

DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE



More than 100 Geology alumni joined current students and faculty for a picture in the Illini Union Ballroom at the end of the Friday festivities.

100+ Geology alumni return for the department's 2025 reunion

For more than seven decades, the Department of Earth Science & Environmental Change has helped students interpret stories written in stone, water, and time. This spring, alumni, faculty, and students came together to celebrate that legacy at the department's 75th anniversary homecoming, three days filled with shared memories, fascinating science, and a look toward the future.

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Spring field course returns to Cyprus and the Troodos Ophiolite

The 2025 GEOL 415/515 spring field course returned to the world-class geology of the Troodos Ophiolite and associated terranes within the island nation of Cyprus. The classroom component, during the first half of the semester, focused on the evolution of the Theory of Seafloor Spreading in general and the particular significance that the exposures on Cyprus have had on our understanding of seafloor spreading processes. Students read and discussed historical and modern scientific literature on the Troodos Ophiolite and how oceanic crust is constructed at mid-ocean ridges. This included mantle-melting dynamics beneath mid-ocean spreading centers, melt percolation through the lithosphere, and dike injection and magma transport leading to the eruption of lava.

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GEOL 415/515 students among Cretaceous pillow basalts in Cyprus.



Department Head Craig Lundstrom leading the field course in Cyprus

Letter from the head, **CRAIG C. LUNDSTROM**

Hello to all!

We did it! Led by our fantastic Alumni Board Chair Mike Bourque, we pulled together a wondrous “75 years of Geology at Illinois” get-together this past May. If you were able to attend—thank you; if you could not make it, then start thinking about the next one—we came away thinking, ‘let’s do it again in 5 years!’ The event featured talks, tours of various labs and facilities, and a grand banquet culminating in University President and geocientist Tim Killeen talking about his own science and the planet we study and love. We had such a phenomenal turnout that we worried about the seating capacity of the Illini Union ballroom as the time approached. You can read more in the event write-up, but I will just say it was amazing. I had such a great time seeing people from all of the decades of Geology at Illinois gathered together, and reveling in the memory of good times in the Department.

I want to say a big thank you to Mike, as well as all the folks in the Department who worked hard to make it run as smoothly as it did. Special shout-out goes to Steve Altaner, who bravely led a contingent of more than 75 people on a field trip to Starved Rock State Park. It went off spectacularly well because we have such great people in ESEC.

The big news in the department now is that we have another tenure-track faculty search going on—this time for an Assistant Professor in shallow-crust geophysics. We had over 160 applications, and we are excited to grow more. This is truly an indication of the positive views that LAS and the campus have about ESEC, especially given that we added two new members to the faculty just last year.

Field trips and field camp continue to play major roles in shaping the education of students in the Department. The Wasatch Uinta Field Camp (WUFC) camp is directed by our own Michael Stewart and is now housed at the University of Utah. Course field trips included the Structures class going to Baraboo and Petrology going to Duluth during the beauty of early fall—in fact, the two trips overlapped for a night in Baraboo, testing a plan for a joint field trip in the coming years.

At the reunion, we announced a planned fundraising campaign for an endowment to support our famous GEOL 415/515 spring field course. As

you may know, for many years we had contributions from industry to help subsidize the field component of the course, usually to classic international localities, for both undergraduate majors and graduate students. However, we have been using department funds for the last 5 years to maintain affordability, and that is not sustainable. Therefore, we aim to establish this endowment to allow this program to continue in perpetuity. This past year, we had a very successful trip to Cyprus led by Michael Stewart, Alison Anders, and me. Next spring, a new trip to France will be developed and led by Jess Conroy, Jenny Druhan, and Willy Guenther.

I know many of you experienced the wonders of seeing the world through geologic eyes on a 415/515 trip, and I hope we can be successful in this campaign. Donations to the fund will be matched by Alumni Board chair Mike Bourque up to \$150,000, so your contribution toward this important goal will go twice as far! Simply visit the department webpage (www.geology.illinois.edu) and select the “Make a Gift” link in the upper right corner. A button to contribute to the 415/515 endowment will appear at the top of the page. If you need help with any donation, please call us at (217) 333-3540.

Please drop in whenever you are in the area—we love to catch up with our alumni and friends! Our LinkedIn group, “UIUC Geology Alumni,” has over 400 members and is an easy way for our alumni to connect—and to recruit or search for job opportunities. If you’re not a member already, please join. And as always, we love to hear from you when you send your news to us at geology@illinois.edu.

All the best,
Craig Lundstrom
Head, Department of Earth Science & Environmental Change



Newest Faculty Member: **Meet Sarah Austin**

Sarah Austin didn't set out to become a geologist. In fact, she jokes that she "messed up" when she first enrolled at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, mistakenly thinking the College of Education and Human Development was the right path to medical school. But one introductory geology course changed everything.

"I sat in the second row and was so enthralled the whole class, and then was like, 'Can I do this as a major?'" she recalled. That spark eventually carried her to graduate school at the University of Rochester, and later to teaching positions at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and a postdoctoral appointment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Now, Austin has joined the department, where she will teach classes like Physical Geology, Natural Disasters, Structural Geology, and Geotectonics. For her, the classroom has always been the heart of her career. "I'm so excited to get back into teaching," she said. "I've taught an intro geology class before, and it's my favorite thing. We have a lot of rock and mineral-based labs, and those are the most fun!"

