to unmanned aerial systems (UASs) and drone image processing and model building.

Adding to the lab's inventory, the Center purchased two new DJI UASs, a workstation, and acquired a MicaSense RedEdge sensor. Combined with the high accuracy GPS in the department, the newly acquired equipment will extend CARS research capacity to a higher level.



Cartography Services

By Michael Larson

This past year can best be described as challenging. Although many of our traditional activities were suspended due to the pandemic, Cartography Services continued to maintain a rather busy schedule. As usual, we have spent most of our time split between several key working areas, including the major cartographic projects, and map design and compilation work.

Cartography Services is now in its twelfth year working with Dr. Allen Finchum on the SHPO/OLI project. Our portion of this project, funded by the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, involves data cleaning and updating the Oklahoma Landmark Inventory (OLI) database. Undergraduate students working on the project include Matthew Burton, Connor McKeaigg, and Jacob Shepherd. A new GIS Specialist staff member, Kellen Bullock, has been added to the project team. We expect great things from him.

Cartography Services, working with lead PI Dr. Alyson Greiner, Dr. Lowell Caneday, and GIS Specialist Hank Yang, continued working on the ongoing RMP-GIS grant from the Oklahoma State Parks. This project has dual, overlapping missions, the first of which is updating the Resource Management Plans for each park. The second mission is to continue to build, update, and maintain a geospatial database and web viewer of all the infrastructure and facilities in each of the State Parks. This project has helped fund a number of students, including (but not limited to) Fernanda Ramirez Saenz, Niyanth Ponnusamy, Ofuje Amune, and Parker J. Smith. Their hard work out in the parks collecting data is essential for the success of the project.

In addition to everything else, Cartography Services continues to work in its traditional role assisting the faculty in the Geography department with their various projects and research. Faculty we have assisted includes Dr. Dale Lightfoot, Dr. Thomas Lavanchy, Dr. Steve Stadler, Dr. Hongbo Yu, and Dr. Jacqueline Vadjunec.



Geographers in the Field

By Clayton Lucas

My son, Clayton III, and I had the opportunity to travel to Peru in January. Despite the pandemic, we took every precaution possible and journeyed to Cusco, the ancient Inca capital founded in approximately 1,200 A.D. Cusco is an amazing and walkable modern city full of historic charm. The Incan influence is felt in the architecture, food, culture, history and, especially, in the people.

From Cusco, we journeyed on to the magnificent ruins of Machu Picchu, mostly by train, but hiking the last several miles along the Inca Trail. The ancient Inca citadel sits seemingly atop the world with breathtaking views around every bend that include mountain peaks reaching into the heavens, high above the clouds, contrasted by vast river valleys below.

Our purpose in exploring these locales was to continue a lifelong pursuit to broaden our horizons and understanding of other cultures, peoples, and geographies, in an effort to ultimately better understand the collective world in which we live. Our journey to Peru far exceeded those expectations in this endeavor.



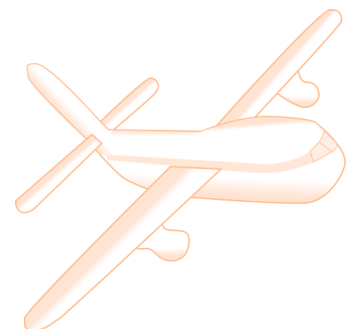
Photos of my son and I standing in front of Inca ruins while hiking the Inca trail.



Photo of local woman and her child in Cusco.



Clayton standing in the rain above Machu Picchu.



Network with the Geography Department through LinkedIn

Over the past couple of years, LinkedIn has become a highly effective networking tool. To help you grow your LinkedIn network, follow our profile Geography Department Oklahoma State University, and then connect with others who follow us, too.

This school year look for regular updates on our social media accounts.

Connect with us!



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Geography Department
Oklahoma State University

Departmental Colloquia

All via Zoom

10/23/2020: Dr. Mohamed G. Abdelsalam presented on his "Egypt: The Gift of the Nile– A Geological Perspective" research. He is a professor in the Boone Pickens School of Geology.

10/28/2020: Dr. Brad A. Bays presented in the National Barn Alliance Virtual Lecture Series, on "Oklahoma's Historic Barns."

11/13/2020: Dr. Darren Purcell presented "American Late-Night Humor & Popular Geopolitics: Examining Representations of China & the Arab Spring." He is Associate Professor of Geography & Sustainability at the University of Oklahoma.

03/19/2021: Dr. Samantha Krause, Assistant Professor of Geography at Texas State University. Dr. Krause's research interests include soil and water geochemistry; tropical wetlands; and long-term paleo-environmental change. Her presentation was titled, "Multiproxy Reconstruction of Wetland Agrosystems: Case Studies from Northwestern Belize."

04/23/2021: Geography graduate student presentations. Jaryd Hinch presented on his thesis research, "Social Geographies of Warcraft: A Discursive Evaluation of a Virtual World's Effect on Its Users." Yanxia Wu's presentation was titled, "Spatial Analysis of Ethnic Migration Behavior: A Case Study of Chinese Immigrants in the New York-Newark-Jersey City Metropolitan Area," and based on her dissertation research.



The mission of the Department of Geography is:

- to provide an exceptional educational experience in a student-centered departmental community that emphasizes the value of lifelong learning, employs engaging instructional activities, and prepares students for careers in an increasingly globalized world;
- to conduct innovative theoretical and applied research that promotes discovery, cultivates interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships, fosters socioeconomic development, and responds to the needs of society;
- to promote the importance and relevance of geography to the public and to provide geographic expertise to the university, community, and state.

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