



## Department of Geography Newsletter

### University of Alabama

Box 870322 Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0322, Vol. 3, Fall 2006

#### Chair's Greeting

The past year has been memorable on several accounts. First, we successfully hired two new faculty members. Dr. David Brommer joined us as an Assistant Professor this fall having recently completed his doctorate. Dr. Brommer received his BS degree from Mississippi State University in Geoscience, and both his M.A. and Ph.D. from Arizona State University. Dr. Brommer's specialty is climatology, and he will teach GY 101 (Atmospheric Processes and Patterns) and three upper division or graduate level courses in climatology. This semester he is teaching "Climatology" and in the spring he will offer a new course entitled "Boundary Layer Climates."

Second, the Department hired Dr. Amanda Espy-Brown as a full time instructor. Dr. Espy-Brown has been teaching part time for the Department for the past few years, and we are delighted to have her as a full time contributor to our programs. Dr. Espy-Brown received her M.S. degree from the University of Alabama, and completed her Ph.D. at the University of Florida in 1998. While Dr. Espy-Brown will primarily teach sections of GY 102 (Landscape Processes and Patterns) and GY 105 (World Regional Geography), she will offer one upper division course each fall semester in either cultural or medical geography.

With these two new hires, the Department will include twelve instructional faculty, the largest number in the history of our program. Notably, half of these faculty have been hired in the past six years including Dr. Weber, Dr. Appiah-Opoku, Dr. Boulton and Professor Wilson in addition to Dr. Brommer and Dr. Espy-Brown. I am particularly pleased that these hires have greatly strengthened our physical geography program, which now has expertise in biogeography, geomorphology and climatology. The addition of Dr. Appiah-Opoku, Dr. Weber and Professor Wilson has also greatly expanded and strengthened our planning related course offerings.

Our Graduate Program has also grown. In each of the past two years we have been given two additional GTA positions for our physical geography labs which has increased our total to ten. We also have graduate students working in Land Management, Real Estate, the Map Library, the Computer Lab, and Cartographic Research Laboratory. In total, we now have 20 M.S. students occupying funded positions. Notably, our graduate student community has expanded significantly and is now approaching 40 when both full time and part time students are considered.

We have heard from a number of former students in the past few months about new jobs, with many of these being full time academic positions. Kat O'Reilly has been hired by Texas A&M University, Mark De Socio has been hired by the University of Akron, Tim Kidd has been hired by Old Dominion University, Maria Garcia-Quijano has been hired by Florida Atlantic University, and Kelly Allen has been hired by Tulsa Community College. We extend our congratulations to our former students, and now colleagues.

As many of you know, we also had a tragedy in the Department last spring with the death of Professor David Weaver. Professor Weaver was a mainstay in the Department for nearly three decades. He served as chair for thirteen years, was critical to the development of the department's programs, was an excellent mentor and a great friend. Many former students and colleagues have asked if we will create a fund or award in his honor. A committee was formed this past spring to discuss how we might honor Professor Weaver's contributions to the Department, the University of Alabama and the discipline of geography in general. You will find a notice about the committee's plans on page ten of this Newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Professor Webster

## Faculty and Staff



**Seth Appiah-Opoku**

I have just entered my fifth year as assistant professor at UA. A number of significant milestones were recorded in my work this past year. My book chapter titled “Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Management in Africa: Evidence from Ghana” was published in *Africa’s Development in the Twenty-first Century* (Ashgate Press). A manuscript titled “The Need for Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Stewardship: An African Example”, was re-submitted to the *Journal of Cultural Geography*. I was a guest speaker at the University of South Alabama, under the AAG Visiting Geographical Scientist Program, on January 26, 2006. In February 2006, I presented a paper titled “Campus Innovations: Experiential Learning in Ghana and Implications for Study Abroad Programs in Mexico” at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Association for Academic Programs in Mexico and the Caribbean, at Cuetzalan, Mexico. I also presented a paper titled “African Economic Integration in the New World Order: Prospects and Challenges” at the AAG Annual Meeting in Chicago, March 7-11, 2006.