She is equally thrilled about the chance to help with the department's field camp, an opportunity that holds personal significance. She fell in love with structural geology at field camp, so "being able to teach at field camp every year is the dream," she said.

Austin describes the department as warm and welcoming from the start: "Everyone was so incredibly kind, and genuinely so. It feels like a really nice community." As she settles in, she hopes students will see her as approachable and ready to help: "I want students to feel comfortable talking to me. If they have any questions about anything, I am more than happy to chat."

When she's not in the classroom or out in the field, Austin enjoys hiking, playing video games, and spending time with her dog, Balto. Her advice for students reflects her own journey: "Follow what you're interested in and don't be afraid to ask questions. Some of the coolest opportunities I've had were all because I asked the right person the right question."



2025 Alumni Achievement Awardee: **Murry Gerber (MS '78)**

The department presented the 2025 Alumni Achievement Award to Murry Gerber on April 17th. Many of our alumni make illustrious contributions in the geoscience world, in both industry and basic research. But others leverage their geoscience skills into highly impactful careers spanning into other arenas—Murry is a great example of this.

Murry completed his MS in 1978, advised by Albert Corozzi. Murry was then hired by Shell Oil, and he worked his way up the ladder from field geologist to management. Then his career took a turn as he moved to the finance side of Shell, working as treasurer and helping to establish Coral Energy (now Shell Trading North America).

In 1998, when the Marcellus shale gas boom was about to take off, Murry was hired as President and CEO of Equitable Resources (now EQT Corporation). The company innovated and navigated the tumultuous early years of the shale gas boom, made astute moves to acquire assets, and grew explosively to become the largest natural gas producer in the Appalachian Basin. Murry stepped down as CEO in 2010, continuing as executive chairman until 2022. Given his proven experience at the helm of EQT, Murry was selected to serve on the boards of directors of major corporations, including BlackRock, Halliburton, and US Steel.

In his presentation to the department, Murry explained that his geoscience training set him up for success in management and executive leadership. He said that broad training in scientific thinking, combined with a geologist's ability to work with complex observations, to assess uncertainty, and to make decisions involving risk, provided a solid foundation for success in many fields, including executive leadership. The department recognizes Murry's major achievements and vision in the energy industry and beyond.

100+ Geology alumni return for the department's 2025 reunion

(Continued)

A LEGENDARY KICKOFF

Festivities began Thursday afternoon with a special department colloquium featuring Dr. Suzanne Mahlborg Kay (BS '69, MS '72), William & Katherine Snee professor emeritus at Cornell University. Her presentation offered a scientific journey and reflection on decades of work in the field, setting a high bar for the celebration ahead.

That evening, alumni, faculty, and friends gathered in the Natural History Building Core for a social hour. Laughter and storytelling filled the space as generations of geologists reconnected.

Mike Bourque (MS, '78), outgoing chair of the Alumni Board, said the excitement was contagious. "Seeing old friends and meeting older or younger alumni for the first time is remarkably rewarding. Sharing stories often revealed interests and experiences surprisingly like mine. It reaffirmed my sense that geologists share a unique mindset of intellectual curiosity and a relationship to the earth that quickly feels familiar, almost like family."



Alumni had a chance to mingle with current ESEC students during a poster session on Friday afternoon.

A DAY OF DISCOVERY AND CONNECTION

Friday's full-day program began with coffee and conversation at the alumni mixer, followed by talks and reflections. Faculty members Craig Lundstrom, Dan Blake, and Steve Marshak, along with alumni Sharon Mosher (BS, '73, PhD, '78) and Margaret Leinen (BS, '69), shared updates on the department and the evolving field of geosciences. A showcase of student experiences followed, highlighting field camp and international trips that continue to shape the next generation of geoscientists.

"We wanted to highlight the recent trips as a way for alumni to connect with current students, but also remember their past trips," said department head Craig Lundstrom. "We hope they remember as we try to build an endowment for future trips."

At lunch, alumni sat with current undergraduates, offering advice, trading stories, and participating in a job panel discussion.

James Cokinos (BS '02) reflected on the value of his department connections. "It's a great milestone and a great reflection point on one's career to see what the department and university did for me. This community is fantastic. So many geology grads were at my wedding. If that's not a testament to the friendships you build here, I don't know what is."

In the afternoon, attendees toured the Natural History Building, visiting the university's rare coal ball collection, paleontology specimens, and Illinois State Geological Survey archives.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH AND ACHIEVEMENT

Later in the day, professors Tom Johnson, Bruce Fouke, and Trish Gregg presented their latest research, offering insight into the cutting-edge work happening within the department.

For Johnson, the reunion was as much about people as it was about science. "With so many of them here at once, it was like a big, intense family reunion. The department has sent so many students into the world, and now we see the fruits of our labors."

The poster session that followed allowed students and researchers to share their work with alumni and peers in an engaging, informal setting. As evening fell, attendees gathered to honor achievements, renew friendships, and look ahead. The night concluded with remarks from university provost John Coleman and president Timothy Killeen, who reflected on the department's enduring legacy and its vital role in addressing future global challenges.



