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Anthropology Newsletter



Department of Anthropology
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF
SOCIAL SCIENCE



OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**
AND INSPIRES LEADERS

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: *Beaumont Tower at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Photo courtesy of Jacqueline Hawthorne.*

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Dr. Ampson Hagan joins the Department of Anthropology as College of Social Science Dean's Research Associate

By Katie Nicpon



The MSU Department of Anthropology welcomes Dr. Ampson Hagan as their new College of Social Science Dean's Research Associate. Dr. Hagan earned his Ph.D. in anthropology from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and joined MSU in fall semester 2022.

"I applied to the College of Social Science Dean's Research Associate Program

at MSU because it looked like it was one of a kind," he said. "The dedication to supporting and nurturing scholars from diverse backgrounds caught my eye, and the program's commitment to doing the work of putting scholars in positions to succeed, with institutional resources, intrigued me."

Dr. Hagan's research interests surround humanitarianism and rescue, broadly focusing on how Black African migrants crossing the Sahara Desert encounter and navigate the humanitarian and policing nexus that seeks to intercept them.

He grew up watching cartoons where superheroes saved others, and then he worked in large NGOs in which people engaged in heroic acts of humanitarianism and rescue. In 2015, during his Ph.D. research at UNC, he often saw news reports of African migrants getting stranded and shipwrecked in the Mediterranean.

"I began to wonder about the paths they took to reach the sea, and I began to see more reports of migrants stuck in the Sahara. After reading about humanitarianism in the Sahara and other regions of Niger and Algeria, I decided to go and see what I could learn about the lives of migrants in those countries."

Over the course of 12 months of ethnographic research with unauthorized migrants and inside a migrant camp in Niger, this research is the body of his dissertation, *Deserving Humans in the Desert: How Black trans-Saharan Migrants Experience the Logics of Liberal Humanism via Humanitarian Care in Transit*.

He has ambivalences towards the field of humanitarianism, as well as the practice of rescue.

"The inherent politics of both are complex and involve contradictions to their stated goals," he said. "Articulating those politics and contradictions is something I think is incredibly important. That would allow stakeholders, organizations, and governments to speak more openly and think more critically about how concepts of humanity, and understandings of who is

considered human, are at stake in humanitarian rescue operations and structures."

He thinks that the rescue as a concept needs to be critically analyzed as a tool that reflects who is worthy of being saved and who is not and that these issues are important for anthropology and for society to consider.

"I hope that others continue to question the concepts of rescue and humanitarianism on their 'human' grounds. A humanitarianism that fails to influence or even attempt to improve the abject and dangerous conditions that humans face, is a failure to intervene in a crisis. What does that say about humanitarianism? About rescue? I want this research and its fundamental questions to exist in conversations outside of my narrow slice of academic discourse."

In spring, he will teach ANP 330 Race, Ethnicity and Nation, and this semester, he's focusing on writing.

"As a very new member of the department, my most meaningful experiences have been all the support from my colleagues, and all the time I have had to write!" he said.

Dr. Hagan joins the Department of Anthropology as a Dean's Research Associate, a program established in 2018 aimed at promoting an inclusive scholarly environment in which outstanding scholars in the social sciences support the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion in the academy.

"We're delighted that Dr. Hagan has joined our faculty and we are excited about the important perspectives and dynamic research he brings to our department," Dr. Todd Fenton said, chair of the department.

The Dean's Research Associates have a minimal teaching load, will be mentored and supported, and will participate in a Dean's Research Associate Development Institute with the goal of possibly transitioning them into tenure-system positions at MSU.

"Offering more than just words, the program has put in place institutional resources that will promote the development of scholars of color, and I am excited for the opportunity to grow as a researcher and a future faculty member at MSU," Dr. Hagan said.

In addition to his research, writing and teaching, Dr. Hagan enjoys learning new skills.

"I want to learn how to skate. I have plenty of pursuits and skills that I want to attain in the near future and learning to in-line and roller skate are important skills to learn," he said. "Two more things: I'd like to volunteer on a farm, and I want to learn how to drive a car with a manual transmission." ■



MSU Department of Anthropology holds Human Remains Excavation Course for Michigan State Police

▲ *The MSU Forensic Anthropology Lab facilitated a training session in Lansing for members of the Michigan State Police force. The training involved how to properly excavate and handle remains. The skeletons used for the training were made of plastic. Photo credit: Jacqueline Hawthorne, MSU College of Social Science photographer.*

By Katie Nicpon

In September, the MSU Department of Anthropology offered their four-day, Human Remains Excavation Course for Michigan State Police officers and laboratory personnel.

“This training is important for us to expand our skillset and provide the best and highest quality response for the community,” Christina Rasmussen said.

Rasmussen works for the Michigan State Police in the Lansing Forensic Lab and was one of 17 participants in the training.

This training provides an overview of how forensic anthropology can contribute to investigating deaths, and the appropriate methods investigators should follow when they are searching for and recovering actual human remains (although the skeletons used for training are made of plastic).

“This training is important, as service to the community is a pillar of our practice,” Dr. Carolyn Isaac said.

