

Anthropology Newsletter



Department of Anthropology
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



About the Department

The MSU Department of Anthropology engages in our discipline as a humanistic science of cultural and biological diversity across time and space. Our strength is in our diversity of approaches to this fundamental inquiry. We specialize in sociocultural anthropology, archaeology, medical anthropology, biological anthropology, and anthropological linguistics. We work towards an understanding of the human condition, past and present, in countries across the world and in our own backyards.

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Success stories in anthropology come via many different paths. However anthropology informs your career, whether you are a practicing anthropologist inside or outside the academy, we want to hear from you.

Contact us with your stories.

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Cover photo: Participants celebrate “Colorful Day” during pride month in Chiang Mai, Thailand in June 2022. Photo credit: Kelsey Wagner.

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MSU Anthropology professor receives Fulbright Scholarship for linguistic anthropology research in France



Dr. Chantal Tetreault, MSU Department of Anthropology associate professor, received a Fulbright Scholarship to research Arabic language education and policy in Paris, France, for six months.

Dr. Tetreault's academic background is linguistic and cultural anthropology, and her research focuses on the connection between language change and cultural

change. In past research, she has focused on youth in France of Algerian or North African descent.

"Some of the basic kinds of principles that I work with regarding language practices have to do with social identity, notions about belonging, social exclusion, and particularly as they relate to gender and ethnicity," she said.

Her Fulbright Scholarship began January 1, 2022 and ran through June 2022, encompassing the ethnographic phase of her research while in Paris.

"My current project has to do with language education, particularly Arabic language education in France," she said. "Arabic is the second most widely spoken language in France, and France itself has more immigrants of Arab descent or Arab heritage than any other European country. And yet Arabic is not taught very often in public schools."

Dr. Tetreault remarked that a similar scenario would be if the United States didn't teach Spanish in public schools. In France, students are more likely to encounter the opportunity to learn Arabic through post-secondary education or through community institutions. Her first interest as a linguistic anthropologist is to understand why this is the case in France. She also hopes to contribute to the understanding of the social institutions where Arabic is taught currently in France such as local associations and religious institutions. Ultimately, she hopes her work will contribute to public discourse and policy decisions around increasing availability of Arabic in French public schools.

"I think there is increasingly a desire for more clarity and openness around the need to teach more Arabic, both from the perspective that we should teach more dialectal Arabic and also more written Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic," she said. "There's a kind of

understanding that people need to come together to work toward better policies around language education regarding Arabic in France. So from my research, I hope that there can be some potential policy outcomes that bring together teachers of multiple dialects of Arabic (Darija and Fusha) in addition to some research products such as a book."

Dr. Tetreault's research involves interviewing policymakers, educators, students and administrators.

"One thing that's just been so gratifying, humbling, and wonderful is that both educators who are teaching Arabic in after-school programs in France and also university students of Arabic are very excited to be interviewed," she said. "I've had wonderful experiences with people being very enthusiastic about taking time out of their schedule, to make time for an interview. And I'm thrilled that there's a willingness, but also an enthusiasm to share stories with me about their experiences, either learning Arabic, or teaching Arabic, or wanting to learn Arabic and not being able to in some cases."

After she completes her interviews, Dr. Tetreault plans to publish several research articles and she hopes to write a book. Because every Fulbright Scholar needs a sponsor institution, Dr. Tetreault has been working with the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) as her sponsor institution.

"It is just an incredibly wonderful place because so many different languages are being taught," she said. "There's a kind of richness and diversity of students from all over the world and also from all different kinds of backgrounds and heritages in France. And I've really connected with the faculty at INALCO who teach both kinds of Arabic: dialectal Arabic (Darija) and Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha)."

Dr. Tetreault would also like to encourage others to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship, which is available to undergraduates, graduate students, postdocs, and also advanced researchers.

"It's a wonderful way to create a situation for academic and scholarly exchange," she said. "I have really enjoyed an even deeper scholarly exchange than I expected." ■



MSU Anthropology Undergraduate Spotlight: Jackson Schooley



"I've made life-long friends that I have met in my Anthropology classes," said senior Jackson Schooley, who graduated in May 2022 with a degree in Anthropology. A lifelong learner of language and people, Jackson found the human-centric discipline in the MSU Department of Anthropology to be a perfect marriage of his interests.

"Anthropology gives us a unique role to play in the fight against injustices: one characterized by empathy, curiosity, and a deep understanding of the ways contemporary issues intersect with other aspects of our lives and identities."