FIELD IN FOCUS: ALUMNI GEOLOGY TRIP

To cap off the celebration, more than 75 alumni, students, faculty, and guests took part in a full-day field trip to Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks. Led by emeritus professor Steve Altaner, the excursion offered a chance to reconnect with fellow alumni and the landscapes that first inspired their love of geology.

“Leading geology field trips has always been my favorite part of teaching,” Altaner said. “When Craig Lundstrom offered me the opportunity to lead a geology field trip for our 75th reunion, it was an easy yes.” The group hiked over three miles of rugged terrain, traversing river gorges, waterfalls, and towering cliffs carved from St. Peter sandstone, and discussing salient aspects of the local and regional geology. Altaner said what stood out most was the broad age range of participants, from children to retirees. “I was humbled by the participants’ breadth and depth of geologic and scientific expertise. Everyone learned something, enjoyed themselves, and was able to reconnect with people and places.”

The department hopes this is the start of a new tradition, with the next celebration slated for 2030. “Not only was this a great thing for the department, building our alumni community for the future, it was just plain fun,” said Lundstrom.



Steve Altaner talks about the origins of the Kankakee Torrent.



Steve Altaner talks about St. Peter sandstone near Cascade Falls.

WANT TO SEE MORE PICTURES FROM THE REUNION?

Visit our webpage at
go.Illinois.edu/GeologyReunion

DISPATCH FROM THE ARCTIC:

Prof. Ellen Buckley

UTQIAGVIK, Alaska—My boots crunch into the snow as I step onto the frozen Arctic Ocean. It's April in Utqiagvik, Alaska, and I'm here to help run a sea ice field trip for eighth graders and assist with some fieldwork. Around me, a network of tents—each with a story to tell about the sea ice—waits for the group of thirteen-year-olds to arrive.

I weave between snowmachines, stepping around gear arranged for the students. A Starlink device is behind me, keeping me tethered to my graduate student class via Zoom. These students are enrolled in my "Ice and the Climate System" course at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 3,000 miles away. I hold up my phone, turning it to show my students back home what it looks like to drill an ice core, to scrape algae from the bottom of the ice, to lower a device that measures conductivity, temperature, and depth into the ocean through a narrow hole.

The Zoom chat lights up: "How thick is the ice?" 1-3 meters. "How do you deal with polar bears?" We have guards posted, scanning the horizon.

I pan to a group launching a kite used to map ice features and track traditional whaling routes. Another station shares Indigenous knowledge passed down over generations. Nearby, scientific instruments buzz in the cold. The most popular stop for the younger students? The hot dog station, where the kids line up, laughing, cheeks red from the wind, for something warm off the grill. Science, ice and hot dogs—what more could you ask for?

I'm a remote sensing scientist by training. I'm used to interpreting sea ice through laser altimeters and satellite imagery. But this week, I'm teaching about ice while standing on it—snow blowing sideways, wind chill biting. The middle school students are from the local community, bringing their lived knowledge of ice and cold.



We trade terms: I describe freeboard and melt ponds; they tell me about the celebrations that occur when a whale is brought ashore.

Later, back on land, I look out over the sea ice as the sun slowly sets. Soon, this ice will break away from the shore and move west. And from now on, when I see pixels from space, I'll imagine boot prints, a whaling livelihood, polar bears, and the faint sound of laughter across a white expanse.

ANN LONG - LAB TEACHING SPECIALIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

Ann Long retired at the end of 2024 after being the heart and soul of the department's Lab and Discussion sections in introductory geology courses for almost 25 years. During that time, she was the lab organizer and Head TA for two important courses for our department: GEOL 100 (Planet Earth), a large-enrollment physical geology course for non-majors, and GEOL 107 (Physical Geology), a critically important first course for geology majors. Her successful teaching methods involved enthusiasm and encouragement, which created a friendly and welcoming environment for thousands of students in her Labs and Discussions. Unsurprisingly,

Ann regularly appeared in the List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students for both courses. As Head TA, Ann was responsible for the overall operations of the Labs and Discussions in those courses. Fortunately, Ann has superb organizational skills. She created well-designed and well-supplied Lab room spaces, held weekly meetings with all TAs in those courses, addressed any problems that arose during the semester, and communicated regularly with the Lecture instructor to ensure consistency and completion of course objectives. She co-authored custom Lab manuals for GEOL 100 and 107, and created many new exercises designed

to capture students' attention, foster critical thinking, and illustrate fundamental geologic principles. In addition to these many talents, Ann is very humble, kind, and good-natured. Ann made monumental contributions to our teaching program, and we will miss her greatly.



Grad student Aabash Bhattarai taking a core sample from a tree trunk on Rialto Beach, Olympic Peninsula National Park.

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Steve Altaner led a full-day geologic field trip to Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks for the department's 75th anniversary celebration (see page 1). About 70 alumni, students, faculty, and guests participated in the trip to these classic destinations, which are beloved by generations of Illinois geologists. Steve guided versions of this trip many dozens of times during his 37 years as a faculty member in the department.