Isaac is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology in the College of Social Science, and the director of the MSU Forensic Anthropology Laboratory (MSUFAL). She collaborated with Anthropology Associate Professor Joe Hefner, Ph.D., on the training, in addition to receiving help from graduate students including Rhian Dunn, Micayla Spiros, Clara Devota, and Holly Long.

“We often partner with law enforcement to aid in the search and recovery of human remains and it is essential that we all understand the appropriate techniques to ensure all of the skeletal remains and evidence at the scene are collected. We also want to create relationships with our law enforcement colleagues so they know they can call us to assist in such recoveries.”

The training includes a combination of lectures and hands-on experience. Lectures feature topics such as how to assess sex, age, ancestry, and stature from skeletal remains; identifications using comparative radiography, skeletal trauma analysis; and forensic archaeology.

The department also provides a hands-on osteology (bone) laboratory so participants can try to identify the various features of the biological profile in the skeletal remains.

One afternoon is dedicated to forensic entomology (how the study of insects can contribute to the death investigation) and a field demonstration of decomposition and the collection of insects of interest. Ryan Kimbirauskas, Ph.D., a board-certified forensic entomologist and MSU faculty in the Center for Integrative Studies in General Science hosted this part of the training.

“On the third day (excavation day) teams search for, systematically excavate, recover, and document simulated clandestine burials (plastic skeletons that we buried back in May),” Dr. Isaac said.

“From this exercise, they prepare presentations on their excavations and present them on the last day.”

On excavation day, participants are divided into a number of teams to perform line searches and probing to detect where the simulated clandestine burials are located. Once the burial locations have been determined, they begin the systematic excavation, ensuring thorough mapping and photography of the process are completed.

“The goal is to expose the skeleton to understand the position of the remains and any associated evidence when they were placed into the ground,” Dr. Isaac explained. “During this process they learn how to detect clandestine graves or soil disturbances, utilize soil probes to determine the outline of the burial, set up a grid over the burial for mapping, carefully remove soil from above the remains to ensure they are not disturbed, screen soil to find any small portions of bones or evidence, pedestal the bones (i.e. removing enough soil to expose the bones but not too much where they will fall out of place), and how to take coordinates of the skeletal remains to produce a map for documentation purposes.”

For Rasmussen, one key takeaway was the need to approach each scene differently but collaboratively.

“I learned the importance of being creative and innovative since each scene is different. Working together as a team is the only way to effectively process a scene.”

- Christina Rasmussen

The Human Remains Excavation course has a rich and long history that spans several decades. The training course was established by Dr. Norm Sauer, founder of the MSU Forensic Anthropology Laboratory, back in the 1990s, and it continued when Dr. Todd Fenton took over the directorship of the lab in 2012.

“The MSUFAL relationship with the MSP has been around for a long time and represents years of working together on complex forensic recoveries, death investigations ranging from suspicious deaths to multiple homicides, and everything in between,” Dr. Hefner said. “We are fortunate to have such a strong bond with the state law enforcement, and these courses provide us an opportunity to give back to the community outside of our normal academic duties.” ■

The MSU Forensic Anthropology Lab facilitated a training session in Lansing for members of the Michigan State Police force. The training involved how to properly excavate and handle remains. The skeletons used for the training were made of plastic.
▼ *Photo credit: Jacqueline Hawthorne, MSU College of Social Science photographer.*



Anthropology professor and former chair

Dr. Jodie O’Gorman receives distinguished award and reflects on career

By Katie Nicpon

During the annual Midwest Archaeological Conference (MAC), Professor of Anthropology Dr. Jodie O’Gorman, received the Distinguished Career Award that recognizes archaeologists who have demonstrated excellence and contributed significantly and regularly to the advancement of Midwestern archaeology.

“I’m honored to receive the Distinguished Career Award and I’m very grateful to those who took the time to nominate me and write in support of the nomination,” Dr. O’Gorman said.

The award has deep meaning for O’Gorman because the MAC has been a valuable part of her professional life since graduate school.

“I gave my first professional paper at a MAC meeting decades ago, and participating in the organization has taught me a lot over the years about professionalism and advocacy – and of course the archaeology of the midcontinent. I’ve served as a board member, secretary, and president of the organization, and helped host two of its annual meetings in East Lansing.”

Additionally, receiving the award in La Crosse, Wisconsin held special meaning for Dr. O’Gorman because her roots are nearby on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi Valley, and she spent summers in La Crosse from 1987-1990 working for the Wisconsin State Historical Society on a complex of village sites outside the city. Her dissertation research emerged from that project.

As part of the MAC conference, Drs. Lynne Goldstein (MSU Professor Emerita of Anthropology) and Jenn Bengtson (Associate Professor, Southeast Missouri State University) put together a symposium in her honor titled, “Migration, Gender, Foodways, and Collections in the Midwestern U.S.: Various Pathways in Honor of Jodie O’Gorman.” The symposium featured studies that explored a few of Jodie O’Gorman’s major research interests. A number of her colleagues and former students wanted to honor O’Gorman and highlight her significant impact on archaeology in the Midwestern U.S.