Schooley sees his major as a tool that can help address the things that affect people across the planet.

"It's a way to understand the diversity of the world and a vital medium to connect, study, and analyze different ways to mitigate issues we are seeing and experiencing now," he said.

During his time at MSU, Schooley's favorite class he took was ANP 420, Anthropology of Language and Culture, with Professor Chantal Tetreault. This class focuses on the ways in which languages influence our worldviews and the cultural context of languages.

"I think the format of the classes, which are discussion based, collaborative, etc., truly lets you make connections with really cool people."

As an undergraduate research assistant, Schooley worked under Dr. Emilio Moran researching Michigan's aging dam infrastructure and its ties to economics and climate resilience, along with issues of energy injustice within the state. He worked in the position for three and a half years exploring the realm of community energy, advocating for local marginalized communities and writing articles to be published in journals.

"I truly feel as though my efforts and time in this position have contributed to making this world a more just place- which is always the ultimate goal of my work."

The MSU Department of Anthropology selected Schooley as the 2022 outstanding graduating senior.

"Jackson is the most promising and best prepared undergraduate in sociocultural anthropology I have met during my time at MSU," Dr. Lucero Radonic said, associate professor of anthropology and nominator for the award. "He is a brilliant young scholar and a kind student with a disposition towards collective learning in class."

After his graduation, Schooley will have an internship in sustainability management for the City of Lansing. Upon its conclusion, he has a goal of going into policy work, strengthening the preexisting texts and "introducing new, more comprehensive, and intersectionality-cognizant policy that is aimed at increasing climate resilience in infrastructure." After a few years in the job market, he plans on attending graduate school to further his training and better prepare himself to support the causes he believes need help on a larger scale.

"I truly feel as though my efforts and time in this position have contributed to making this world a more just place."

"My advice to those considering Anthropology is to not worry about what other people's perceptions of this discipline are and its applicability to career options/success- this discipline can prepare you for a plethora of fields/environments," he said. "As long you have that drive and urge to contribute to making this world a better place for all, I'm certain you will feel as though you made the right choice." ■

Learn more about the department

To learn more about the MSU department of Anthropology visit anthropology.msu.edu.



Dr. Gabe Wrobel wins 2022 Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor of the Year Award for MSU

The Department of Anthropology is happy to announce that Professor Dr. Gabe Wrobel has received the 2022 Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor of the Year Award for Michigan State University. This award is presented annually and recognizes faculty who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to mentoring undergraduate researchers. This award is completely student-driven; only undergraduate student researchers can submit nominations, and the University's Undergraduate Research Ambassadors choose the finalists. Honorees are selected with the following criteria: faculty members who demonstrate a commitment to undergraduate research, provide strong professional mentoring, and serve as role models in their field of study. Dr. Wrobel was nominated by Department of Anthropology undergraduate students Alison Weber, Collin Sauter, and James Waltermeyer.

Dr. Wrobel's work in bioarchaeology focuses on the analysis and interpretation of skeletal remains from archaeological contexts in cave and rock shelters in Maya communities in Belize. He established the MSU Bioarchaeology Laboratory in 2012, which provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to maintain and care for skeletal collections, work with databases, understand how skeletal remains provide insights about past human lives, and even publish or present work at academic conferences. Through projects and collaborations at MSU Bioarchaeology Laboratory, Dr. Wrobel provides exemplary mentorship to undergraduate and graduate students alike, inspiring future careers in bioarchaeology, forensic anthropology, and archaeology.

One of those students is Alison Weber, who is working on her Bachelor of Science in Anthropology with a minor in Social Science Quantitative Data Analytics. Her primary interest

is in Forensic Anthropology, and she is currently working in Dr. Wrobel's lab studying how Macromorphoscopic Trait Data can be utilized from past populations. She has also had the opportunity to take a graduate level seminar with Dr. Wrobel. Weber nominated Dr. Wrobel because of the emphasis he puts on undergraduate research, which she says is "crucial to MSU producing successful and well-rounded anthropologists". She said she also appreciates that Dr. Wrobel makes himself available to students, understands the stresses of being a student-researcher, and is especially supportive in the research design process and making dense topics digestible and understandable.