Alison Anders' Group welcomed two new students this year: Syd Brinker, working on interactions between glaciers and rivers, and Carlee Scott, working on inorganic carbon in Illinois soils. We're also working to understand floodplain sedimentation and phosphorus storage in Illinois over the last 200 years, and looking forward to a new collaboration with Hung Nguyen's group to use tree ring dating for this purpose.

The Conroy research group is engaged in projects spanning modern and paleoclimate dynamics of the tropical Pacific, with a focus on stable water isotope systematics in the region. This year, two graduate students joined Dr. Conroy on a field campaign to Kiritimati Atoll, where the team conducted lagoon water and sediment sampling. The group continues to advance research in tropical Pacific paleoclimatology: Shane Lusk is developing a new paleoclimate record from Kiritimati lagoon sediments spanning the Common Era, and KeMia Smith is investigating how climate is recorded in the geochemistry of Galápagos land snails. Allison Wallin

is focused on understanding wind variability in Illinois, where surface winds are slowing, and is examining wind and atmospheric circulation changes across key climate intervals from the Last Glacial Maximum to the mid-Pliocene on a global scale. These projects are supported by funding from the National Science Foundation for wind and isotope-related research, and by a campus research board grant for the Kiritimati paleoclimate work.

The Fouke Lab Group has continued to contribute to medical research related to calcification in the human body (see page 8). Recent invited presentations included the Yellowstone Summit, the Yellowstone Forever Institute, and the Thermal Biology Institute at Montana State University. Bruce is in his 13th year serving as Director of the Illinois Roy J. Carver Biotechnology Center and holds the Ralph E. Grim Professorship.

The Gregg Lab has had an exciting year! We are thrilled to welcome two new PhD students: Carla Farris, who will be joining our Galápagos team, and Hayley Woodrich, who is staying on as a PhD student and will continue her work on Yellowstone, co-advised by Ross Maguire. Additionally, Hayley was awarded a prestigious NSF Graduate Research Fellowship! Trish was awarded a new NSF Grant to investigate Campi Flegrei, the active supervolcano beneath Naples, so traveling to Italy is in the future. Our research in the Aleutians is continuing, and PhD candidate Yuyu Li published an excellent study on the "stealthy" eruptive behavior of Veniaminof volcano, which received a lot of media attention. Trish is taking a sabbatical this year and looking forward to exploring new research directions using AI for volcano forecasting with colleagues at the NCSA.

Willy Guenther and his students are working on questions related to the formation of the Great Unconformity surface and the long-term (in)stability of cratons. They are also continuing to develop methods in (U-Th)/He thermochronology. This past year, PhD student Ryan Sigat completed his dissertation on the deep-time (>1 Ga) thermal history of the Upper Midwest craton, while PhD student Ola Babarinde is investigating the erosion history of the Great Unconformity in the Great Plains states from borehole samples. Willy is working on creating new numerical models of He diffusion in zircon."

Tom Johnson's group is applying selenium stable isotope measurements toward mitigating mining-related selenium contamination. Gold mines and coal mines in British Columbia and West Virginia release selenium as their waste rock piles are exposed to weathering. Work by recent MS graduate Matt Stiegman, current MS student Justin Weaver, and current undergrad student Zach Jalley is helping mining companies understand, and decrease, selenium releases to the environment.

Hung Nguyen's Water Cycle and Tree Rings group conducted fieldwork at Olympic National Park and several dam removal sites in Illinois, Indiana, New Hampshire, and Maine. Hung also received an NSF grant for a project titled "Shifting snow, changing flow - quantifying warming-induced seasonal streamflow changes in the snow-fed Columbia River over the past 500 years".

Transdisciplinary breakthroughs from the Fouke Group:

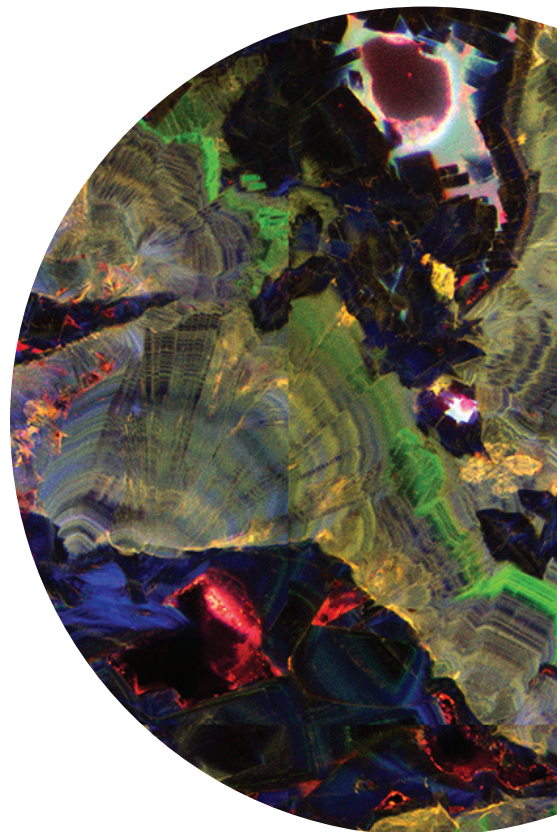
CONNECTING CORAL REEFS AND HOT SPRINGS WITH THE HUMAN BODY