My research continues to focus on ecotourism in protected areas. It was the focus of my NSF funding application in January 2006. I continue to pursue NSF funding.

I granted an interview to *Alabama Public Radio* on June 28, 2006. The focus was on Ghana’s participation in World Cup Soccer. Also, my planning advice on sewer systems was published in *The Mobile Register* on January 27, 2006. In addition, I granted another interview to *Science News Magazine* regarding my work on ecotourism at the Kakum National Park in Ghana. This appeared in the September 2006 issue of the magazine.

I continue to serve on the Diversity Committee, as *alternate* on Faculty Senate, and a committee member on the AAST program committee. I also served as the Geography Department’s coordinator for the Adopt-a-Mile Program. Finally, I continue to teach planning courses, geography of Africa, and a study abroad course in Ghana titled “Field Studies in Africa”



**M.A. Lisa Boulton**

As the department’s resident geomorphologist, the past academic year was a busy but fruitful year. Melissa Mayo, my first graduate student as a professor, graduated in May 2006, and my current graduate student, Anne Wynn, is making excellent progress toward completing her degree. I made research presentations at AAG, SE-DAAG, and attended the Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium. My research continues to focus on long-term changes in sediment dynamics related to human and natural disturbance. I am excited to report that I recently expanded my research activities into other applied aspects of geomorphology and have begun a research project with biologists from UA to examine geomorphological controls on bivalve species diversity in the Bogue Chitto River of Alabama. The bivalve research is being partially supported by a UA-Research Advisory Committee Grant I was awarded in April 2006. In the upcoming academic year I will be teaching Introductory Physical Geography, Geomorphology, and a new Soil Science class.



**David Brommer**

I arrived at the University of Alabama having received my Ph.D. in Geography at Arizona State University in May 2006. I am a climatologist, with interests in climate change, human-climate interactions, and synoptic climatology. These research interests have led me to study cave climates in tropical environments, severe local storms, pollution, and mortality related to extreme weather events. My dissertation focused on spatial and temporal variations of precipitation duration throughout the conterminous United States, under the supervision of Dr. Randall Cerveny. I am currently extending my dissertation research to analyze variations in precipitation characteristics in the southeast United States. This academic year I am teaching Principles of Physical Geography I, Foundations in Climatology, and Boundary Layer Climates. Having completed my B.S. in Geosciences from Mississippi State University, I am enjoying my return to the Southeast!



**Hobson Bryan**

The Department has an air of excitement these days with new faculty and record graduate student enrollment. My office, sharing space on the third floor with the Map Library, labs, and graduate student offices, is a particularly nice place to share the vibrancy of the enterprise. This past year marked completion of projects concerning such diverse topic as tourism promotion and social, economic and environmental justice impacts. The latter ranged from proposed fishing net bans to disposal of high-level nuclear waste. I am particularly proud of co-authoring two book chapters with our former student, Susanne Rose in *Water Allocation in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia: New Issues, New Methods, New Models*. Susanne is a Ph.D. student at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. One of the editors is Aaron Wolf, who was a member of our faculty before going to Oregon State University a few years ago. During the coming year I will be offering "Social Impact Assessment" for the first time in several years. We have made what was formerly exclusively a graduate level course into a combined upper level undergraduate- graduate offering. I will also be teaching "Environment and Society" in the fall.



**Amanda Espy-Brown**

This year has held many changes for me as I have transitioned from working with a local non-profit and teaching part-time to becoming a full-time instructor this fall. I will continue to teach introductory physical geography courses, medical geography and cultural geography. I will now also teach regional geography each semester in both day and night classes. I am also looking forward to serving on graduate committees and to working with some graduate students on directed research. A highlight for me over the past several years has been to teach mini-courses on geography and geology through local public schools, the homeschool association and now Boy Scouts. My research interests include hunger and nutrition issues in the developing world and gender in development.