Another student is Collin Sauter, who is working on his Bachelor of Science in Anthropology and Chemistry and is interested in digital archaeology and bioarchaeology. Sauter says he nominated Dr. Wrobel for the Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year Award because "he is always readily available to guide me in my research, and he also helps me prepare for my academic future. I have a lot of freedom and control over my research project, but Dr. Wrobel is incredibly helpful when I need advice and guidance." Through research and mentorship at the MSU Bioarchaeology Laboratory, Sauter has also found opportunities to present and publish his work, providing excellent preparation for a continued education and career in anthropology.

Congratulations again to Dr. Wrobel for winning the prestigious 2022 Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor of the Year Award for Michigan State University. We are proud to have such a supportive mentor and excellent researcher in the Department of Anthropology. ■

MSU Anthropology alum named Executive Director of the Hispanic Latino Commission of Michigan



In September 2021, the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan (HLCOM) named MSU alumna Dr. Isabel Montemayor-Vazquez the executive director, and she began her role that same month. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez received both her master's and doctorate's degrees from the MSU Department of Anthropology.

"I was interested in this position because it marries my political science background and applied activist driven anthropology background perfectly," Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez said. "In this position, I can advocate for the needs of the community, work with non-profit organizations serving the Latinx community, train different state agencies on structural and systemic inequities, and most importantly, contribute to policy change."

According to their website, the commission exists to advocate for the well-being of the Hispanic/Latino population with the vision of achieving an environment of social justice and economic parity for the Hispanic/Latino population. As executive director of the commission, Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez is charged with organizing the activities of the commission and working directly with the commissioners to serve as a bridge between state government and the communities of constituents they serve.

"It's an incredible and humbling leadership role, where I am able to amplify the voices of the community through various grants, partnerships, and programs we have established. Working for the state of Michigan as a civil servant, there are few Latinas in positions of leadership, and so it's an exceptional opportunity to serve as a mentor for young first-generation Latinas who have a similar background and family history."

As executive director, her first goals were to hold individual listening sessions with each of the commissioners to better understand how they see their role as commissioner. Another immediate goal was to recruit a legislative intern to assist in producing a legislative report in Spanish and English that follows legislative bills and their impact on the Latinx community. Increasing job opportunities and improving economic prosperity for the Latinx community are priorities found in the mission and vision of the commission, so a third goal was to create a Latinx job fair for recent college graduates.

"I am proud to say that all three of these immediate goals along with improving the on-boarding process for our new commissioners have come to fruition."

Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez received both her master's and doctorate degrees at MSU in cultural anthropology. During her time at MSU, she felt the most meaningful opportunity she experienced was being able to teach. Her teaching experience at MSU prepared her for accepting a professorship at UTA Arlington where she taught Sociology and Anthropology for six years. As executive director, she still has opportunities to teach on many of the topics that were interesting to her as a student and are pertinent to the Latinx community of Michigan.

Another meaningful experience during her time at MSU was when the department funded her and several other graduate students to present their research at the Society for Applied Anthropology conference in Merida, Yucatan.

"I never could have imagined I would be able to use my degree in the community where I grew up and make a difference in so many people's lives."

"My research was centered around Michoacan and I had never ventured as far as Merida. It was such a unique experience to travel with fellow anthropology students to present in such an accepting environment, on a panel together, and also learn about the indigenous history of Yucatan together."

Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez looks back on receiving her advanced degree in anthropology as a wonderful and useful tool in being able to give back to her community.

"I never could have imagined I would be able to use my degree in the community where I grew up and make a difference in so many people's lives. The Hispanic/Latino Commission does a lot of work behind the scenes to ensure the Latinx community has the necessary platforms to voice their concerns. Additionally, the commission strives to provide ample opportunities for the Latinx community to thrive in the state of Michigan. It's a privilege to work in this capacity and serve my community." ■

Ph.D. Students Emily Milton and Jeff Burnett awarded research funding from the William A. Lovis Research Fund in Environmental Archaeology, the Lynne Goldstein Fellowship, and the Alumni and Friends Expendable Fund for Archaeology

We are happy to announce the award recipients for the Department of Anthropology Archaeology Fellowships. Ph.D. student Emily Milton received funding from the William A. Lovis Research Fund in Environmental Archaeology, the Lynne Goldstein Fellowship, and the Alumni and Friends Expendable Fund for Archaeology; and Ph.D. student Jeff Burnett received funding from the Lynne Goldstein Fellowship.