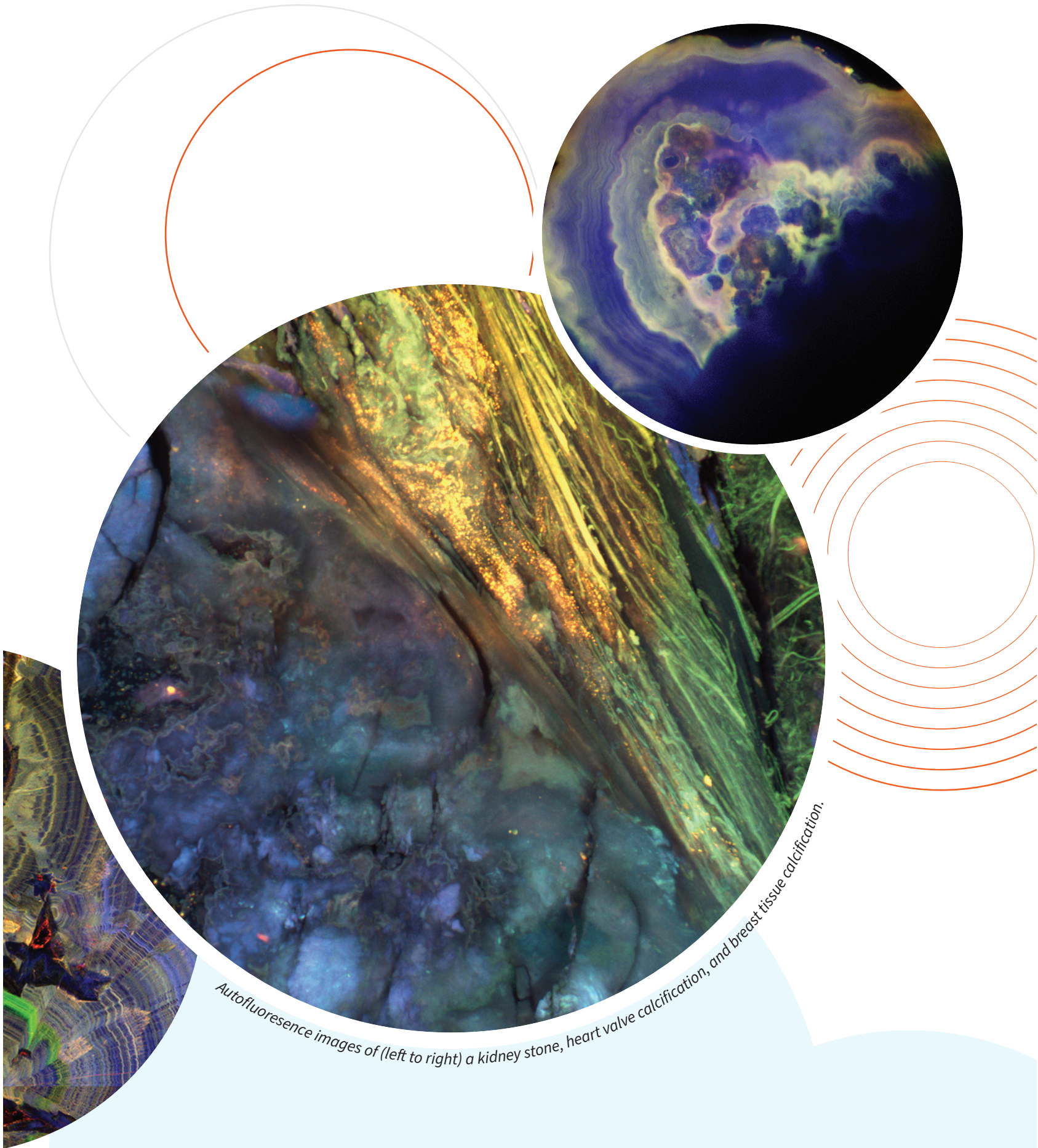
Bruce Fouke's research group has made breakthroughs in human kidney stone research, in partnership with the Mayo Clinic and Northwestern Medicine. You may have wondered how this topic - seemingly an offshoot unrelated to geoscience - fits into his research agenda. The answer is straightforward: The geological and biogeochemical phenomena of calcification and diagenesis, responsible for the formation of coral reef limestone and hot spring travertine, are the same processes that drive pathological calcification processes in the human body.

Fouke brings to the world of medical research unique transdisciplinary expertise, including super-resolution (100 nm-scale) autofluorescence microscopy, knowledge of mineral stratigraphic layering and paragenesis, next-generation molecular biology (DNA, RNA, protein) omics techniques, and insight into the role played by microbes. This integration has led to new perspectives in the medical community for development and testing of previously unexplored drug therapies and clinical interventions.

The Fouke group's GeoBioMed strategy has moved beyond kidney stones to include calcification associated with aortic valve heart disease in collaboration with UCLA Health, as well as benign breast disease and breast carcinomas, in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic. As Bruce puts it, "The human body is brimming with fluids that are poised at the threshold of precipitating calcium-rich minerals. We have evidence that pathological calcification proceeds via initial deposition of tiny amorphous spherules that diagenetically transition into larger crystalline forms. These mechanisms are strikingly similar to biomineralization paragenetic sequences we have documented in natural geological environments. The study of human pathological calcification, therefore, lends itself extremely well to our geoscience-inspired approach."