Dr. O’Gorman’s research interests have focused on Native American village life in the midcontinent of North America from about AD 1000 to 1700s. Archaeologists identify many different cultural traditions in the midcontinent during this period and she has been interested in the relationships of different groups within and between communities.

“Many people were living in substantial villages during this time and some of the villages and towns can be described as multi-ethnic,” she said. “I’m interested in how people negotiated their interactions and how ideas and practices both created and maintained relationships between people and between people and their landscape. Throughout my career, I’ve been particularly interested in how the role of women and their agency in foodways play into these interactions.”

Dr. O’Gorman plans to retire September 1, 2023, and is beginning to reflect on her career.

“I’m very proud of the Morton Village research project I’ve been co-directing for almost 15 years now,” she reminisced. “Our field



▲ Dr. Jodie O’Gorman received the Distinguished Career Award at the annual Midwest Archaeological Conference.

and lab work at the site has been the focus or contributed to eight dissertations and many publications have come from the research. My students, the co-PI, collaborators, and myself have come to interpret the multi-ethnic site in new ways and colleagues are realizing how important this example is to how we understand ancient patterns of Native American cultural interactions across the broader region.”

She has also spent time reflecting on the students she has taught in field schools and other archaeology courses.

“I enjoyed my time with them very much and many individuals stand out – mostly for positive reasons! I am proud of them all whether they pursued careers in archaeology or simply moved on having learned more about archaeology. I’m especially thankful for having the opportunity to work with Native American students and colleagues at MSU; they’ve helped me understand more fully the importance of different perspectives and made me a better archaeologist.”

Upon her retirement, Dr. O’Gorman plans to explore a variety of research and other interests that fell by the wayside during the past forty years.

“But my top goal is to spend more time with my family, especially my grandchildren,” she said. “And my partner, and enjoy our cabin in the woods, tend my gardens, fish more, read more, paint more, write different things – the list goes on.”

Dr. O’Gorman joined the MSU Department of Anthropology in 2000 and served as the department chair for nine years.

“We’re so grateful to Jodie for her dedication to our students, our colleagues, our community partners and the field,” Todd Fenton, Ph.D., said, professor and current department chair. “We especially appreciate Jodie’s service as our chair for nine years. We wish her so much joy and time with loved ones during her retirement.” ■

MSU alumni Aaron and Jill Whiteford establish scholarship for cultural anthropology field work

By Katie Nicpon

Aaron Whiteford was teaching English in Ecuador for a year after an undergraduate study abroad experience there when he met Jill, who was in a Spanish immersion program after graduating from college too.

"Then he said, 'I'm going to Michigan, do you want to go with me for a couple of months?' And you know, being in my early 20s, I was there for an adventure anyway, so I said, 'sure,'" Jill Whiteford smiled. "I ended up going to Michigan with him to help him get settled, and I just never left."

Aaron entered the Michigan State University Anthropology graduate program and Jill decided to continue her education in the School of Social Work. They look back on their time at MSU with fondness because it's where they began their family and also because of the relationships they built with other students and their professors.

"The School of Social Work was able to interweave personal relationships and connections with the faculty that I think was really remarkable," Jill remembered. "And I think about that experience – I just really appreciate the fact that I had those connections with the faculty, I don't know how they did it, I don't know if I was just super lucky. But that's a really, really fond memory I have."

They also look back in awe that they made it through financially.

"We remember those years well, how hard they were and how we scraped every piece, every dollar together. And you didn't know if you're going to have enough to do it the next year," Aaron recalled.

Their first-hand experience with the expenses of graduate school, especially the field work research required in the field of anthropology is what led them to establish a scholarship in the MSU Department of Anthropology to help cultural anthropology students fund their field work during their graduate study.

"Knowing that if we can take some of that burden off of at least one person in this process, that's going to be hugely impactful," he said. "Those dollars mean a lot more to that person than they mean to us, and we get the benefit of seeing their work play out."

Now a Leadership Consultant with Talent Plus, Aaron previously worked in the field of development and philanthropy for 15 years at his undergraduate alma mater Lewis and Clark College in Oregon, and understands the importance of giving. He also comes from a family where giving to higher education institutions was an important priority.

"There are scholarships in the Whiteford family name at Beloit College, Iowa State University, the University of Nebraska and the University of Arizona. We are proud to expand our family legacy of giving and adding Michigan State to that list."

"We all value education, and we understand that this is a critical piece in understanding and in forming well rounded adults," Aaron said. "I think more specifically with the work that's being done within anthropology,



▲ Aaron and Jill Whiteford with their children, Andrew and Matthew.

and especially now more than ever, we live in a society that doesn't really like looking outward and views the rest of the world with suspicion and distrust. For me, at least, I think the more we can do to help the next generation to understand each other and how others in the world function, the better."

Last year, doctoral student Juan Carlos Rico Noguera received the inaugural Whiteford Cultural Anthropology Field Work Scholarship and allowed him to cover research expenses for the first phase of his dissertation research in Colombia.

"Ecuador is probably the most important to us, but a close second is Colombia," Aaron said. "That's where my grandfather first did his research in the 1940s, and my father conducted his doctoral research starting in the 1960s. They developed long-standing familial relationships that continue to this day. Having the research done in Colombia was a pleasant surprise, to say the least, and I was surprised by how touched I was by all of that."