Each of the funds support archaeology students in the Department of Anthropology at MSU: for the Alumni and Friends Expendable Fund for Archaeology, the fund is intended to encourage archaeology students who have demonstrated the capacity to achieve educational and professional goals, the motivation to achieve these goals and the initiative to seek opportunities to further their progress. The fund is open to undergraduate and graduate students studying archaeology, and can be used for scholarships for fieldwork, fellowships, research, and travel.

The Lynne Goldstein Fellowship is awarded to graduate students enrolled in the MSU Anthropology Department with preference given to those students who have participated in the Campus Archaeology Program, and is intended to assist students doing their dissertation research.

With the William A. Lovis Research Fund in Environmental Archaeology, the endowment is intended to support interdisciplinary environmental archaeological research bridging anthropological archaeology and the natural, physical, biological and earth sciences. It is designed to underwrite and enhance the work of graduate students who investigate human/environment interaction for deeper time periods prior to Euro-American colonization episodes worldwide.

Ph.D. student Emily Milton received funding from the William A. Lovis Research Fund in Environmental Archaeology to support exploratory analyses for a potential new approach for reconstructing Andean and Pacific coastal diets in southern Peru. As part of her dissertation,

she will be investigating how isotopic methods can inform on Early Holocene diet in Peru. Her samples will include environmental substrates including water and plants; data from these materials will also inform on anthropogenic change in the present-day environment.

Milton was also awarded the Lynne Goldstein Fellowship to help her to create outreach materials for her research. She plans to use Storywork, an approach centered on visual art and storytelling, to share her findings with one of the communities she has worked with. Department funding will support both translated and interactive booklets, as well as support a new online project she hopes to begin this fall that will communicate her field and lab methods through immersive visual and audio media.

Lastly, Milton was awarded the Alumni and Friends Expendable Fund for Archaeology to complete data collection for her first dissertation manuscript, which is focused on isotopic measures of seasonal change in the south-central Andes of Peru. She hopes her findings will inform best practices of how archaeologists can isotopically study the archaeological materials from Central Andean sites. The award will support 140 isotopic measurements of water and plants that she will collect in her 2022 field seasons.

Ph.D. student Jeff Burnett received funding from the Lynne Goldstein Fellowship, and the funding will be used to support his dissertation project and to prepare him to apply for the Wenner-Gren Engaged Research Grant program, which supports engaged, community-based anthropological projects that work collaboratively with community groups. His dissertation project is an archaeological investigation of African American homeownership, community formation and memory-making in the historic Highlands area in the resort community of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. The Lynne Goldstein Fellowship will allow him to organize and host in-person research design meetings with a core group of collaborators. ■

DIVERSITY CHAMPION:

Dr. Eric Montgomery



Dr. Eric Montgomery is an assistant professor with the MSU Department of Anthropology, as well as the advisor for Peace and Justice studies. A scholar, author, teacher, and filmmaker, Dr. Montgomery is devoted to using his voice to speak up for human rights around the world.

Dr. Montgomery has designed multiple classes and is focused on providing students with the knowledge they need to tackle

the world's most pressing issues. Of all the classes he teaches, his favorite focuses on social justice movements from around the globe.

Without a doubt, my favorite class to teach is Anthropology 321: Social Movements. In the last few years, we've had the largest women's protests in the history of this country, as well as Black Lives Matter demonstrations that spread across the world. These movements have shook the world, and as a result, the young adults that come into my class are already social justice warriors. It's amazing to see how hungry these young adults are to make a difference in the world. So the reason why it's my favorite class to teach is because I can harness their energy, help them rein it in and focus, and show them how to really invoke change. And that's why it's my favorite class to teach.

For the final class, I split the students into 10 groups, and had each work on a current social movement. For example, one group looked at environmental justice, which included everything from overfishing to Indigenous land rights. Another group worked on March For Our Lives and the issue of gun control, just as the tragedy in Oxford took place. Everything is really poignant, and that's what I like about teaching that class.

When he's not teaching, Dr. Montgomery is also a researcher with broad interests in anthropology, religion and peace and justice. Below, he shares two of his most recent projects that he is incredibly proud of.

The vast majority of my research circulates around anthropology and religion in Western Africa, as well as voodoo in places like Haiti. My newest book which will come out in 2022, "Spirit Service: Vodún and Vodou in the African Atlantic World," published by Indiana University Press is one of the most elaborate, comprehensive, eclectic books ever written on vodou. We have experts from all around the world talking about vodou in New Orleans, Haiti and Western Africa, and how it's tied to things like personhood, identity,

and unity of Black people around the world. Oftentimes, people don't realize that Vodou is the oldest and one of the largest religions on earth.