New understandings and therapeutic breakthroughs have resulted, helping with the prevention and treatment of kidney, heart, and breast calcification, which afflict tens of millions of people globally each year. The Fouke group has received more than \$2M in funding from the National Institutes of Health and the Weil Foundation, resulting in groundbreaking articles in *Nature Reviews Urology*, *Nature Geoscience*, *Nature Scientific Reports*, and other top journals.





Autofluorescence images of (left to right) a kidney stone, heart valve calcification, and breast tissue calcification.

ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD REPORT BY BOARD CHAIR MIKE BOURQUE (MS '78)

The Department reconstituted an Alumni Advisory Board (formerly the Geothrust Committee) in 2016, just ahead of the reopening of the Natural History Building. I have been a member of the Board since that time, and Board Chair since 2021. I earned an MS degree in 1978 under the direction of Professor Ralph Langenheim. As a Teaching Assistant, I worked for Ralph as well as professors George Klein and Albert Carozzi. I worked at Shell for 30 years as an Exploration Geologist.



Board chair Mike Bourque.

The Board currently consists of 20 alumni. We meet twice a year, once virtually and once on campus. The Board is a diverse group of professional geoscientists representing many important career pathways students seek. Members have degree dates from 1954 to 2009, providing the broadest perspectives on changes in technology, economic trends, resource development, and environmental sustainability.

The mission of the Alumni Board includes several goals to enhance the continued success of ESEC. The first is to stay current on key matters such as student enrollments, research objectives, faculty developments, and financial resources. The second is to engage with the department's undergraduate and graduate students as much as possible to provide personal guidance and encouragement. Third is to assist the Department in fundraising. Members are required to make nominal contributions on an annual basis. However, it is typical for individual members to lead the way in significant campaigns. In addition, their personal networks with other alumni stimulate contributions. Finally, Board members have a most human need to stay physically and emotionally connected with the University and

the Department that helped launch our professional lives. Serving on the Board is our way of saying "Thank you."

In the five years I have been Chair, the Board has established the Ralph Langenheim Undergraduate Scholarship Endowment, enhanced the Jim Kirkpatrick Graduate Student Award Endowment, revitalized a historical collaboration between Geology and Plant Biology in coal ball research, with the Tom L. Phillips Memorial Fund for Paleobotany, funded by a Board member, and is leading the way with significant contributions for the newly launched campaign for a 415/515 Spring Field Course Endowment.

A key goal is to bring together the department's alumni. A LinkedIn UIUC Geology Alumni group, administered by two Board members, has grown to at least 438 members today, among the largest of its kind in the US. The Board has organized local alumni mixers in Houston and Chicago, with more to follow. Our greatest success was helping organize the first departmental Alumni Reunion last May. If you missed it, let us know how soon we should do it again!

Spring field course returns to Cyprus and the Troodos Ophiolite

(Continued)

During spring break, professors Michael Stewart, Craig Lundstrom, and Alison Anders led the 10-day trip to Cyprus. The group arrived jet-lagged after many hours of overnight travel. To adjust, they spent a day in the ancient city of Paphos visiting UNESCO heritage sites such as The Houses of Dionysos, Theseus, Aion, and Orpheus- the villas of four Roman noblemen from the 2nd to the 5th centuries, featuring intricate floor mosaics depicting scenes from Greek Mythology. Also visited were the Tombs of the Kings from the 4th century BC, Byzantine-era churches, and fascinating local markets.

After the much-needed rest and sightseeing in Paphos, the group traversed the Mamonia Complex (sediments and volcanics sutured to the Troodos Ophiolite), observing thrust faults of the tectonic mélange. They then investigated an olistrisome— a submarine mass-wasting deposit- exposed at Aphrodite's Beach (where the goddess was born from the sea). The day ended at the small mountain village of Kakopetria, checking into the legendary Ekali Hotel- home base for the remainder of the trip. Successive days were spent traversing the Troodos Ophiolite and its exposure of mantle rocks, lower crustal intrusive bodies, mid-crustal sheeted dikes, and the lavas and pelagic carbonates of the upper crust.

Each evening, the group explored Kakopetria to find a meal from the intimate family restaurants. Students experienced fantastic Greek dishes, including mountain trout and lamb! Andreas Mantalas, the purveyor of Ekali, provided a warm welcome and even DJ'd a dance party on the group's last evening in town. Overall, it was an excellent field excursion where many exposures were examined, much was learned, and everyone had great fun and experiences!

As is usual for 415/515 courses, students raved about their experiences on their course evaluation forms. Anonymous comments included: *"This course was absolutely incredible. The lectures were in-depth and provided proper background information on the geology of Cyprus, and the field trip was unbelievable. I would recommend this class to anyone interested in geology in a HEARTBEAT."*

Another wrote: *"I think one of the strengths of this course is its ability to cover a variety of processes while connecting them to one location. In this way, the class acts as a survey course and gets very detailed about the field location."*



YOUR SUPPORT TAKES STUDENTS FURTHER

If you agree that the department should sustain this transformational course, we urge you to consider donating to the endowment we're building to keep GEOL 415/515 affordable in perpetuity. The fund is called the Geology Field Course Endowment and it is the department's highest priority at present.

