The Graticule

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Student-led newsletter for the Macalester Geography Community

Projections from the Chair

By: Eric Carter, Department Chair

Which Minnesota institution has been around longer than the Vikings, Target, or the Honeycrisp apple? Of course, I'm talking about the Macalester Geography Department, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this academic year!

In Spring of 1947, Hildegard Binder Johnson convinced Macalester president (and dorm namesake) Charles Turck to let her offer the school's first Geography classes. The postwar setting is crucial. Johnson fled fascist Germany in 1934, with her doctorate from the University of Berlin in hand, and taught German and geography at various schools. After the war, Macalester embraced the rising spirit of internationalism, proudly flying the flag of the newly created United Nations at the center of campus. And hundreds of new students, recent veterans of the war, filled the classrooms. The time was right for a class in World Geography, which Johnson soon renamed Human Geography.

After paging through archival materials to put together this column, I now understand how Hildegard set the tone for what makes the Macalester Geography department distinctive and great. Thanks to her leadership, our commitment to international area studies was strong from the start. As Geography alum Burke Strickland '69 told me recently, Hildegard was a great teacher, "open-minded and accepting," who "helped students expand their view of the world beyond an American perspective."

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MACALESTER 80 GEOGRAPHY

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Recent Happenings

Welcome Back Lunch

On September 17th the Geography department hosted our annual welcome back lunch! The lunch was a wonderful way to connect FYC students, current and prospective majors, and faculty. We played a Geography favorite icebreaker game where everyone got a card with a place or topic to place on their back and then had to figure out the answer with the help of people you chat with.



Claire Rochelois & Timotei Chas, GTU Co-Presidents



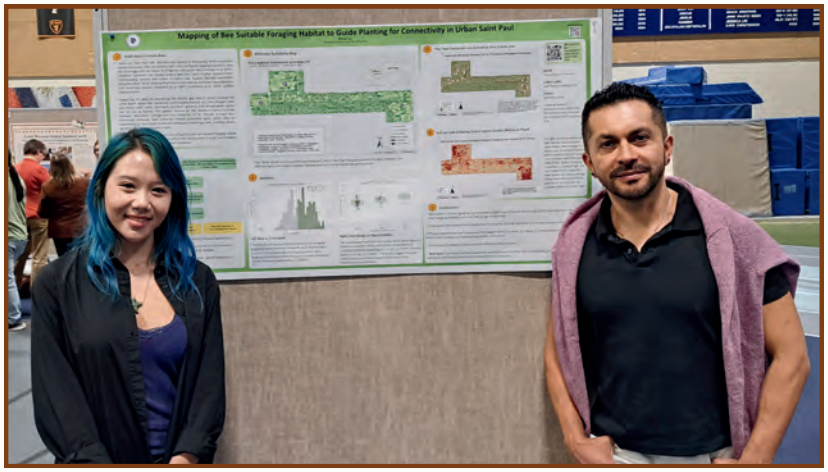
Mara Fletchner, Geography major and office assistant



Aram Petroysan '27 presents on his summer internship with Glimpse.

Summer Research Showcase

Geography students presented their summer research projects on October 9th as part of Macalester's Student Summer research Showcase poster session. Students across all departments developed posters displaying their research projects for other students and faculty to learn about. Not pictured: Timotei Chas '27, El Davis-Greene '28, and Sam Parsons '27.



Khue Le '28 and Xavier Haro-Carrión presenting on collaborative remote sensing research as part of creating Macalester and St.Thomas's joint pollinator corridor.



Patrick Sursano '27 and I-Chun Catherine Chang with Patrick's research on public-private partnerships in public market spaces.

Geography Students venture out!

Regional Geography of the U.S. & Canada Visits Northern Minnesota

For the 25th year, students in Laura Smith's Regional Geography of US and Canada FYC embarked on the their annual visit to the Iron Ore Mine (the Grand Canyon of the North), Hibbing High School, the Forest History Center, and Mille Lacs museum and casino. Students learned about Northern Minnesota's mining boom, historical timber industry, and Indigenous history.













Food, Agriculture, and the Environment Tour Wisconsin Farms

Prof. Bill Moseley took his class on their semesterly field trip to Whetstone and Common Harvest farms back in September! As always farmers Emily and Dan gave them great tours that were insightful to the course curriculum on sustainable farming practices.

Urban Geo takes a ride!