**Luoheng Han**

I continue my remote sensing and GIS modeling of water quality work in the Gulf of Mexico and Tallapoosa watershed. In June, we, in collaboration with Dr. Dick Snyder at University of West Florida, conducted a successful field study/data collection over the Pensacola Bay using an airborne hyperspectral imaging sensor operated by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I published two refereed articles in the *International Journal of Remote Sensing* (one was authored by myself and the other was co-authored with Karen Jordan). I presented the major results of the Tallapoosa watershed project in two national and one state conferences. In addition to the two remote sensing and one GIS course, I also taught a summer interim China course in 2006. This course was, for the first time, offered jointly by the College of Arts and Sciences and Culverhouse College of Commerce through the Capstone International Center. A total of eleven students and two professors spent fourteen days in China. Because of its success, we will again offer this course in 2007. Finally, I continue as supervisor of the departmental GIS/Remote Sensing and computer Lab. I also continue my volunteer work to serve as webmaster for our departmental web page, which I created and have been maintaining since 1998. Last year was the tenth anniversary of my position as advisor for UA's Association of Chinese Students and Scholars.



**Jeff Richetto**

Upon starting my 27th year at the University of Alabama my teaching and research interests continue to revolve around urban planning and regional/economic development. For the past five years I have taught a Global Issues course in the University's Freshman Seminar Program, introducing new students to the Capstone and helping them to 'acclimate' to a university level educational environment. Over the past three years I have participated

as an AP reader for high school Human Geography courses, sponsored by ETS, as well as continue to serve on the College Board as an AP Human Geography consultant. I am still serving as Chair of the University's Master Campus Plan committee. There have been and will continue to be over the next several years major structural, architectural, and landscape modifications to the UA campus. When completed, the University will be dramatically transformed. Finally, I am now a proud grandfather of three, recently adding our first granddaughter (Isabella Maria).



**David Shankman**

The past year my research continued to focus on bottomland hardwood ecosystems in the southeastern Coastal Plain. I am currently working on pre-European floodplain forest reconstruction with Justin Hart, who received his MS degree from Alabama and is now in the Ph.D. geography program at the University of Tennessee. My second research project focuses on flood prediction and flood management and planning along the middle Yangtze River in China. This work includes examinations of (1) the relationship of El Nino/ENSO to rainfall and (2) historic levee failures during severe floods in this region. As part of this project, I am looking at the effects of landuse/vegetation changes on rivers in the upper Yantze River watershed in western China. This is the third year of my appointment as Adjunct Professor at the Key Laboratory for Poyang Lake Studies at the Jiangxi Normal University in China. I continue to teach courses in physical geography. This is my tenth year serving as the Environmental Science Program Director.



**Joe Weber**

The past year I have been working on the topic of urban sprawl, and how it increases the time it takes people in Alabama to commute to work. I presented this at several conferences, and saw there is a lot of interest in the

topic of sprawl (even if nobody can quite agree on how to define it). This year I'm getting back into the topic of accessibility, and planning to use travel diary data sets to calculate space-time accessibility in several cities. I'm also going to pursue some network analysis topics, including the growth and planning of transport networks. I taught a new class, Regional and Urban Transportation Systems for the first time, which was a lot of fun. It covered a wide range of transport geography topics, from network analysis to roadside landscapes. I have several students graduating this fall, including two writing theses, which is keeping me busy. This year I will be presenting my research in conferences in Tampa, West Virginia, and San Francisco. I am looking forward to getting to visit my home state of California, and hopefully I will get to see the desert again.



**Bobbi Webster**

This academic year marks my eleventh year as a full-time instructor at UA. I continue to teach during the day and in our evening program. My classroom time is devoted entirely to teaching introductory physical geography this academic year. I continue to serve as the academic advisor for all undergraduate geography students and will begin this fall serving in the same capacity for all environmental science majors.



