New Petrographic Microscopes

Anyone who graduated in the past 30 years will probably remember using a petrographic microscope in Davis Hall 311 to complete a laboratory in sedimentary petrography, mineralogy or igneous and metamorphic petrology. Although those scopes served us very well for many decades, they were far beyond their normal lifespan; advances in microscope technology and optics have led to equipment that is much more durable, easier to use and provides better imaging of thin sections. Over the 2017-2018 academic year Professor Emerita Dr. Carla Montgomery donated nearly $100,000 to facilitate the purchase of ten new Nikon E200 polarizing microscopes, as well as a new, high performance, Nikon CI Eclipse scope that can conduct both transmitted and reflected light microscopy. Additional hardware and software on this scope enable a wide variety of digital imaging and image analysis applications. The E200 scopes will be dedicated to student use whereas the CI Eclipse will be used as an instructional and research scope, used both in teaching our labs and for graduate student research.

As an unexpected dual benefit to Dr. Montgomery’s donation, Lab Manager Josh Schwartz successfully navigated the state bureaucracy and was able to file paperwork that enabled us to donate our old scopes to Triton Community College and Naperville High School. We were happy to be able to extend the reach of Carla’s generosity, and look forward to using the new scopes for decades to come.

Business Cards Wanted

If you have a business card and can spare 10 minutes, please scan your card and email it to us at: askgeology@niu.edu. We would like to use them for a hallway display highlighting the successes of our alumni. If you’re willing, we will also encourage current students to contact you for mentorship regarding career pathways and how to best prepare for today’s job market.
Jim Walker Retires

Dr. Jim Walker accomplished a lot since arriving in the department in 1984. An expert in subduction zone volcanism and in particular, the volcanoes and volcanic processes of Central America, Jim is known for his quiet, thoughtful manner, his love of jazz and literature, and his dedication to students. At Jim’s retirement event on May 11, 2018, Department Chair, Mark Fischer noted that Jim was a consummate colleague and a model for what a university faculty member should be. In 2017 the graduate students recognized Jim’s excellent teaching and mentorship by awarding him the Most Outstanding Professor Award. Former students Dr. Barry Cameron (Ph.D. ’98) and Bernadette Greenwood (B.S ’00, M.S. ’03) dropped in to help celebrate Jim’s career and the highlight of the event may just have been when Jim was invited to trigger a model volcano that produced a spectacular effusive eruption right before the eyes of the assembled group. Congratulations Jim!

A 1980s version of Jim Walker, shortly after he arrived in the department.

Paul Stoddard Retires

On December 7, 2017 the department held a celebration to honor the career of Dr. Paul Stoddard, who retired at the end of December. Paul’s 30-year career began with foundational studies of plate tectonics and gradually evolved into planetary geology and geophysics. Paul is perhaps best known for his outstanding teaching in the department’s GEOL 103 Planetary and Space Science class. Because of Paul’s enthusiasm and mastery of the material, that class continues to be the most heavily subscribed of all our introductory courses. Paul’s departure leaves a big hole because of his varied contributions to the department and institution. He has taught a wide variety of classes ranging from field camp to geophysical field methods and plate tectonics, served as an undergraduate advisor, served as President of the Faculty Senate and regularly conducted a Thursday morning trivia session in the department office. Paul is now a candidate for the Illinois State legislature where he intends to use his deliberate approach to problem solving to better the state and represent the needs of the 70th district.

Paul inspects the cake.
Total Eclipse Visits Illinois

On August 21, 2017 a total eclipse sped across North America, landing in Oregon and exiting the east coast in South Carolina. The maximum duration of totality was reached at a point near Carbondale, Illinois and lasted for roughly 2 minutes and 40 seconds. More than a few of the department’s faculty, students and staff made the trek to southern Illinois to witness the event in person. Despite the unwelcome encroachment of a cloud that covered most of the event in Carbondale, viewers at other nearby locations were treated to an amazing view. Some described it as so moving as to be a mystical or spiritual experience. In DeKalb we were treated to about 90% totality, but rain and clouds obscured it for everyone.

The best news is that if you missed the 2017 event, don’t worry; another is going to happen on April 8, 2024, this time traveling from south to north across the continent. The path will cross southern Illinois again, this time giving more than 4 minutes of totality! If you want to go, start making your hotel reservations now and be prepared to spend a couple days in the area after the event - the traffic after the August event caused hours-long back-ups on every interstate and U.S. highway connecting to southern Illinois and western Kentucky.
Hello NIU Geologists!