Students in Dan Trudeau's Urban Geography vistied the historic Como-Lake Harriet streetcar line to learn about their historic prominence in the Twin cities.





Projections from the Chair

(Cont'd from p. 1)

Knowing the importance of getting students out of the classroom to closely observe the world around them, Hildegard was also the first professor to lead a field course at Macalester, on the conservation of the Whitewater River watershed in southeastern Minnesota, starting in 1950. On such trips, she later wrote, her "curiosity was aroused by impractical field and property boundaries running uphill and farms extending across valley bottomland, terrace and upland." Such treks inspired her to eventually write Order Upon the Land (1976), a now-classic book on the US Public Land Survey system and the mark it left on Midwestern cultural landscapes.

She also engaged with the community, teaching the first-ever human geography course offered on local television – for course credit, by the way – in 1958, on the public station KTCA. And like many who followed in her footsteps in Macalester Geography, Hildegard played active leadership roles in the National Council of Geographic Education, the American Association of Geographers, and the International Geographical Union.

For its first 16 years, Macalester Geography was a one-woman show. Courses were popular, partly because they were required for social studies teachers in the Masters of Education program that Macalester had at the time.



Hildegard with a cake baked by Karen Lanegran, 1973. Her students iced the cake with the names of Hildegard's favorite geographers!

In the mid-1960s, the department got its home in Carnegie Hall, an additional tenure-track faculty member in Matti Kaups, and its first Geography majors. In 1969, Johnson's former student David Lanegran joined the Macalester faculty, which brought new energy to the department.

In my next column, I'll say more about the Lanegran Era, and subsequent installments will bring us up to the present. In the meantime, we're looking for Geography alumni to share their stories to help us celebrate our 80th anniversary. We would love to know how Macalester Geography shaped your life and career, and hear your memories of your time as a student here or through the Geography department Instagram account.

Department Visitors



Visiting Scholar Bin Ying

Where are you from? Guizhou, China

Field of study: Karst Environments, Sustainable Livelihoods, Human Geography

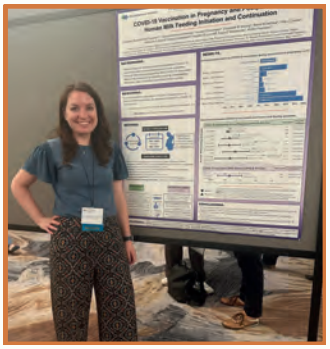
Dream travel destination: If I could visit anywhere in the world, I would choose Mount Everest. It is the roof of the world, with unmatched alpine landscapes that show the incredible power of Earth's geography.

Visiting Professor Izzy Figueroa

Where are you from?: Seattle, Washington

Field of study: Epidemiology; specifically vaccines, maternal and child health, and infectious & chronic diseases

Dream travel destination: Antarctica



Faculty Summer Highlights

In Summer 2026 Professor Bill Moseley went to the Mara region of Tanzania (pictured below) to study the cropping systems of smallhold farmers while also examining their household food security and how the process of decision-making in individual households are affected by primary education. In addition to this, he also traveled to the Netherlands to prepare for a semester-long study away program that he will be leading there in Fall 2027!





Our professors at Class of 2026 Graduation in the Spring!



Professors Eric Carter and Roopali Phadke in Costa Rica this past Summer preparing for the short-term study away class they are teaching this semester!

Alumni Stories



Erin Daly Davenport '14

Since graduating from Macalester in 2014, Erin has given generously back to the department through participation in Geography courses, senior seminars, career panels, informational interviews, and student professional development and networking. As a Transportation Planner with a background in active transportation advocacy and GIS, Erin is always looking for ways to make cities work better for people walking, rolling, and biking on our streets, shown by her work in organizations like the Sierra Club, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the Alliance for Biking and Walking, and planning positions in well-known national and international firms such as Kimley-Horn and Alta Planning + Design.

Ross Donihue '11

Ross Donihue is the Lead Content Strategist on Esri's StoryMaps team. He provides leadership and direction for a team of professional writers, cartographers, and visual designers. He applies his background in geography and systems thinking to enhance geospatial technology, addressing the pressing challenges facing our planet. Before joining Esri in 2018, Ross was the Creative Director and Founder of Maps for Good, a visual storytelling team that makes maps and digital media for better world initiatives. Ross is a National Geographic Explorer with a Master of Environmental Management from the Yale School of the Environment. He graduated from Macalester in 2011 with majors in Geography and Environmental Studies.