While paying it forward through establishing their scholarship, Jill and Aaron were also able make a trip back to where it all started.

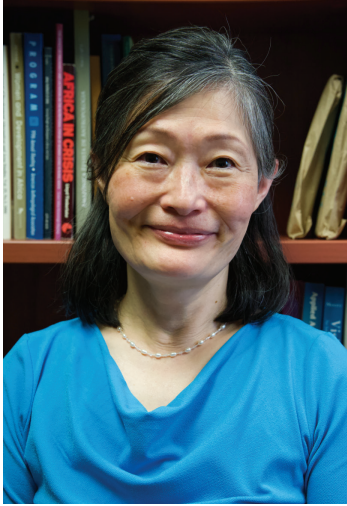
"Last summer, we took our sons Andrew and Matthew to Ecuador, and we spent a week in Cuenca where we met," Jill reminisced. "We were able to relive that time and share it with the next generation. We visited all the places that we spent time in when we were there and everything felt like it came full circle."

They hope their story and their gift will inspire others to give.

"We hope to inspire others to consider how they can have an impact in their own way - to make contributions to the university and the departments that they care so much about whether it's through their estate plans, annual contributions or endowments," Aaron said. "It takes a community to educate students from birth to higher education, so we would encourage people to consider what's important to them and how they would be able to help the next generation in that area." ■

Dr. Masako Fujita: A passion for anthropology and making a difference in women's health and wellness

By Priyanka Jayakodi



Dr. Masako Fujita is an Associate Professor in biological anthropology, specializing in contemporary human variation. She also directs the Biomarker Laboratory for Anthropological Research. She regularly teaches the graduate course Quantitative Methods in Anthropology and undergraduate courses such as Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Human Adaptability.

Dr. Fujita joined MSU as an Assistant Professor in 2008. She remembers that period of time as “a little hectic” because when she moved to East Lansing to join MSU Anthropology, she had submitted her final dissertation copy only about ten days prior. Even though the abrupt transition to becoming a professor was challenging, things got better over time.

“I have been fortunate to work with friendly office staff, graduate assistants, and colleagues,” she says.

In terms of research, Dr. Fujita is interested in women's health and wellness, particularly women in vulnerable life stages like pregnancy and lactation. Her research thus far has focused on maternal nutrition and health, breastfeeding, and mothers' milk. Her Master's research focused on the impact of sedentarization on maternal diet, nutrition, and morbidity among formerly nomadic pastoralists in northern Kenya. For her Ph.D. dissertation, she continued with people of northern Kenya and investigated how mothers cope with food insecurity amid repeated and increasingly severe droughts.

More recently, Dr. Fujita's research has focused more on mothers' milk, investigating the notion of maternal buffering – “there is this assumption that mothers can maintain high quality milk to nourish infants even under nutritional or infectious disease stress. But in some harsh environments, I feel that it is unrealistic to expect mothers to pull this off. So, I have been trying to address this question in my research, working with my collaborators.”

Her research team recently published two journal articles; one on the micronutrient folate in mothers' milk and the other on the antimicrobial protein called lactoferrin in mothers' milk. Both of these papers deal with the question of maternal buffering.

Dr. Fujita is excited about the current research she is involved in with her collaborators investigating iron nutrition and COVID-19 risk among healthcare workers. Iron is a vital nutrient for both humans and microorganisms. This means that humans have walked a fine line between too much iron (which can fuel infections) and too little iron (which can compromise health) through evolutionary history. Dr. Fujita and her colleagues are testing the optimal iron hypothesis, predicting that having somewhat low iron in the blood will be protective against infections, including COVID-19. The research team has collected data among healthcare workers in Nigeria, and they are about to begin data analysis. She looks forward to disseminating the results from this research.

Dr. Fujita always had a passion for anthropology. She initially took an introduction to anthropology course as an elective in British Columbia and learned some fundamental concepts such as holism and ethnocentrism. She says, “I was an international student, and anthropology helped me adapt to life in the host country. Born and raised in a more homogeneous country, it was my first time to live among people with different cultural backgrounds. Anthropology helped me navigate life.”

When asked to share a piece of advice for her students, Dr. Fujita mentioned important advice she received from her loving mother: “Enjoy the process - my mother said that at her age nearing the end of life, what she has come to treasure the most is the process – being in the midst of it – rather than her achievements. Looking back at my own years as a student, I too treasure the journey part – it was lengthy and at times unsure if I would ever finish, but in hindsight those were invaluable years!” ■



Anthropology undergraduate Levi Webb: Passion for the stars and the people below them

Levi Webb with other summer MSU Archaeology Field School students. Photo courtesy of Levi Webb. ▲

By Katie Nicpon

Levi Webb's academic advisor suggested he add a minor in computational modeling or mathematics, a more "typical" pathway for an astrophysics major, but after taking anthropology-based ISS courses on different cultures and perspectives, Webb decided to follow his passion.

"As someone who earned an International Baccalaureate Diploma in high school and, thus, came to MSU with a considerable amount of credits, I ambitiously decided to fully major in a second field that (for the most part) has nothing in common with my first field of study," he said. "The bonus is that I get to learn about two of my most significant interests!"