My name is Chuck Bahr. I graduated from Northern Illinois University with a bachelor’s degree in geology in 1978. In 1980 I completed a petrologic and structural-focused master’s thesis titled “The Precambrian Geology of the Aero Lakes Area, Beartooth Mountains, Montana" under the guidance of Dr. Casella. (Hello Dr. Casella!)

Following my defense, I moved to Texas to work for Getty Oil Company and later Texaco for the next nineteen years before partnering with another geologist and starting our own company in 1999. Although I still dabble a bit in the oil and gas industry, I like to think I retired in 2013.

My wife, Michele (another NIU graduate) and I have made our home in the Denver metro area for the past thirty years. We have three grown children and two grandchildren.

Several years prior to my retirement I read an article about how almost 8,000 people in Africa go blind each year simply because the only water available to them is contaminated with parasites and harmful bacteria. It’s a problem that can be easily remedied with proper filtering and/or treatment of the local water supply and by learning and practicing good hygiene habits. Since that time I have been interested in getting involved, but didn’t know how to take those first steps.

Then, in early 2017, a friend invited me to join the Rotary Club of Denver Southeast. It turns out helping people in third-world countries gain access to clean water is one of the core issues in which the Rotary Club is involved. Since joining I have had the good fortune of becoming friends with another Rotarian whose day job is with an organization that, among other things,
raises money and tackles water projects around the world. My friend has devoted his life to these types of projects. As a result, this past February (2018), I had the opportunity to fly with him to the port city of Douala, Cameroon. We then drove north for nine hours to the remote village of Nkar (pronounced ‘nee-kar’) located in the mountains of the Northwest Region of Cameroon, near the Nigerian border. There we met with village and tribal leaders to observe firsthand what needs to be done to increase the village’s water supply and how to remove the resident pathogens.

While the degree of poverty is difficult to explain, the people I met were incredibly kind and generous. I wish I could have started this project twenty years ago.

The course of action we are planning is multiphase and will require the construction of several catchment basins to take advantage of small artesian springs located in and around the village. We are now back home in Denver and are currently putting together a presentation that I’m hoping will help convince Rotary Clubs around the U.S. to help support what we can do for the village of Nkar to make it a model of what we can do for other villages in the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

If you’d like to contact me please “friend” me on Facebook and send a message. I’d enjoy hearing from you.

Thanks. — cb
Graduate Student Spotlight - Justin Moore

Justin Moore defended his M.S. thesis in August of 2018. Justin is the first graduate student to come out of Dr. Nicole LaDue’s discipline-based education and spatial cognition research group. As such, he has some valuable insights into the way geoscientists process and use spatial information. We sat down with Justin for an interview only days before his defense.

**Q.** Some might call you a textbook post-traditional student. How did you end up at NIU at this stage of your life? What was your first career and why did you choose to come back to school to study geoscience?

**A.** Before coming to NIU, I used my Computer Science degree to serve as an Air Force communications officer for four years, ensuring airmen had the training, equipment and guidance to achieve the mission. After separating in 2007, I pursued a career in business, focusing on market research and technology consulting. Part of what drew me to my next professional pursuit was outdoor adventuring, curiosity and a search for fulfilling work that I was passionate about. So, after resigning from business in 2011, I thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail, became a stay-at-home father and began substitute teaching. Over the years I had a sense that I would enjoy being an educator. I had the familial (hat tip to my wife, Julie) and financial (hat tip to the GI Bill) support to begin my schooling anew, focusing on education and geoscience. Fortunately, I found a school, department and program that fit my exact needs, Secondary Science Teacher Licensure with a follow-on master’s degree. The NIU Geoscience Department has been incredibly supportive, with the faculty and students offering a cohesive and caring atmosphere.

**Q.** Your research combines spatial reasoning, topographic maps, landforms and something called augmented reality. What are all these things and why do they fit together so well?

**A.** Augmented (and virtual) reality (AR) is becoming quite popular in industry and education. AR is simply overlaying digital and interactive information on the real world within a user’s field of view. Many researchers are investigating the uses of AR for education, specifically science and spatial thinking, which is basically seeing and manipulating objects in your mind. Spatial thinking is a strong predictor of success in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and critical for success in the geosciences. Fortunately, people can improve their spatial skills through training and experience. Topographic (and other geological) map interpretation requires numerous spatial skills and can be difficult for novices because a map encodes complicated three-dimensional information within two dimensions using symbology.