I'm also currently working on a book with Beth Drexler and Indrani Pal-Chaudhuri about how to get young adults engaged in social justice through digital storytelling and social media. In today's day and age, we have to understand the impact that social media has and the way it has framed social justice issues for our youngest generation. This book will be formatted as a textbook for educators who want to teach this topic in the classroom, and is informed by students' interests and preferences.

Finally, Dr. Montgomery shares what each of us can do every day to push the human rights needle - even if only a little bit - in a better direction.

On an individual level, we can each make a difference in advancing human rights. The first thing each of us can do is stay informed. Ignorance is not bliss, and it is incumbent upon us to get out of our echo chambers and to pay attention to the suffering that is going on in the world. I think every human being - especially the younger generation - should dedicate a half hour of their day to keeping up with what's going on in the news. And I don't mean just CNN - look into news from other spheres of the world!

The other thing I advise people to do is forge bonds with people who are on the front lines that are doing this work, because it's really all about relationships. You don't have to try to change the whole world and tackle every issue at once - find that one issue that you feel an inner connection to. I always tell my students to put aside one hour a week, starting now for the rest of their lives, to volunteer on an issue you care about. This could mean sending out emails, sharing things on social media, or even going to a homeless shelter and delivering food. We may not be able to fix everything at once, but we're all good for at least one hour a week. ■



Ph.D. Student Priyanka Jayakodi wins Dr. Delia Koo Global Student Scholarship and 3rd place in Shao Chang Lee Scholarship Fund Best Paper Competition



The Department of Anthropology is pleased to announce that Ph.D. student Priyanka Jayakodi has won two awards from the MSU Asian Studies Center this past year: the Dr. Delia Koo Global Student Scholarship; and 3rd place in the Shao Chang Lee Scholarship Fund Best Paper Competition.

The Dr. Delia Koo Global Scholarship is administered

by the Asian Studies Center to provide scholarships to students from Asia and to further MSU's interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The Shao Chang Lee Scholarship Fund was established by friends and colleagues of the late Professor Lee to provide scholarship awards for students who have made outstanding accomplishments in Asian studies and are pursuing or planning to pursue a program that includes Asian studies.

Priyanka is a Sociocultural Anthropology Ph.D. student specializing in medical and environmental anthropology. Her research interests include the intersections of health, gender and environment, state violence, and social suffering. Her Ph.D. dissertation will examine the social and political aspects of water insecurity in the context of Chronic Kidney Disease of uncertain etiology (CKDu) in Sri Lanka. At the same time, she is also interested in studying how state violence and militarism in Sri Lanka affect the health and wellbeing of certain communities more than others. Priyanka says that although these two research areas are seemingly unrelated, they focus on broader entanglement of lived experiences of marginalized groups in times of crisis.

Priyanka's previous education and research experiences were critical preparation for her current work: She obtained her BA and MA in Sociology from University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Through her research there, she explored daily occurrences of stigma and how it's manifested through different meanings attributed to CKDu and how the social values, healthcare system, and media influence stigmatization of patients diagnosed with CKDu. It's through this research experience she became interested in studying water insecurity in the context of CKDu. At MSU, Priyanka has found success in building upon her ethnographic research prior to joining the Department of Anthropology Ph.D. program.

Priyanka won 3rd place in the Shao Chang Lee Scholarship Fund Best Paper Competition for her paper titled: "Chronicity of Militarism: Sri Lanka's Militarized Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic." This paper was written for Dr. Heather Howard's course, ANP 834: Medical Anthropology. Priyanka presented this paper at a panel entitled "Covid's Chronicities" at SfAA 2022 Annual Meeting and she is working on publishing a book chapter based on this paper in a volume edited by Dr. Lenore Manderson and Dr. Nancy Burke. Priyanka is continuing to work with Dr. Howard to expand this research with ethnographic data and plans to publish a paper.

Priyanka will use the funds she received from the Dr. Delia Koo Global Scholarship during her initial summer fieldwork in 2022 in Sri Lanka, where she will explore the multiple socio-economic and political dimensions of water insecurity in the context of CKDu in the North-Central Province in Sri Lanka. Most of the time, dominant approaches to water insecurity focus on solutions that are technocratic, depoliticized and environmentally deterministic.