**Jerry Webster**

The past year has been a busy though rewarding one. I continue to divide my time between my duties as chair, teaching, research and service. During the summer I served as an expert witness in a public housing discrimination case in Baltimore and a districting case in Mississippi. My side was successful in the Mississippi case which pertained to a state senate district, and I am optimistic about the decision in the Baltimore case which should be handed down by the end of the year. I have been co-editing a book on urban geography with George Pomeroy at Shippensburg which is quite close to completion. I expect it will appear in spring 2007. I also served as the guest editor for a special issue of

the *Southeastern Geographer* on the political geography of the South which will appear in May 2007. Last fall I was elected President of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG), and those duties have also kept me busy. I recently learned I have been selected as an Outstanding Alumni for 2006 by the Alumni Association at Western Washington University. I will travel to Bellingham, Washington for the award ceremony in early November. Finally, I am very pleased that two of my MS students completed their theses this past year and are now enrolled in Ph.D. programs. Daniel McGowin is working on his doctorate at Florida State University, and Heath Robinson is working on his Ph.D. at SUNY-Buffalo.



**Bobby Wilson**

Most of my attention continues to be focused on a book-length manuscript concerning “race and consumption,” which I hope to complete this year and submit to a publisher. An invitation was extended to me to participate in the “Race, Ethnicity, and Place” Conference III to be held November 1-4, 2006 in San Marcos, Texas. My presentation will reflect my ongoing work on “race and the geography of consumption.” A chapter entitled “The Historical Spaces of African American” will appear this year in *Contemporary Ethnic Geographies*, edited by Ines M. Miyares and Christopher Arrieiss (Roman Littlefield). Several book reviews were published that appeared in *Labor History*, *Urban Geography*, and the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. I continue to modify and add to my course on “Political Economy and Race in the South.” For the first time, I am teaching a large, mainly freshman, course on the “Principle of Human Geography,” which I am enjoying. Along with my teaching and research responsibilities, I will also be chairing the Geography Program Review Committee.

## Placenames Research Center



**Linda Watson and Tom Kallsen**

We have really been busy at the Placenames Research Center. We now have two USGS grants related to placenames: one is an ongoing project concerning important urban areas in the United States that may potentially be high risk targets in terms of homeland security and the other is for the State of New York. Last year, we began year three of our four year grant to update the US Geological Survey’s Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) database for the forty-six top ranked cities in the country as determined by the National GeoSpatial Intelligence Agency. Since beginning this grant, we have located and processed tens of thousands of new names to add to the GNIS. Also, last April we were awarded another four year contract to update the GNIS records for the state of New York. The New York grant allowed us to hire a graduate research assistant for one year. Nathan Sills, a first year graduate student in the Geography Department, has been helping us on this contract since mid August.

The New York grant marked a milestone for us because it was the twelfth USGS GNIS related grant that the Geography department has received to date. It’s hard to believe, but the Map Library has been the official Eastern Region Placenames Research Center for fifteen years now, and we have been conducting USGS funded research related to placenames for over twenty years.

## Map Library

### Tom Kallsen

The Map Library centered its focus last year on the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service. We are supporting a number of research projects on campus, most notably in Biology and the Geographic Names Information System. We are also a prime contributor to the Alabama Maps website. In February, the library sponsored the “Road Scholar” event for the middle school division of Sci-

ence Olympiad. We are also involved with a number of companies in economic development projects, with our client base coming from such places as Austin, Texas and Lake Charles, Louisiana.

## Cartographic Research Laboratory

### Craig Remington

August marks the beginning of my twenty third year as “the map guy” in the department. My staff finds me to be of a surly nature. To this, I remind them that I have been working here longer than they have been alive and that I have always been surly. As the end of the semester academic burn-out descends upon my young cartographers, I remind them that I have been going to school every year since 1959. That seems to make them feel better.

The Cartographic Research Lab is alive and well. Folks still need maps. They may not know of what, but they know they need them right away. I have been blessed by the advancement of digital technology in solving cartographic problems and rewarded with students that know how it is used. I’m glad somebody knows. I have had a cell phone for several years, but I don’t know the phone number. When it rings, it has to be my wife, and I can approach the conversation in the proper frame of mind. I love technology.

We have lots of new toys, principally because the old toys broke. I could write of new scanners, printer, computers and the like, but our favorite new toy is an air conditioner. No more sweat dripping from the brow onto the keyboard. We can dehumidify the place to a point where we are thinking of charging extra for curing our products before delivery.