Creating models is an effective method to externalize a person’s understanding of a
concept. When a person receives feedback while building a model, there is an opportunity for increased understanding. The AR Sandbox is an effective tool to create small-scale landforms or terrain and have that feedback overlain directly on the model. Furthermore, the tool facilitates hypothesis testing, since the AR Sandbox feedback updates in real-time as a user moves the sand.

Q. Exactly what are you doing for your research project?
A. I investigated how we educators can use the Augmented Reality (AR) Sandbox to improve student learning regarding topographic maps. The AR Sandbox precisely reads the elevation of the surface of sand in a box and then projects elevation information onto the sand's surface (e.g., color relief, contour lines and a water simulation). Students use their hands to manipulate the sand to build and adjust landform models, and the AR Sandbox can provide spatial feedback by redrawing the elevation information in real-time. Since topographic maps are difficult for students new to the geosciences, and AR has so much potential in science education, the AR Sandbox seems well-suited to bridge the gap and facilitate topographic map skill acquisition. I ran a controlled laboratory study to investigate if and how 2D and 3D spatial feedback from the AR Sandbox influence novice topographic map users’ learning outcomes (pre-/post-test). I found that the study’s approach using the AR Sandbox did significantly improve outcomes for individual students. The AR Sandbox is highly engaging as well, so students enjoy the experience.

Q. So, what happens after NIU?
A. I’m excited to put my hard work into practice as an Earth and Space Science high school teacher. I accepted a position at Proviso East High School and begin in the fall of 2018. I’m looking forward to passing on my excitement for geoscience to the students. My hope is to spark interest and curiosity in science, so some may endeavor to become scientists and others can understand “how to know what’s really real in a world increasingly full of fake” (Novella & Novella, 2018).

Cited Reference
2019 Anniversary Celebration Event

The time is long since overdue for us to convene a gathering of alumni and friends. In 2019 the department will celebrate 50 years since its founding, as well as the 75th anniversary of the construction of Davis Hall. Over the next year, we will conduct a major fundraising effort that will recognize and honor all of the amazing achievements of the last five decades, and which will help us meet our goals for the next five decades. In keeping with this goal, and with a tip of the hat to James Hutton, we are calling the campaign: The Present is the Key to the Future. Why? Because your generous contributions now will help the department continue and grow its legacy of helping all students achieve more than they often thought was possible.

The fundraising effort will culminate in a formal gathering of alumni and friends in early October of 2019, hopefully near the time of a home football game, or perhaps in association with a field trip or other group activity. Please keep your early October calendar open and watch your email, regular mail and our Facebook page for forthcoming announcements with details and a finalized date for the gathering. We hope to have a huge turn out. To help us prepare for the event we invite everyone to submit photos, stories, quotes, reminiscences and comments related to your time in the department. Was your advisor known for a certain saying? Did they have a characteristic or habit that you’ll never forget? Do you have photos from an amazing field excursion? Do you have a humorous story about something you did while you were a student or faculty member here? What is your best memory of your time at NIU? How has your life been changed by your experience in the department? Did you publish some particularly compelling research or discover something new as a graduate student? What do you remember most about your field camp experience? Do you have photos from around campus or Davis Hall that capture the spirit of the time you were here? What was the soundtrack of music that best represents your time at NIU? In what Davis Hall room did you spend most of your time?

We would love to see and hear all of your best memories and experiences and intend to share many of them at the gathering next fall when we celebrate the achievements of the department and all of its extended family. In addition to celebrating the achievements of the past, we will reconnect you with your academic home and let you know how we have charted out a plan for the future of geoscientific research and teaching at NIU. We hope to engage every one of you in shaping, fine-tuning and executing that plan to ensure the vitality and positive impact of the department for the next 50 years.
### Awards, honors and accomplishments of the last year

#### Degrees Conferred

**August 2017**
- Matt Ciapas (B.S.)
- Kerri Gefke (B.S.)
- Jessica McKay (B.S.)
- Keenan Moen (B.S.)
- Dean Pfolsgrof (B.S.)
- Ricardo Rodriguez (B.S.)
- Jennifer Rugh (B.S.)