Webb is currently a junior astrophysics and anthropology major with an undecided anthropology subfield.

"I've taken a very wide sample of classes in each field of anthropology, so it's hard to say that I've liked one above the rest," he said.

This past summer, Webb participated in the MSU Archaeology Field School.

"Dr. Camp's field school this past summer was very well-rounded," he said. "Students got experience with many archaeological processes, such as survey, excavation, archival research, and artifact photography and cataloging. I feel honored to have had such an experience in an incredibly welcoming and open-minded environment, and I had a ton of fun!"

This semester, Webb is working in Dr. Stacey Camp's Kooskia Lab with artifacts from World War II Japanese internment camps in Kooskia, Idaho. Dr. Camp is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology, director of the Campus Archaeology Program, and new department undergraduate director.

"Because this archaeology is relatively recent history, I know that my work is important to the living relatives of the people whose belongings are in the collection," Webb said. "Dr. Camp has talked to me about people who reach out to her about the importance of the database she's creating of artifacts. That connection encourages me to do excellent work in the lab."

In addition to his work at the Kooskia Lab, Webb also works in the MSU Observational Research Program (MORP), and he is involved in multiple physics clubs across campus such as the Astronomy Club and the Society of Physics Students.

"I'm the vice president of MSU's high-powered Rocketry Club, and I attend LGBT social gatherings whenever I have time," he said. "This semester, I've also been attending a lot of physics and astronomy seminars/colloquia, and I have been getting more involved in anthropology, too, through discussions with professors and grad students."

Involved in many courses, programs and clubs, Webb has important advice for students:

"Stressing out only makes everything harder, and it becomes a vicious cycle. Just remember that your professors are people too, and they'll most likely be understanding if you're struggling and need help. And, a lot of anthropology professors really like talking to students, even if you don't need help!"

Webb plans to begin stellar astrophysical research on supernovae, and plans to get his Master's in anthropology and his doctorate in astrophysics. He hopes to inspire other students to create their own path.

"You know yourself best. Judge your limits based on where you know them to be set – aim above the expectations of people who underestimate you and don't let their perceptions of you alter your sense of self." ■

Roxanne Moran: Sixteen years in the department she loves

By Priyanka Jayakodi

The Department of Anthropology is delighted to feature Roxanne Moran, who has been working in the department for 16 years. Roxanne began her career at Michigan State University in March 2001. She initially worked as a teller in the cashier's office, then moved to contracts & grants. In 2006, Roxanne joined the Department of Anthropology as an office assistant III. Since then, she has been helping faculty, staff, and students in the department with various tasks such as handling accounting and student payroll processes as well as processing expense and travel reimbursements.

Roxanne also handles purchasing equipment at faculty requests, ordering office supplies, and maintaining the department's ledger records. Whenever people walk into the department, Roxanne greets them, answers their questions, or directs them to where they need to go. She is also responsible for course scheduling and various procedures involving undergraduate students and their classes.

When asked about her experience working at the Department of Anthropology, Roxanne said, "The opportunity to work with some of the most talented and dedicated people in the Department of Anthropology makes me very proud to be a part of this department. We work together as a team through good times and hard times. We support each other in the best and worst circumstances, no matter when they happen. I'm very thankful to have been able to devote so many years to a department that I love."

Dr. Todd Fenton, Department of Anthropology Chair and Professor, admires the dedicated service that Roxanne has been providing the Department of Anthropology and MSU, noting that "we are incredibly fortunate to have Roxanne working in our department, and I am thankful to her for the indispensable support she provides to our faculty, students, and to the smooth functioning of the department. Working with Roxanne is always a pleasure, and I look forward to continuing to work with Roxanne in the years to come."

When not at work, Roxanne loves spending time with her family, especially her very energetic grandsons Eddie and Kenny, who are constantly on the go. She also loves to travel, thrift shop, refinish old furniture, and train her labradoodle puppy, Gus.

The fact that Roxanne comes from a musical family means she is often watching her husband, sons, and daughter play music at parties or in local establishments. Talking about her musical family she said, "last year will always be remembered as the year that my oldest son, Jacob Moran, who was a contestant on American Idol, made it to the top 14 and competed for the title! The journey far exceeded his expectations." ■



"The opportunity to work with some of the most talented and dedicated people in the Anthropology department makes me very proud to be a part of this department."