Rachel Fehr '16

Since graduating from Macalester in 2016, I've built a career in food security and health policy. I started out at the Kaiser Family Foundation, researching health insurance reform (and making lots of maps!). I went on to get my Masters in Public Affairs from Princeton, where I interned with the Congressional Budget Office and consulted for North Carolina's Medicaid agency. After grad school I joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where I work on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) policy. Much of my work at USDA is focused on modernizing the program and protecting low-income households from criminal schemes to steal their SNAP benefits. Geography gave me a critical eye for how place, inequality, and institutions shape people's everyday experiences, which has stayed with me throughout my career.

Have a story of your own to share? We want to hear it!

Please use the QR code here to submit your alumni story to be featured in a future issue!

Geography Majors Study Away Spotlight 2026

Claire Rochelois '27

Where: Cape Town, South Africa
What: Researcher and volunteer on a small-hold agroecology and permaculture farm called Heart and Soil, she specifically looked at the waste streams coming onto the farm and volunteered to plant seeds!



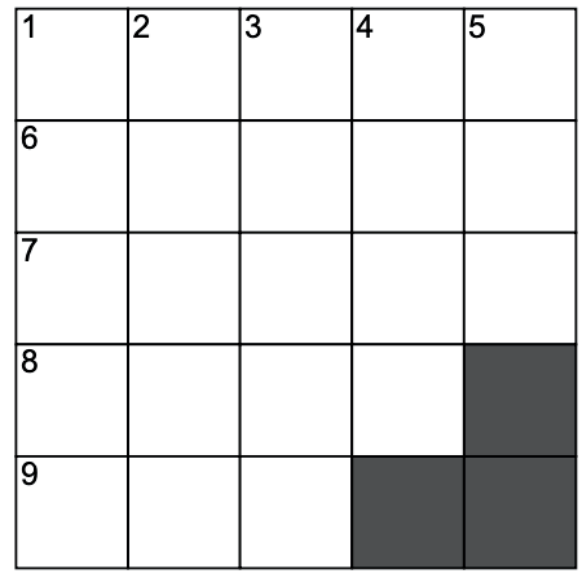


Ranoromiangaly Andriamihaja-Rabe '27

Where: New York City, U.S.A.
What: Outreach and Communications Intern at GrowNYC where she helped them direct, capture, and edit photos and videos for their 50th anniversary while also helping them digitize previous records!

Geography-ish Crossword!

Find answers here or on the geography instagram account



Across:
1. A Geographers' favorite topic
6. 294 Course
7. MN neighborhood split by I-94
8. Hawaiian instrument, plural
9. Airport Security

Down:
1. Walk like a peacock
2. Too many in the kitchen
3. Sleep disorder
4. Jar tops
5. Natural System

Upcoming Events

- **Fall Open House** (Nov. 2)
- **AP Human Geography students at Mac** (Nov. 7)
- **GEOG-111 poster session** (Nov. 9)
- **EnviroThursday with Xochi Castañeda-Camacho (St Olaf)** (Nov. 12)
- **Geography Awareness Week** (Nov. 16-20)
- **Geobuddies** (Dec. 3)
- **Winter Dinner** (Dec. 3)
- **Lanegran Day** (Feb. 19)

Alumni, we want to hear from you!

This academic year we are marking the 80th anniversary of the Macalester Geography Department --- and we want to hear your stories! Since its founding in 1947 Macalester Geography has grown into one of the best undergraduate geography departments in the country.

Through the years, Macalester Geography alumni like you have inspired us with your stories, offered insights and opportunities to our students, and helped us create a strong sense of community beyond campus. This year, we'd like to highlight as many of these alumni stories as we can in our newsletter, "The Graticule."

Submit your Geography Alumni Stories



Audrey Colwell '29, Co-editor



Lola Black '29, Co-editor

Support Geography! When giving to Macalester, consider making a gift to the Geography Department. To direct your gift to our program, please select "other" in the "designate gift to" option and write "Geography" in the comments. Your gift will support high-impact activities, including field trips and professional development opportunities for students that are a signature part of the Macalester Geography experience.

44.938951, -93.169306
macalester.edu/geography

Departmental Support

Constance Delage, Office Coordinator
Eric Carter, Department Chair

Want to stay updated?

Follow us on Instagram (@macgeography) and join our groups on LinkedIn (Macalester College Geography Network) and Facebook (Macalester College Geographers) to keep up to date on the department and other alumi!