**December 2017**
- Katherine Bane (B.S.)
- Seth Coursey (B.S.)
- Justin Staudt (B.S.)

**May 2018**
- Edwin Greenwood (M.S.)
- Marlena Rock (M.S.)

#### Faculty

- Phil Carpenter
  - Outstanding Graduate Studies Professor (selected by GEOL grad students)
- Justin Dodd
  - JOIDES Resolution, IODP expedition 374, research cruise to the Ross Sea, Antarctica
  - Outstanding Undergraduate Studies Professor (selected by GEOL undergrad majors)
  - National Geographic Research grant ($25,250)
  - Spent two weeks in April conducting NSF-funded fieldwork in Guatemala

#### Students

- Jason Coenen (Ph.D. student)
  - Geological Society of America Graduate Student Research Grant ($1,650)
- Josh Ehlich (Ph.D. student)
  - North Central Section of the Geological Society of America, Best Student Presentation at the spring 2018 meeting
  - Carla Montgomery Graduate Scholarship in Geochemistry ($1,500)
  - Ira Edgar Odom Graduate Scholarship in Mineralogy or Petrology ($1,000)
- Nicholas Berry (B.S. ’18)
  - American Association of Petroleum Geologists Foundation’s Deana and Paul Strunk Military Veterans Scholarship Program ($2,000)
  - Surya Freeman (M.S. student)
    - Geological Society of America Diversity Award ($2,500)
  - Michael Grzybowski (M.S. ’17)
    - National Groundwater Association Best Student Presentation at the annual meeting
- Tim Hodson (Ph.D. 17)
  - Outstanding Graduate Research (best thesis)
  - Audrianna Johnson (B.S. student)
  - Carla Montgomery Undergraduate Scholarship in Geology ($1,500)
  - Outstanding Undergraduate Senior ($200)
- Zo Kreager (Ph.D. student)
  - Geological Society of America Graduate Student Grant ($1,870)
  - National Association of Geoscience Teachers Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award
- Jessica McKay (M.S. student)
  - Brian Fugiel Scholarship for Field Research ($1,000)
  - Eugene C. Perry Scholarship Celebrating a Legacy of Research in Mexico and Latin America ($750)
- Justin Moore (M.S. student)
  - NIU Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Literacy Proposal or Pilot grant ($1,200)
  - Outstanding Graduate Student ($200)
- Brittany Price (Ph.D. student)
  - Jonathan H. Berg Fellowship for Exceptional Promise in the Discipline ($1,500)
- Kaelyn Quinlan (B.S. student)
  - John R. Young Scholarship for Passion in the Discipline ($600)
- Eduardo Ruiz-Marin (B.S. student)
  - Geological Society of America travel grant ($125)
  - John R. Young Scholarship for Passion in the Discipline ($600)
- Sarah Shapley (B.S. student)
  - Dean’s Award ($100)
- Michael Tanner (B.S. student)
  - Exemplary Student Teacher Award
- Erika Zocher (M.S. student)
  - Outstanding Graduate Student ($200)
  - Jonathan H. Berg Fellowship for Exceptional Promise in the Discipline ($1,500)

#### Spheres of Influence newsletter

- **GEOL undergrad majors**
  - **Professor**
  - Spent two weeks in April conducting NSF-funded fieldwork in Guatemala
  - Spent two weeks in July conducting fieldwork in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia
  - Conducted a second successful summer of NSF-REU grant

- **Faculty**
  - Phil Carpenter
    - Outstanding Graduate Studies Professor (selected by GEOL grad students)
  - Justin Dodd
    - JOIDES Resolution, IODP expedition 374, research cruise to the Ross Sea, Antarctica
    - Outstanding Undergraduate Studies Professor (selected by GEOL undergrad majors)
    - National Geographic Research grant ($25,250)
    - Spent two weeks in April conducting NSF-funded fieldwork in Guatemala