- Roxanne Moran

Department of Anthropology

Graduate Student Publications: 2022

Graduate students in the Department of Anthropology are often able to begin publishing their research in academic journals before graduating. Congratulations to our graduate students on their publications in 2022! *The names of the graduate students are in bold, and the names of Anthropology faculty members are underlined.*

Biggs, Jack. A., Jeffrey J. Burnett, Rhian R. Dunn, Emily B. P. Milton, and Amber M. Plemons. 2022. "The Campus Archaeology Program at Michigan State University: Reevaluating Our Program during a Pandemic." *SAA Archaeological Record*, 22(2):17-21. <https://mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?m=16146&i=740794&p=18&ver=html5>

Burnett, Jeffrey J. 2022. "Seeking Radical Solidarity in Heritage Studies: Exploring the Intersection of Black Feminist Archaeologies and Geographies in Oak Bluffs, MA." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 26: 53-78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-021-00601-y>

Dunn, Rhian R., Andrea Zurek-Ost, Paige Lynch, and Carrie Bohne Warren. 2022. "Dennis C. Dirkmaat, Ph.D., D-ABFA: A Brief Visit with an Influential Forensic Anthropologist." *Forensic Anthropology*. <https://doi.org/10.5744/fa.2021.0030>

Gerloff, Grace Shu. 2022. "Beyond Feelings: What's Missing from Trauma-Centered Adoption Narratives." *Adoption and Culture* 10, no. 2: 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ado.0.0016>

Goots, Alexis, Mariyam I. Isa, Todd W. Fenton, and Feng Wei. 2022. "Blunt Force Trauma in the Human Mandible: An Experimental Investigation." *Forensic Science International: Reports* 5: 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsir.2021.100252>

Milton, Emily B. P., Nathan D. Stansell, Hervé Bocherens, Annalis Brownlee, Döbereiner Chala-Aldana, and Kurt Rademaker. 2022. "Examining Surface Water $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ and $\delta^2\text{H}$ Values in the Western Central Andes: A Watershed Moment for Anthropological Mobility Studies." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 146: 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2022.105655>

Spiros, Micayla C., Amber M. Plemons, and **Jack A. Biggs.** 2022. "Pedagogical Access and Ethical Considerations in Forensic Anthropology and Bioarchaeology." *Science & Justice* 62, no. 6: 708-720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scijus.2022.03.008>

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New Graduate Program Director, Dr. Stacey Camp

By Priyanka Jayakodi

The Department of Anthropology is pleased to announce that associate professor and director of the MSU Campus Archaeology Program, Dr. Stacey Camp is the new graduate program director. Dr. Camp sees this as an excellent opportunity to get to know incoming students and help graduate students navigate their academic programs. Dr. Camp has been in administrative roles since 2013. She enjoys solving problems and finding solutions for her colleagues, staff, and students and welcomes the opportunity to promote what her students and colleagues are doing to the wider university audience.

Camp joined MSU as an associate professor of anthropology in 2017, but she was already familiar with the department before being hired. She was a visiting National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) fellow at MSU in the summers of 2015 and 2016. During those two summers, she got to know Dr. Ethan Watrall and Dr. Lynne Goldstein, who were directing the NEH institute on digital archaeology that she was attending. One of Dr. Camp's favorite things about the anthropology department is the great staff who care deeply about students and faculty. She says, "we are really lucky to have them on our team."

She also appreciates the collegiality and sense that everyone works together for a common purpose.

"Everyone has been so kind to me since coming here," Dr. Camp said.

Before coming to MSU, Dr. Camp spent nine years as a faculty member, administrator, and director of a federal archaeological repository at the University of Idaho.

"Moving from rural Idaho to suburban East Lansing was definitely a big cultural shift, but my MSU colleagues made the transition easier for my family," she said.

In Idaho, she worked in a department of multiple academic fields – criminology, sociology, and anthropology.

"There were not a lot of anthropologists in my department," said Dr. Camp. "At MSU, I really appreciate being in a large anthropology department with anthropologists from all sub-disciplines in a college dedicated to the social sciences."

Dr. Camp first learned about anthropology in high school while volunteering at a museum.

"I really enjoyed working with the public, so I took anthropology courses my first semester at Occidental College ("Oxy") in Los Angeles. I was immediately hooked," she said.

She lovingly remembers her fantastic professors and mentors at Oxy, including Dr. Elizabeth Chin (now editor-in-chief of American Anthropologist), Dr. Robin Sewell, and Dr. Jeff Tobin. While at Oxy, she attended her first archaeological field school in Ireland, directed by Illinois State University's Dr. Charles E. Orser.

"I was fascinated by his community-based approach to archaeology, which is why I decided to pursue the sub-discipline of historical archaeology," Dr. Camp said.

Dr. Camp's archaeological research explores what citizenship and national belonging mean to communities who have been actively denied and/or dispossessed of legal and/or cultural citizenship. She looks at how these communities respond to exclusion and racism through archaeology.

"Archaeology can reveal what people consumed in the past, such as what they ate or purchased. Historically dispossessed or disenfranchised communities have used consumerism to claim citizenship and national identity," Dr. Camp said.

Dr. Camp's research has also investigated the politics of the past and what it means to preserve, curate, and present artifacts. Early in her career, she studied how government-run museums in Ireland privileged the country's prehistory to the neglect of more contested, difficult histories, such as the Great Famine and British colonization. She continues to write about the silences and absences in museums and history books. She has a book chapter coming out next year that reviews an exhibit on civil rights and racism in American history at The Henry Ford.

Outside of academia, Dr. Camp loves spending time outdoors, hiking, cross-country skiing, kayaking, and skiing in Michigan with her husband and two children.

"I was a figure skater for most of my young life and coached on the side for many years up until moving to Michigan," Dr. Camp said. "I still figure-skate over at the Munn Ice Arena on the weekends".