Visit the department's home page, or see page 13 for details about giving online, by phone, or by mail.

Donations to the Geology Field Course fund will be matched through a generous pledge by Alumni Board chair Mike Bourque up, to \$150,000.

ALUMNI NEWS

Your fellow alumni would love to hear from you!

Please send a brief note to geology@illinois.edu.

Lorence “Larry” Collins (PhD ’59), Professor Emeritus at Cal State University, Northridge is still active, researching and writing to correct erroneous claims made by young-earth creationists regarding Noah’s flood, the age of the earth, etc. Larry has remained in touch and has been a supporter of the department for many years.

Margaret Leinen (BS ’69) stepped down this year from her role at UC San Diego as Vice Chancellor for Marine Sciences, Dean of the School of Marine Sciences, and Director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Margaret credits the mentorship of Harold Wanless with helping to get her started in research. She went on to a successful research career in oceanography at the University of Rhode Island, became Vice Provost for Marine and Environmental Programs and Dean of the Graduate School of Oceanography there, and went on to serve in an astonishing array of leadership positions. There are too many to list here, but they include Assistant Director for Geosciences at NSF, President of AGU, and President of the Climate Response Fund. She is a fellow of AGU, GSA, and AAAS. Margaret currently serves on the department’s Alumni Advisory Board and has been a long-term, loyal supporter.

Karen Franczyk (BS ’78) worked at the USGS in Lakewood, CO, for 16 years, earning an MS from the Colorado School of Mines in 1983. She moved to Iowa, completed an MS degree in Physician Assistant Studies in 1999, and worked as a physician’s assistant until she retired in 2022.

Dean Rose (BS ’83) attended the reunion festivities, and we learned that he runs Blacksmith Foundry, a well-known metalworking shop in the Champaign-Urbana area (www.blacksmithfoundry.net). Dean’s work includes the ornate iron archway at the Urbana farmer’s market and various metal sculptures many of us have seen in the local parks.

Faith (Stanke) Fitzpatrick (MS ’88) is a Research Hydrologist at the USGS Upper Midwest Water Science Center in Madison, WI. She earned her PhD from UW-Madison and has spent much of her career studying geomorphic, flood, and sediment dynamics of rivers. Her area of expertise is in historical watershed geomorphology and sediment budgets, specifically identifying natural and human causes for accelerated erosion and sedimentation problems, flooding, habitat degradation, eutrophication, and sources of contaminants.

Linda Bonnell (PhD ’90) and Rob Lander (PhD ’91) continue to run their sedimentary petrology consulting business, Geocosm (<https://geocosm.net>), out of Durango, CO. Rob and Linda will be attending the NPF Biennial Reservoir Characterization Conference in Stavanger, Norway in December and presenting, “Making Rock Without a Sample: Petrology-Inspired Digital Twins for Reservoir Characterization.”

Scott Clark (PhD ’07) is Professor and Department Chair at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. Tom Johnson stopped in to catch up with Scott back in February, and heard that he and Francine have sent their daughter Julie off to college- they are adjusting. Scott’s department is fighting budget pressures by recruiting as many students to geoscience as possible (just like us).

Wedding bells chimed in May, as **Jia Wang (BS ’17, MS ’19)** and **Paul Ginsberg (BS ’15, PhD ’23)** were married in Urbana (see photo below). In attendance were **Mahta Ansari (PhD ’24)**, **Kalini Bruckel (PhD ’23)**, **Cecilia Cullen (MS ’19)**, **Jeff Xiao (PhD ’23)**, **Mingfei Chen (PhD ’22)**, **Ching Chang (PhD ’21)**, and **Devin Mannix (PhD in progress)**. Jia works at Aqueous Solutions, the geochemistry software company founded by Prof. Emeritus Craig Bethke. Paul is a Senior Materials Engineer at Cache Energy, a Champaign-based company making innovative long-duration energy storage devices.

McKailey Sabaj (BS ’20) completed her MS degree at Indiana University in 2023 and has been working as a Research Geologist at the Indiana Geological and Water Survey.



GIVE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE!

Gifts from alumni and friends provide critically important support for students, sustain excellence, and allow us to pursue new initiatives. This year, our highest priority is to build the Geology Field Course Endowment. The first \$150,000 in gifts to the fund will be matched!

