The Importance of Place: Exploring Geographies of (Im)Mobilities, Landscapes, and People

Holly Barcus Inaugural Lecture as DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geography

Thursday, November 17, 2022
4:45 p.m.
Alexander G. Hill Ballroom
Kagin Commons
Macalester College
Holly Barcus is DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geography at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she has taught since 2005. Barcus holds BA and MA degrees in Geography from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (1995, 1997) and a PhD in Geography from Kansas State University (2001) and a Master of Asia-Pacific Studies (MAPS) degree from The Australian National University (2014).

A human geographer by training, Barcus’s research interests converge at the intersection of migration, ethnicity, and community change in rural places. Her work since 2006 is amongst the Kazakh population of western Mongolia and considers questions of identity, environment, and changing migration trajectories. Her broader interests include the implications of migration and (im)mobility for place identities, landscapes, and community change in rural regions across the globe, including previous research in rural regions of the United States, such as Appalachia and the Great Plains.

Barcus’s work appears in journals such as Population, Space and Place, Geographical Review, Asian Ethnicity, and Regional Studies and has been funded by the National Science Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, among others. In 2018, she co-authored Lives Across Space: An Introduction to Contemporary Population Geographies (Taylor & Francis, Routledge) with Keith Halfacree (Swansea University, Wales). Her 2022 edited volume, Rural Transformations: Globalization and its Implications for Rural People, Land, and Economies (Routledge, with Roy Jones, Curtin University, Australia; and Serge Schmitz, University of Liège, Belgium), profiles case studies of rural sustainability and transformation from countries spanning the Global South and North. Barcus continues to work closely with colleagues across the globe through her elected position of Vice President and Treasurer of the International Geographical Union (IGU) Executive Committee.

Collaborative teaching and scholarship are essential components of her work and professional identity. She considers the opportunities to work with community members, students, and colleagues, in coordinating international field schools and international faculty seminars, in addition to local and regional project-based collaborations to be among the most rewarding of her career. When not at Macalester, she enjoys hiking, biking, and paddling with her family as well as exploring the material representations of culture and place, such as food preparation, textile production, and glass blowing.
Endowed chairs at Macalester

Lin Aanonsen, O.T. Walter Professor of Biology

Holly R. Barcus, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geography

David L. Blaney, G. Theodore Mitau Professor of Political Science

Eric Carter, Edens Professor of Geography and Global Health

Kristina A. Curry Rogers, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Biology and Geology

James Dawes, DeWitt Wallace Professor of English

J. Peter Ferderer, Edward J. Noble Professor of Economics

Susan E. Fox, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science

Ruthann Godollei, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Art and Art History

Walter D. Greason, DeWitt Wallace Professor of History

Thomas Halverson, Armstrong Endowed Chair in Mathematics

William Hart, Margaret W. Harmon Professor of Religious Studies

Daniel J. Hornbach, John S. Holl Professor of Environmental Studies

Joanna V. Inglot, Edith M. Kelso Associate Professor of Art and Art History
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Gary Krueger, Cargill Professor of International Economics
Ruthanne Kurth-Schai, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Educational Studies
James W. Laine,Arnold H. Lowe Professor of Religious Studies
R. Brooke Lea, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Psychology
Joyce Minor, Karl Egge Visiting Professor of Economics
Karine S. Moe, F.R. Bigelow Professor of Economics
William G. Moseley, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geography
J. Andrew Overman, Harry M. Drake Professor of the Classical Mediterranean and Middle East
Raymond R. Rogers, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geology
Ahmed I. Samatar, James Wallace Professor of International Studies
Satoko Suzuki, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures
Thomas D. Varberg, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Chemistry
Sarah E. West, G. Theodore Mitau Professor of Economics
Eric Wiertelak, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Psychology

The DeWitt Wallace Professorships were established in 1976 through a gift from DeWitt Wallace, son of Macalester President James Wallace (1894–1906). He and his wife Lila Acheson Wallace co-founded Reader’s Digest in 1920. Mr. and Mrs. Wallace were noted philanthropists whose gifts generously supported Macalester as well as the New York Public Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and many other organizations.