On the horizon, Dr. Camp is working on a collaborative project that explores the materiality and artwork of the COVID-19 pandemic that involves two archaeologists including her and a cultural anthropologist. They recently published in the Journal of Contemporary Archaeology last year an article titled "Private Struggles in Public Spaces: Documenting COVID-19 Material Culture and Landscapes". The team is currently working on two articles related to this project. One examines what it means to curate and preserve materiality associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the other looks at how archaeological and ethnographic methods shifted to accommodate the ephemeral nature of materiality and artwork displayed during the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



Society of Antiquaries elects first MSU professor Dr. Ethan Watrall as fellow

By Katie Nicpon

The Society of Antiquaries elected Dr. Ethan Watrall, associate professor in the Michigan State University Department of Anthropology, as a fellow. The Society of Antiquaries was founded in 1707, and represents the oldest learned and prominent scholarly society focusing on heritage and archaeology. The society's 3,000 elected members include some of the most prominent scholars and professionals in heritage and archaeology such as national museum directors, curators, directors of heritage preservation trusts and non-profits and members of the UK parliament. Dr. Watrall is the first MSU professor to have ever been granted this distinction, only the fourth elected from the Big 10, and the ninth from the United States.

"Being named a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries is enormously important to me as it is a recognition of the importance of my work to the fields of heritage and archaeology," Dr. Watrall said. "It also reflects very well on the Department of Anthropology by shining a spotlight on the outstanding research, teaching, and outreach we're doing in heritage, preservation and community engagement."

Dr. Watrall was elected due to the notoriety of his research, teaching and outreach in the use of digital methods and computational approaches to document, preserve, contextualize, and provide access to tangible heritage and archaeology.

"I strive to leverage digital methods to preserve and provide access to archaeological and heritage materials, collections, knowledge, and data in order to facilitate research, advance knowledge, fuel interpretation, and democratize understanding and appreciation of the past."

In most cases, his research leans towards providing a mechanism for the public to engage with and understand our collective heritage.

"But it's not just about public access to digitized heritage," he explained. "My work also focuses on collaborating with communities to digitize their own heritage and tell their own stories about their past with that digitized heritage. A lot of my work also intersects with museums and other collections holding heritage institutions, building workflows and platforms to digitize, provide access to, and contextualize natural and cultural collections that are often completely inaccessible to the public, communities, students, and scholars."

While Dr. Watrall has directed or co-directed many externally funded digital heritage and archaeology projects, a recent example of his work in this area is the Internment Archaeology Digital Archive (IADA), which he co-directs with his Department of Anthropology colleague Dr. Stacey Camp. Currently funded by the National Park Service and developed in collaboration with MSU's Matrix:



The Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences, IADA is an open digital archive that will host, preserve, and provide broad public access to digitized collections of archaeological materials, archival documents, oral histories and memorabilia that speak to the experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II in the United States.

Additionally, the focus of Dr. Watrall's teaching helps to prepare future generations of Anthropologists to engage in digital methods and computational approaches to preserve heritage. He regularly teaches ANP 412: Methods and Practice in Digital Heritage and ANP 465: Field Methods in Digital Heritage - the only class of its kind in the U.S.

"Beyond my curricular efforts, I also direct the Cultural Heritage Informatics Initiative, which provides graduate students interested in cultural heritage with the space to learn how to apply digital methods and computational approaches to their work," he said.

Dr. Watrall also seeks to share digital practices with the field of Anthropology across a wide scale. He recently published two edited volumes co-edited with Dr. Lynne Goldstein, professor emerita of Anthropology, Digital Heritage and Archaeology in Practice: Data, Ethics, and Professionalism and Digital Heritage and Archaeology in Practice: Presentation, Teaching, and Engagement.

All new fellows are formally admitted to the society during a ceremony at Burlington House, the society's headquarters in London, where they sign the register of admissions and are welcomed into the society. Dr. Watrall hopes to attend the ceremony the next time he's in London.

"It is my hope that the being named a fellow will help greatly increase the number of graduate students wanting to come to MSU to work with me and my colleagues in the department, provide more opportunities to secure external funding to support our work, provide more opportunities for innovative collaboration with other scholars and units around campus, and encourage the college and university to invest more resources in our work and allow us to grow and extend our reach and impact." ■

Melanie Pitt named Outstanding Senior

By Patti McDonald



Graduating Senior Melanie Pitt of Farmington Hills, Mich. has been chosen by the Department of Anthropology as this year's Outstanding Senior.

Pitt said she was elated and shocked when she heard the news.

"It was very unexpected," Pitt said. "I don't tend to expect much from what I have done, but it was a nice surprise. I was really happy."

Professor of Anthropology and director of the MSU Bioarchaeology Laboratory Dr. Gabriel Wrobel nominated Pitt for the award because she showed initiative with organization, something that is crucial for work in the lab.

Dr. Wrobel said Pitt's organization set her apart from other students.

"When I first met Melanie and I talked to her a little bit, I immediately saw that she just had an organized brain and she liked to put things in order. And I thought, 'I need somebody that can do that in this lab,'" Dr. Wrobel said.

"She was clearly prepared and organized and that was great," he added. "I love finding students like that."