The Cart Lab Development Fund has been augmented by the staff collecting loose change as found on the ground around campus. The student ID cards now also serve as a debit cards, thus cash is becoming increasingly difficult to stumble upon. Any alumnus who wishes to spread the joy of the financial success brought about through their degree in Geography is welcome to contact me on my cell phone. We promise to emblazon a mouse with your name, elegantly inscribed on drafting tape with a Sharpie, as a token of our appreciation. Thus, the memorable years of your time at Alabama will always be in our hand.

## Recent and Forthcoming Publications

**Appiah-Opoku, S.** (2006). “Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Management in Africa: Evidence from Ghana.” In Konadu-Agyemang, K., and Panford, K. (eds.), pp. 205-216. *Africa’s Development in the Twenty-first Century: Pertinent Socio-economic and Development Issues*, Hampshire, England: Ashgate.

**Appiah-Opoku, S.** (2007) Review of *Urbanization and African Cultures*, by Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*. 41 (1): forthcoming.

Rose, Susanne and **C. Hobson Bryan**, 2006. "Stakeholder Analysis and Social Impacts of Water Reallocation in the ACT and ACF Systems." In *Interstate Water Allocation in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia: New Issues, New Methods, New Models*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp. 159-179.

**Bryan, C. Hobson** and Susanne Rose. 2006. "Stakeholders and Issues in the ACT and ACF Systems." In *Interstate Water Allocation in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia*, edited by Jeffrey L. Jordan and Aaron T. Wolf. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp. 30-48.

**Bryan, C. Hobson**, 2006. Review of Seth Appiah-Opoku, *The Need for Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Impact Assessment: The Case of Ghana*, *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 26: 600-601.

Bronststein, D., D. Baer, **H. Bryan**, J. DiMento, and S. Narayan, 2005. letter critiquing the National Environmental Policy Act, *Science*, 307: 674.

Corley, C., M. Galbraith, and **H. Bryan**, 2005. “Strengthening Community in Higher Education: Different Approaches among Living-Learning Communities,” *The McNair Scholars Journal*, 5: 69-84.

**Bryan, Hobson**, “Recollections,” in Rabel Burdge (ed.), *An Oral History of the First Twenty-Five Years of the International Association for Impact Assessment*, pp. 14-15. IAIA, Fargo, ND, 2005.