"I believe my study is significant because it aims to explore lived experiences of water insecurity at multiple levels (scale of the body or individual, household, and community) and how water insecurity is entangled with CKDu, poverty, gender dynamics, as well as neoliberalism," she said.

Following the completion of her summer fieldwork project, Priyanka plans to host a collaborative photography exhibition on water security at MSU and initiate a reading group with fellow doctoral students in the College of Social Science who are studying water-related issues.

Priyanka says these activities are especially significant because climate change is unarguably the number one global challenge faced by human beings around the world and specifically in underprivileged communities, and requires a broader discussion among fellow graduate students who are interested in studying water justice and water governance.

"I hope my research in Sri Lanka will make a positive impact on water policies there," she said. "My long-term goal is to become a professor in Anthropology at a public university in Sri Lanka through which I could disseminate knowledge, conduct research, and continue to work with the communities that are marginalized in multiple ways." ■

MSU Anthropology alum finds success in the business world



"Rarely is there another person in any meeting room that I'm in that has the background that I have," Michigan State University alumnus Jeffrey Bennish laughed good-naturedly. Bennish is the Vice President of QuVA Pharma Inc., a 503B pharmacy drug manufacturer, who graduated with a degree in anthropology.

"I think you can use a lot of the skills from an applied anthropology standpoint that translate incredibly well into business environments, and find yourself with a unique skill set amongst your peers and those business environments that make you stand out," he said.

Bennish attributes his success to his early training in anthropology from MSU.

"I actually found that the skills that I learned, in particular, the skills of ethnography (the scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures) and the ethnographic toolkit that you pick up translates incredibly well into the world of business, especially on the sales side, where you're really trying to build relationships with people that don't know you, and create a pathway in that relationship for business to occur," Bennish said.

Bennish knew he wanted to study anthropology in high school because he was drawn toward a major that focused on other cultures.

"In high school, I was most interested in my humanities courses, and multidisciplinary courses: about that intersection of different cultures and geographies and histories," he said. "And really, just the opportunity to expand on that with the undergraduate degree in anthropology, Michigan State was just a perfect fit for what I was interested in in life."

Bennish values the training he received, although his path isn't quite what he imagined when he first began as an anthropology major at MSU. During his senior year, Bennish realized that he would have to attend graduate school if he wanted to continue on to a career in anthropology academia. Because he wanted to graduate after four years and begin his career, he decided to try working in medical sales, and never left.

"To graduate with a degree in anthropology, you really have to learn how to be a writer," he said. "And so that translates incredibly well into business in terms of developing business plans, developing proformas and focusing on other people's

voices. Because really, when you write an ethnography, you are trying to emphasize other people's voices, not your own. You learn how to write from other's perspectives, and that is a very unique skill."

To further his education, he received a graduate degree in Medical Anthropology from the University of Colorado. Throughout his career, he increasingly took on leadership roles and felt that his skills transferred to each new position.

"In anthropology, there's a lot of focus put on agency and the emotional attachment that people have with with different interests, and I think it sets you up incredibly well for acting as a leader in a complex organization, because you can definitely use your skills to help make sure that you're connecting with people at different levels and different layers based on what they're looking for out of their careers."

Bennish realizes he has taken a unique path, and is often surrounded by peers with more traditional degrees in his career field.

"When I compare my skills to people who had more traditional business degrees or marketing degrees – not that you can't learn a lot in those disciplines – but as it pertains to business development and in the world of sales within business, you have those cultural skills that you that you pick up through anthropology that really allows you to see a lot of nuances in people's behaviors," he said. "What you learn is how people emotionally attach themselves to certain perspectives and experiences. And you learn how to deconstruct those meanings. So that you can find ways to create connections there."

Bennish is hoping to attract more graduating anthropology majors to his field.

"I talk to people in our human resources department about wanting to find incredible sales talent, I always tell them they should be looking in the anthropology departments of the undergraduate programs," he said.

His advice for current anthropology undergraduates or high school students considering anthropology as a major.

"I wouldn't shy away from a career in business if you decide you're not going to work in academia or continue on to grad school," he said. "I think you can use a lot of the skills from an applied anthropology standpoint that translate incredibly well into business environments. You'll find yourself with a unique skill set amongst your peers and those business environments that make you stand out." ■

Announcing the Retirement of Joan Reid, Department of Anthropology Academic Program Coordinator

Joan Reid is retiring from Michigan State University after 32 years, having served in three other campus roles before becoming the Academic Program Coordinator for the Department of Anthropology in 2015.