- **Students**
  - Jason Coenen (Ph.D. student)
    - Geological Society of America Graduate Student Research Grant ($1,650)
  - Josh Ehlich (Ph.D. student)
    - North Central Section of the Geological Society of America, Best Student Presentation at the spring 2018 meeting
    - Carla Montgomery Graduate Scholarship in Geochemistry ($1,500)
  - Nicholas Berry (B.S. ’18)
    - American Association of Petroleum Geologists Foundation's Deana and Paul Strunk Military Veterans Scholarship Program ($2,000)
  - Surya Freeman (M.S. student)
    - Geological Society of America Diversity Award ($2,500)
  - Michael Grzybowski (M.S. ’17)
    - National Groundwater Association Best Student Presentation at the annual meeting
  - Tim Hodson (Ph.D. 17)
    - Outstanding Graduate Research (best thesis)
  - Audrianna Johnson (B.S. student)
    - Carla Montgomery Undergraduate Scholarship in Geology ($1,500)
    - Outstanding Undergraduate Senior ($200)
  - Zo Kreager (Ph.D. student)
    - Geological Society of America Graduate Student Grant ($1,870)
  - National Association of Geoscience Teachers Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award
  - Jessica McKay (M.S. student)
    - Brian Fugiel Scholarship for Field Research ($1,000)
    - Eugene C. Perry Scholarship Celebrating a Legacy of Research in Mexico and Latin America ($750)
  - Justin Moore (M.S. student)
    - NIU Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Literacy Proposal or Pilot grant ($1,200)
    - Outstanding Graduate Student ($200)
  - Brittany Price (Ph.D. student)
    - Jonathan H. Berg Fellowship for Exceptional Promise in the Discipline ($1,500)
  - Kaelyn Quinlan (B.S. student)
    - John R. Young Scholarship for Passion in the Discipline ($600)
  - Eduardo Ruiz-Marin (B.S. student)
    - Geological Society of America travel grant ($125)
    - John R. Young Scholarship for Passion in the Discipline ($600)
  - Sarah Shapley (B.S. student)
    - Dean’s Award ($100)
  - Michael Tanner (B.S. student)
    - Exemplary Student Teacher Award
  - Erika Zocher (M.S. student)
    - Outstanding Graduate Student ($200)
    - Jonathan H. Berg Fellowship for Exceptional Promise in the Discipline ($1,500)
Field Trip to the Valles Caldera

In early October of 2017, Jim Walker and Justin Dodd led seven students on a week-long trip to study the Valles Caldera, a 13.7-mile-wide resurgent caldera with a rich eruptive history in the Jemez Mountains of northern New Mexico. In preparation for the trip the students spent the first portion of the semester learning about the eruption history and the composition of rocks within the Taos Plateau Volcanic Field (TPVF). Intersected by the Jemez Lineament and Rio Grande Rift, the region was affected by multiple volcanic events and is currently the site of an active continental rift.

With hydrothermal deposits, resurgent lava domes, and a variety of basalts and rhyolites, this was a thrilling region for field study. In all, the group spent four days exploring and characterizing the volcanic deposits of the TPVF.

The first day in the field was spent observing the Precambrian gneiss at the Gilman Tunnel and travertine deposits at Soda Dam. Later in the day the group visited welded pyroclastic flow deposits of Battleship Rock (a large volcanic rock) and the Redondo Creek Rhyolites. The second day was spent inside the Valles Caldera National preserve where students got an up-close look at the Redondo resurgent dome, including obsidian fragments from pyroclastic deposits. The third and last member is the Tshirege, which resulted from a large plinian eruption around 1.24 million years ago. This massive pyroclastic flow deposit had an estimated volume of ~400 km³ and formed the Valles Caldera.

Key stops on the second half of the trip included the Harding Pegmatite Mine, located about 20 miles southwest of Taos, New Mexico. Now retired from heavy mining, the students enjoyed exploring the abandoned pit and identified numerous minerals in the Be-Li rich deposit. A stark contrast from the surrounding volcanic deposits, the pegmatite dike exploited by the mine had a

The Valles Caldera region is perhaps best known for a pyroclastic deposit called the Bandelier tuff.
A wide variety of minerals including spodumene, quartz, lepidolite and albite. The field trip was capped off by a visit to the Rio Grande Gorge, where the group saw multiple flows of the Servilleta Basalt. The Servilleta lava flows were interbedded with sediments and disrupted by reverse faults, making them all the more fascinating. In the end, everyone concluded that New Mexico, or the land of enchantment, was an amazing place to visit.

– Contributed by M.S. student Valerie Voisin.

Mark Howland Retires

Mark Howland retired on December 31, 2017. Although his official title was staff cartographer, Mark made countless contributions to the department. Mark created displays and activities for STEMFest, designed flyers and hallway displays to attract new students, designed and printed faculty and student posters for conferences, prepared digital imagery for use in field camp, and maintained the department website. Mark and his daughters took dozens of family vacations through numerous national and state parks and monuments all around the country, and his outstanding photos of many of these places adorn the department walls. Angel's Landing in Zion National Park, held a particularly special meaning for Mark.