- Han, L.** (2005), "Estimating chlorophyll-a concentration using first derivative spectra in coastal water," *International Journal of Remote Sensing*, Vol. 26(23): 5235-5244.
- Han, L.** and Jordan, K. (2005), "Measuring algal chlorophyll concentration in Pensacola Bay, Florida using Landsat ETM+ data," *International Journal of Remote Sensing*, Vol. 26(23): 5245-5254.
- Shankman, D.**, Keim, B.D., and Song, J. 2006. "Flood frequency in China's Poyang Lake region: trends and teleconnections," *International Journal of Climatology* 26: 1255-1266.
- Hart, J.L. and **Shankman, D.** 2005. "Disjunct eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) stands at its southern range boundary," *Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society* 132: 602-612.
- Sultana, Selima, and **Joe Weber.** forthcoming. "An Approach to Defining and Mapping Residential Sprawl and its Implications for Journey-to-Work Patterns," *Professional Geographer*.
- Weber, Joe,** Selima Sultana, and Isabelle Maret. 2006. "Urban Sprawl, Commuting, and Access to Public Transportation in the Southeast." *Papers of the Applied Geography Conference*. 29: 282-291.
- Weber, Joe.** 2006. "Reflections on the Future of Accessibility," *Journal of Transport Geography* 14: 399-400.
- McCall, Andy and **Joe Weber.** 2005. "Predicting Attendance at Southeastern Amusement Parks Using Accessibility and Amenity Based Models," *The Geographical Bulletin* 47: 45-59.
- Chapman, Thomas; Leib, Jonathan, and **Webster, Gerald R.** 2007, "Race, the Creative Class, and Political Geographies of Same Sex Marriage in Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer*, forthcoming.
- Webster, Gerald R.;** Bowman, Jerrod; McGowin, Daniel and Robinson, Heath. 2007, "Research on the Political Geography of the South," *Southeastern Geographer*, forthcoming.
- Webster, Gerald R.** 2007, "Voting Rights and Social Justice in the South," *Southeastern Geographer*, forthcoming.
- Leib, Jonathan and **Webster, Gerald R.** forthcoming, "Electoral Districts," *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Edited by R. Kitchin and N. Thrift, London: Elsevier.
- Pomeroy, George and **Webster, Gerald R.** editors 2007, *Global Perspectives on Urbanization*, New York: University Press of America, forthcoming.
- Webster, Gerald R.** and Leib, Jonathan I. 2007, "The Confederate Battle Flag and the Neo-Confederate Movement in the South," in *The Neo-Confederate Movement in the United States*, Edited by Euan Hague, Heidi Beirich and Edward Sebesta, University of Texas Press, forthcoming.
- Leib, Jonathan and **Webster, Gerald R.** 2006. "District Composition and State Legislative Votes on the Confederate Battle Emblem." *Journal of Race and Policy*. 2: 53-75.
- Webster, Gerald R.** 2006, "Sports, Community, Nationalism and the International State System," in *The Geography-Sports Connection: Using Sports to Teach Geography*, pp. 33-46. Edited by Lisa DeChano and Fred Shelley, Pathways Series No. 33, Jacksonville, AL: National Council for Geographic Education.
- Webster, Gerald R.** 2006, "Political Geography," in *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, pp. 362-366. Edited by Barney Warf, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wilson, Bobby M.** 2006. "The Historical Spaces of African Americans," in *Contemporary Ethnic Geographies in America*, pp. 71-92. Edited by Ines M. Miyares and Christopher Airrieiss, Lanham, Maryland: Roman and Littlefield.
- Wilson, Bobby M.** 2006. "Review Essay: Unmaking Goliath," *Urban Geography* 26 (4): 283-85.
- Wilson, Bobby** 2006. "The Most Segregated City in America: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980," *H-Urban Book Review*.
- Wilson, Bobby** 2005. "Black Workers' Struggle for Equality in Birmingham," *Labor History* 46: 539-42.

## Attention Former Graduates

We enjoy having former students discuss their experiences since graduation with our current students and faculty. If you are interested in providing a presentation to the department, please contact Professor Webster at (205) 348-5047 or by email at [gwebster@bama.ua.edu](mailto:gwebster@bama.ua.edu).

## Graduate Student Recruiting Day

The Department will hold an open house for student considering a Masters degree on Friday, November 10th, 2006. The open house will begin at approximately 11:00, with lunch being served. Students will meet the faculty and have tours of the Cartographic Research Laboratory, Map Library, Placenames Research Center, and Computer/GIS/Remote Sensing Laboratories. We expect these tours to conclude in late afternoon. To insure our lunch order is sufficient, please call Dr. Gerald R. Webster at (205) 348-5047 or email him at [gwebster@bama.ua.edu](mailto:gwebster@bama.ua.edu).

## Former Graduate Steve Darby

Former undergraduate and graduate student Steve Darby, returned to Tuscaloosa briefly this summer while away from his teaching duties at Shanghai High School in China. During his teaching breaks he spends a great deal of time traveling throughout eastern Asia. He has traveled to Cambodia, Tibet, and visited the Great Wall. He sent us this picture of the city skyline.



## Kenny Gilbert's Ghana Adventure

I love seeing and doing new things, be it across the street, or across the globe. This past summer I had just that opportunity with Dr. Appiah-Opoku's "Alabama in Ghana" program. This is a program I had wanted to for a number of years, but had neither the time nor the money to do so, so when both came available in December of 2005, I jumped at the opportunity. Five months, quite a bit of money and eight separate vaccinations later (Hepatitis A&B, Polio, Tetanus, Yellow Fever, Meningitis, Malaria and Typhoid Fever) I was on my way to Ghana on May 24th.