Pitt transferred to MSU from Schoolcraft College in Livonia in 2021. She previously studied at Albion College, where she worked as a research assistant in the Anthropology Department. Pitt said she always enjoyed studying anthropology and the thought of studying and working in MSU's bioarchaeological lab intrigued her.

"When I was transferring into a bigger university, I started to think, 'Oh, maybe forensics would be interesting,'" she said.

Pitt said she did more research and connected with Professor of Anthropology Dr. Stacey Camp, who helped her narrow down which subfield she wanted to study: bioarchaeology.

Dr. Wrobel helped Pitt secure the Dean's Assistantship grant through the College of Social Science. The grant, a \$5600 stipend, gives students "the opportunity to have an enriched independent research experience in the social sciences with a faculty mentor."

Pitt worked closely with Dr. Wrobel to create a digital repository for the bioarchaeology lab using Kora.

Kora is an open-source, database-driven, online digital repository application for complex multimedia objects (text, images, audio, video) created by MATRIX. The application ingests, manages,

and delivers digital objects with corresponding metadata that enhances the research and educational value of the objects. (from Kora's website).

"She has completely restructured the lab and how we organize the materials that are in it, how we find things, how we keep digital records. It has been a huge help."

- Dr. Gabriel Wrobel

Pitt said organization did not always come naturally to her, but following her diagnosis of attention deficit disorder, things got easier, and she started to excel in her college courses.

"I'd always sort of thought I was just a bad student, my peers never seemed to struggle with homework and studying the way I did," Pitt said. "Once I was diagnosed with ADHD and began treating it, the difference was unbelievable – it was like I had needed glasses my whole life and never understood why I could not read the board like everyone else. I was not a bad student, my brain just worked differently, and I had never had the means to excel."

"Before coming to MSU, I didn't know what I wanted to do after college," Pitt said. "I'm still a little unsure, I am figuring it out as I go. I love archaeology, and this experience with the digital archive and organizing the lab has shown me I also really like collections management. It has given me a few things to think about as potentials for future careers."

After graduation, Pitt is slated to join Dr. Wrobel in Belize where they and other members of the Ambergris Caye Archaeological Project, including Maya students from Belize, will excavate an ancient Maya site community. Pitt will lead the project's field lab.

Pitt said she is excited about the opportunity to travel, and she is looking forward to continuing her work. She said it is bittersweet to look back on her college career and she is proud of how far she has come.

"It's strange to look back six years ago and remember how much harder school used to be for me," Pitt said. "At the same time, I would not have it any other way. I think the way that I was when I first started college and the struggles that I faced were essential for where I am now. That was a foundation that I needed to build upon. But it was all necessary steps to get to where I am now." ■

Professor Emeritus Dr. William Lovis named AAAS Fellow, selected for Steering Committee

By Patti McDonald and Priyanka Jayakodi

The Department of Anthropology is pleased to announce that Professor Emeritus Dr. William Lovis has been recognized as a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, or AAAS.

Dr. Lovis was recognized as a fellow of the AAAS earlier this year, along with four other Michigan State University researchers.

Lovis was selected as an AAAS fellow for his significant contributions to archaeological research, collections stewardship, and student and public education.

Lovis said the recognition has significant meaning because he has been a member of the AAAS since graduate school, which was more than 50 years ago.

“First of all, it’s really very pleasing to be recognized by my colleagues and peers for what I’ve achieved in my career,” Lovis said. “I have a lot of gratitude for having been conferred that honor . . .”

In addition to Lovis’ recognition as a fellow, he was also selected to serve on the Steering Committee for the Anthropology Section (H) of the AAAS.

Given his record of leadership, experience, and expertise in the management of professional organizations, Dr. Lovis will collaborate with other Steering Committee members in the multi-year Anthropology Section transition to a new organization-wide AAAS Governance Modernization Project.

In fact, part of Lovis’ role on the Steering Committee is to select AAAS fellows for next year, a challenge to which he is looking forward.

“Not having been through the process at the other end, this is going to be a learning year for me, too,” Lovis said. “But part of it is knowing who among my colleagues is doing useful, recognized work that other people are using and where they’re making an impact on the discipline in a visible way.”

Dr. Lovis is pleased about his selection and looks forward to the exciting opportunity of moving anthropology forward in one of the nation’s oldest national scientific societies.

“A lot of what I’ve done professionally is very much aligned with many of the goals of the AAAS, and I think that was part of why I was recognized; there is a pretty tight alignment there,” Lovis said.



“Then the other part of it is that I’ve worked diligently in an interdisciplinary fashion to insert more natural and biological science into the kind of archaeology that we’re doing.”

Lovis said given today’s need for scientific experts to fight the “war on science,” he is happy to offer his time and experience to something in which he believes.

“The scientific basis for knowledge is under a fair amount of stress at this point, and I think it’s essential that we don’t let that continue.”

- Dr. William Lovis

“This is an opportunity to assist in working effectively to bring to the public the notion that science is actually useful, and something that can benefit their lives, rather than something that you undermine and see as more of an ideological problem. Providing a better understanding of science to the public will assist in moving us in this more positive direction.” ■

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