WAYS TO GIVE:

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STUDENT AWARDS AND DEGREES

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Zach Jalley

R. James Kirkpatrick Award for Outstanding Graduate Research in Geology

Hannah Veldhuizen

Harriet Wallace Outstanding Woman Graduate Student Award

Jinyu Wang

Harriet Wallace Outstanding Woman Undergraduate Student Award

Anne Cook

Harriet Wallace Geology Graduate Student Service Award

Hannah Veldhuizen

Harriet Wallace Geology Undergraduate Student Service Award

Naomi Dolan

Outstanding Senior Award

Sofie Rank

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

2024: Christyna Moore and Hayley Woodrich

Morris Leighton Research Grants

Shah Bilawal Ali

Alexcia Dunn

Molly Halla

Jacob Huffaker

Hannah Veldhuizen

Hayley Woodrich

Jackson Geology Graduate Student Research Awards

Syd Brinker

Ines Gauthier

Molly Halla

Jacob Huffaker

Shane Lusk

Christyna Moore

Hannah Veldhuizen

Allison Wallin

Tenley Webb

Hayley Woodrich

Winslow Research Grant in Hydrology

Carleigh Wachtel

Jinyu Wang

ESEC Future Earth Scientists

William Fitton

Zach Jalley

Donovan Jensen

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Rebecca Matter

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Alyssa Jean Skaar

Emily Spaete

Sophia Voudris

Langenheim Scholarship Recipients

Naomi Dolan

William Fitton

Zach Jalley

DEGREES CONFERRED 2024-2025

Bachelor of Science

August 2024

Willem Patrick Jo

Dominik Sebastian Rzesutek

May 2025

Neil James Dombrowski

Tara Clare Leonard

Tiffany Liu

Rosario Martinez

Alyssa Jean Skaar

Master of Science

December 2024

Celia Aranda Reina

May 2025

Neil Isaac Van Kanegan

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2025

Hannah Juliette Veldhuizen



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ALUMNI OBITUARIES

Margaret A. Bargh (BS, '49) passed away on June 22, 2025. Margaret worked at the Illinois Geological Survey for many years. She was pivotal in bringing analog geological data into the computer age, converting analog coal resource maps into digital computer formats.

Charles J. Gossett (MS, '57) passed away on July 26, 2024. After graduating, he served in the US Army, where he worked for the Army Map Service. In 1965, Charles and his family moved to Speedway, Indiana, where he spent 34 years working with the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Duane "Dewey" Moore (MS, '61 and PhD, '63) passed away on October 18, 2024. He completed his doctorate under Don Henderson, then taught at Marshall University for one year. He

taught at Knox College from 1964 to 1988, serving as department head for 10 of those years. Dewey wrote, with Bob Reynolds, a successful textbook, *"X-Ray Diffraction and the Identification and Analysis of Clay Minerals."* He moved to the ISGS in 1988 to work as Senior Clay Mineralogist until retiring in 2001. He received the Clay Minerals Society's prestigious Brindley Lecture Award in 2000.

Donald Easton Orlopp (MS, '62 and PhD, '64) passed away April 12, 2022. After completing his doctoral work, he went on to have a successful career of 30 years with Chevron Overseas Petroleum Inc.

Dianne Juchimek (BS, '64) passed away on November 15, 2024. She earned her MS in Library Science from Syracuse University, then worked for

30 years at the Franklin Moon Library of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry as an Associate Librarian in Technical Services in charge of acquisitions and collection development.

William R. Highland (BS, '73) passed away on October 28, 2023. We believe he lived in Morrison, Colorado, some time ago and had a consulting business located there. If you knew him, please pass any information you may have to the department.

Ronald W. Jorgensen (MS, '77) passed away on September 21, 2024. He taught at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY, in the 1980s. Please pass any additional information you may have to the department.

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2024–2025 COLLOQUIUM SPEAKERS

August 29:

Cynthia Palomares,
2024 (AEG Jahns
Distinguished Lecturer)

September 5:

Jaco Baas,
Bangor University (Jack
and Richard Threet Lecture
in Sedimentary Geology)

September 26:

Douglas Edmonds,
Indiana University
Bloomington (Glenn and
Susan Buckley Lecture in
Environmental Geology)

October 3:

John Higgins,
Princeton University

October 10:

Peter C. Lippert,
University of Utah (Richard
Hay Lecture)

October 17:

Scott St. George,
WTW Research Network

October 24:

Ben Fernando, Johns
Hopkins University (Ralph
E. Grim Lecture)

October 31:

Ben Rostron,
University of Alberta;
2024 (GSA Birdsall-Dreiss
Distinguished Lecture)

November 7:

Lauren Harrison,
Colorado State University

November 14:

Peter J. Edmunds,
California State University,
Northridge

November 21:

Rose Oelkers,
ESEC Postdoctoral
Researcher

December 5:

Karen King,
University of Tennessee,
Knoxville (R. James
Kirkpatrick Lecture)

January 30:

Daniel Watkins,
Brown University (Ralph E.
Grim Lecture)

February 6:

Donna Shillington,
Northern Arizona
University (Richard Hay
Lecture)

February 13:

Greg Druschel,
Indiana University at
Indianapolis

February 20:

Robin Gerlach,
Montana State University
(R. James Kirkpatrick
Lecture)

February 27:

Don Penman,
Utah State University

March 6:

Sarah Rosengard,
School of the Art Institute
of Chicago

March 13:

Julia Cole,
University of Michigan
(Glenn and Susan Buckley
Lecture in Environmental
Geology)

March 27:

Derek Gibson,
Southern Illinois University

April 3:

Matthew Harrington,
Colorado State University

April 17:

Murry Gerber (MS '78),
2025 Alumni Achievement
Award Recipient

April 24:

Guleed Ali,
SUNY Stony Brook

May 1:

Suzanne Kay (BS '69; MS '72),
Cornell University (2025
Geology Reunion Kickoff
Lecture)