I did not know what to expect. I had traveled out of the country before to Japan, and while Japan is culturally different from home, it is just similar enough for me to feel comfortable from the moment the plane landed. But I expected that Ghana would be a totally different experience from Japan.



People ask me what I did in Ghana. That is a very loaded question, to be sure. I answer, "A little bit of everything." It really is hard to pin down what we did in just a few sentences since everyday was almost always something totally different than the day before. We spent a lot of time on a bus traveling across the country on interstate grade highways and bumpy dirt roads alike—mostly the latter it seemed. We visited historic sights such as the Elmina Slave Castle where millions of slaves were shipped to the New World during the slave trade, the Akosombo Dam which forms the largest artificial lake (Lake Volta) in the world, a gold mine in the gold rich Ashanti region, city markets, national parks, traditional religious ceremonies, artisan com-



munities, and so on. If you can name it, we probably did it.

From the moment we landed in the warm and humid environment (not unlike Alabama at that time of year) I was amazed by the friendliness of virtually everyone in the entire country. Some of it seemed insincere—mainly in the city markets—but when we would visit people who were not trying to sell us something, Ghanaians were the most friendly, open and, by and large, happiest people I had ever had the pleasure of coming across.

Our group of fourteen left Ghana on June 11th after nearly three amazing weeks in the country. It was a bittersweet moment for all. We had all come to love the country, each for different reasons, but it would be good to be going back home. We all took away fond memories of Ghana and I am sure any one of us would jump at the opportunity to go again, and would recommend that anyone who had the opportunity and want to go on this trip to do so. It was a lot of hard work, to be sure, but the trip was worth every moment and every penny.

Kenny Gilbert is a graduate student in the Geography Department. He participated in the "Alabama in Ghana" program during the summer of 2006. He graduated with a B.A. in Geography in May 2004, and is expected to receive his M.S. in May 2007.



## In Memoriam



### Professor David C. Weaver

Our friend, colleague, and long-time leader, Professor David C. Weaver died in Tuscaloosa, Alabama on April 3, 2006, at the age of 63. Born in Dudley, England, David Weaver received his BA degree in geography from the University of Manchester in 1964. He pursued graduate work in geography at the University of Florida, receiving his MA in 1967 and his Ph.D. in 1972. In 1980 he added a Masters in Community Planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Professor Weaver taught at West Georgia College from 1970 through 1977, moving to the University of Alabama in 1977 as Associate Professor. He was promoted to Professor in 1982, and became departmental chair in 1987, a role he played for 13 years. After stepping down from the chair's position, Weaver continued to be an active contributor to departmental operations and a mentor to undergraduates, graduate students and faculty alike. He made substantial contributions to the development of the department's night program, teaching a wide array of different courses.

David Weaver's teaching interests and abilities were broad and included historical geography, the geography of Europe, the geography of the Middle East, the geography of the American South, the geography of National Parks, introductory physical geography, climatology, geography for teachers, and a wide array of planning courses. Although Weaver touched the lives of thousands of college students, he was equally if not more known for his efforts on behalf of K-12 teachers. Beginning in 1990, he provided annual teacher workshops to improve geographic and environmental education to teachers in conjunction with the Alabama Geographic Alliance, and Legacy Inc., Partners in Environmental Educa-

tion.

David Weaver contributed greatly to the discipline through his professional service to organizations such as the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE), the Alabama Academy of Science, the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association and the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG). In 1992 he was given the Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award by the NCGE, and in 1997 he was given the Outstanding Service Award by SE-DAAG.

Professor Weaver also had a long research record with publications in the *Journal of Tropical Geography*, the *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, the *Southeastern Geographer*, the *Professional Geographer*, and the *Journal of Geography*, among others. He was also the author of several books and monographs, technical reports and maps. David will be greatly missed in the Department, College, University, Tuscaloosa community, and discipline of geography.