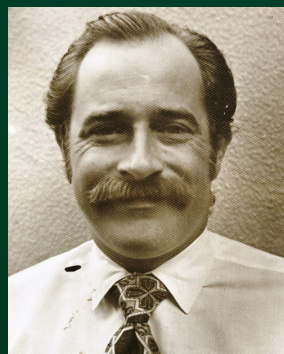
Reid plays an invaluable role in helping Anthropology graduate students matriculate through the program, assisting them from their prospective student visits all the way until graduation. In her role as Academic Program Coordinator, Reid keeps graduate students informed of important deadlines and program requirements, assists with paperwork and department procedures, compiles reports, maintains academic and personnel files for graduate students, and provides key support to the department chair, graduate program advisor, and faculty members. Further, Reid can always be found advocating for students and attending department and GSA events and fundraisers. When asked about what she enjoys about her job, Reid stated: "Working with graduate students has been the most rewarding aspect of my entire career. I am very grateful for the appreciation and respect shown by graduate students when they thank me for my help throughout their program matriculation. The feeling of accomplishment that I played a small role in helping students succeed through a very rigorous Ph.D. program and I am so happy when they graduate!"

Reid's impact on student success is echoed by students across the department, with students praising her dedication to their success, her helpful and supportive attitude, and her quick email responses to last minute questions. Micayla Spiros, a third year Ph.D. candidate, said that it is difficult to put into words how integral Reid has been during her graduate experience, and that she has felt welcomed and supported by Reid since her first visit as a prospective student. She says of Reid: "The diligence, knowledge, communication skills, and innovation that Joan provides for the Anthropology department is unparalleled", and also states that the department will not be the same without her. Emma Zblewski, a second year Ph.D./M.D. student, says Joan has been instrumental in helping her navigate her dual degree program, and that she "helps us balance our priorities and stay up-to-date with department happenings during our med school years."

Dr. Todd Fenton, Department of Anthropology Chair and Professor, says: "It's difficult, if not impossible to list all the achievements, support, and dedicated service Joan has provided MSU and the Department of Anthropology. For over 30 years, Joan had dedicated her career to Michigan State University. Having joined the Department of Anthropology in spring of 2015, she has provided exceptional support to our graduate students. We're beyond grateful for Joan's effort and the joy she's brought to our department for the last 7 years. We will really miss her." ■



Memorial for MSU Anthropology Alumnus Herb Whittier (1941-2021)



MSU Department of Anthropology alumnus Herbert (Herb) Whittier, Ph.D. died June 6, 2021 in East Lansing, Michigan. Whittier studied Anthropology at University of South Florida (B.A. 1963), and Florida State University (B.S. 1965) where he also met his wife

and research collaborator Patricia (Pat) Ruth Jenks, and later received a Ph.D. in Anthropology at MSU in 1973.

The MSU Department of Anthropology was a formative intellectual environment for Herb Whittier; he took coursework, studied Bahasa Indonesian, honed writing skills, and successfully applied for research funding. Whittier worked with Dr. Al Hudson, the Anthropology Department Borneologist, focusing on Kenyah communities found both in Indonesia (East Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Sarawak, Fourth Division). His doctoral dissertation was titled: Social Organization and Symbols of Social Differentiation: An Ethnographic Study of the Kenyah Dayak of East Kalimantan (Borneo). It synthesized geographic and historical information on the Lepo Tau Kenyah – their migration, religious conversion, village and longhouse organization, social class, swidden farming, ritual – but focused on the mediating role of the ba' (beaded baby carrier) in the Lepo Tau symbolic system. Herb then joined Pat Whittier, a cultural linguist, on her Borneo dissertation fieldwork. Supported by National Geographic Society grants, the photographs, fieldwork data, and artifacts from Whittier's Borneo research are now curated in the anthropological collections at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

After completing his Ph.D., Whittier used his anthropological expertise in a variety of positions, including Senior Community Planner with Gilbert/Commonwealth Associates, and as Rural Development Advisor in Surabaya, Indonesia, and Rampur, Nepal. His final professional role was as Associate Director of the Kellogg Foundation-funded MSU Institute of International Health in the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Adapted from The Borneo Research Bulletin, authored by colleagues and friends Al and Judy Hudson, Richard Drake, Judith Tordoff, and William Lovis. ■

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