Mark never missed an opportunity to volunteer to help the department and his sense of humor and help with department pranks helped us maintain a light-hearted atmosphere - we will miss Mark tremendously, but look forward to his continued participation in Thursday morning trivia.
Thank You Donors
Mr. Gilbert and Mrs. Jenny Ankenbauer
Ms. Lisa S. Atluri
Dr. Shashank and Mrs. Seema Atre
Ms. Meredith A. Ayers
Mr. Charles and Mrs. Michele Bahr
Mr. Raymond L. Banks
Dr. Jonathan and Mrs. Patricia Berg
Mrs. Melanie and Mr. David Blood
BP Foundation, Inc.
Dr. Jinkui Cai and Mr. Chieh Li
Chevron Corporation
Mr. Jon and Mrs. Beth Coen
Mr. Keith C. Seramur and Dr. Ellen A. Cowan
Mr. William D. Di Paolo and Ms. Laura B. Hall
Dr. Thaddeus Dyman, Jr. and Mrs. Jenni Dyman
ExxonMobil Foundation
Mrs. Bethany and Mr. Kevin Flynn
Mrs. Mary Fraser Hodson and Mr. Thomas Z. Hodson
Mrs. Kathleen and Mr. Daniel Friant
Mr. Raymond E. Fugiel
Dr. Mary O. Furner
Mr. Dirk and Mrs. Stephanie Grahnl
Mr. Hal T. Herdklotz
Dr. William and Mrs. Nancy Hunter
Mrs. Lee and Mr. Bruce Jacobson
Mr. John and Mrs. Kathryn Kapchinske
Mr. Victor and Mrs. Merry Lahti
Lam Research Foundation
Mr. Mark and Mrs. Loretta Malander
Dr. Carla W. Montgomery
Mr. Arthur and Mrs. Lillian Neil
Mr. Randy R. Niebuhr
Mr. Robert M. North
Mr. Gary and Mrs. Kristin Oberts
Dr. Eugene Perry, Jr. and Mrs. Joan Perry
Mr. Harvey and Mrs. Darlene Pokorny
Dr. Robert J. Pottorf and Mrs. Christine A. Schmitz-Pottorf
Mr. David and Mrs. Carolyn Read
Mr. Mike and Mrs. Dawn Roche
Mr. Justin A. Rosenblume
Mr. David R. Sedgeley
Mrs. Mary and Mr. Robert Shields
Mr. John and Mrs. Carolyn Sulima
Ms. Maxine L. Szwajkowski
Mr. Slawomir M. Tuleczyk
UBS Financial Services, Inc.
Mr. Lee and Mrs. Kathleen Weir
In Memoriam – Amy Polzin

On June 25, 2018 the department lost a committed friend and colleague when Amy Polzin passed away after a battle with cancer. Amy arrived in the department in 1988 and served as our Office Manager for 26 years until her retirement in 2014. Amy worked tirelessly to support faculty, students and staff through the administrations of three department chairs (Davidson, Berg, Booth). Jon Berg reported that Amy “was the engine that kept the department humming,” and noted that she arrived early and worked late, and handled every aspect of budgeting, purchasing and accounting. Jon further noted that Amy was also the one who showed up early to blow up balloons to celebrate someone’s birthday, and made every person who walked into Davis 312 feel as if they were the most important thing to her that day.

Amy’s light-hearted jokes and bad puns kept the department sane, and her nonsensical sayings made you wonder if you should scratch your head or laugh. One of her favorites was, “Do you walk to school or carry your lunch?”

Amy was a huge Packers and Cubs fan (see the photo with Mr. Cub above) who was also dedicated to public service. She was a long-time member of the Kiwanis and Lions Clubs, served as a DeKalb alderman for eight years and won the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce’s Athena Award in 2012. She was a board member for the Children’s Learning Center, a member of the Fire and Police Commission for the City of DeKalb, a co-advisor to the NIU Circle K, a Corn Fest Volunteer, Meals on Wheels volunteer and a Bowl for Kids’ Sake participant. She will be missed as a volunteer tutor, a reader of text books on tape for students with visual impairments and a coach for girls’ softball teams in the DeKalb Park District. She will be missed by all of us who were lucky to have her as a friend and colleague.

Visiting Scholar

In the early part of 2018, the department was fortunate to host as a visiting scholar, Dr. Elzbieta Anna Stefaniak, director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research at The John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin, Poland. A colleague of Dr. Anna Buczynska, the research associate who manages our Stable Isotope Laboratory, Dr. Stefaniak’s visit was facilitated by a Kosciuszko Foundation Fellowship. During her visit, Ela and Anna used GC-MS and IRMS techniques to fingerprint and compare the geochemical and isotopic characteristics of atmospheric particulates (e.g., soot) from the U.S.A. and Poland. Early results were presented at a conference in Poland and indicate that soot particles exhibit fascinating differences that suggest each region has a unique atmospheric pollution signature that can be reliably traced to its source.