### Professor David C. Weaver Memorial Fund

The Department of Geography has established a memorial fund in honor of David Weaver. The fund, at its initial stage of growth, will generate an annual cash stipend for a Department of Geography student's graduate research. The award will be based on the quality of the student's thesis or non-thesis paper proposal. Please make donations directly to the Department or through the University's Capital Campaign program (designating the gift for the Department of Geography David C. Weaver Memorial Fund). Make checks payable to: University of Alabama

**Department of Geography  
University of Alabama  
P.O. Box 870322  
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## Where are They Now?



**Rob George**

Since graduation in 1996, I have worked as a geographer for Blockbuster, Sonic, and now Wendy's. In my current job, I do all of the spatial analysis for Wendy's. Much of what I do for Wendy's is related to site selection. I have written spatial models to predict sales and impact when real estate is looking at a new site. I provide maps and data to help determine the penetration of Wendy's units in markets for site optimization, relocation, new build, and other real estate decisions. I also work closely with the marketing department helping them determine which new products to roll out and to what areas of the country, how to target direct mail, and determining the look and feel of a Wendy's customer. Another interesting project that I worked on recently was geographic scheduling software. We created a new group of field auditors who are to visit every one of our stores in the US and Canada each year. We needed a way to schedule the store visits, so I created a program that would schedule trips to keep them from jumping around in their territories and optimize their travel. It takes about 30 minutes to schedule every store in the system instead of about one day to plan each of the 35 territories.

Wendy's recently finished a company wide reorganization. I played a spatial role in determining the new regional and divisional boundaries. I say a spatial role because the use of geography made the process go much smoother. We used GIS to help determine the regional and divisional boundaries, reassign stores, assign people to stores, and much more.

I enjoy spreading geography throughout Wendy's. It is amazing how quickly people will put down a spreadsheet if they can get a map.

On a personal side, I live in Columbus, OH with my wife Bonnie and two daughters Abby (6) and Lindsay (2). I spend most of my free time at home playing with the girls. Nothing is more rewarding to me than watching my kids grow up. Our family project last summer was building a tree house in the back yard. It was certainly "a family" project.

Roll Tide!



**Melanie Pelham**

Since graduating from the University, I took a job with the Montgomery Water Works and Sanitary Sewer Board in Montgomery, Alabama and have been there eight years. The Board provides water and sewer services to over 230,000 people in Montgomery County and also provides water to surrounding water utilities. I was originally hired by Montgomery Water Works as a GIS Analyst for its Environmental Services Department. My responsibilities include providing maps and analysis to assist the department and the laboratory. I also develop and maintain databases for water quality information collected at surrounding waterbodies. This information is used to understand more about our local water resources, land use practices and their impact on the water, and how to improve (or preserve) those areas needing attention. As a continuation of this, I am also involved with the Alabama Water Watch (AWW) program. It is a citizen volunteer water quality monitoring program covering all the major river basins of Alabama. I am certified by AWW as a Water Chemistry trainer for those volunteers who wish to monitor streams in their local area and also coordinate the local AWW monitoring group, the Tri-River Region Water Watch. These responsibilities continue, but, as with most jobs, duties evolve and change as time passes. My attention is now spent more on public outreach and education and producing and completing regulatory reporting.

One of the most fulfilling, and time consuming, activities is helping coordinate the Montgomery County Water Festival. This two-day event was started in 2001 to educate Montgomery County fourth graders from both public and private schools on water quality issues, water conservation, and the importance of water to everyday life through the use of hands-on learning activities. Since that time, over 15,000 students have participated.

Additionally, the Montgomery Water Works is required annually to produce and distribute to our customers a report detailing information about the sources of our water and quality of water we provide. I am responsible for producing content for this report and assisting with the layout, publication, and distribution of the report to our customers.

Personally, things have also changed a little since leaving Tuscaloosa. Tyrone and I now live in Prattville and have two wonderful children, Garrett (age 6) and Cameron (age 2).

**FALL 2005, SPRING AND SUMMER  
2006 GRADUATES**

**MS Degrees in Geography**

Kenneth Scott Farmer  
Melissa Louise Mayo  
Daniel Austin McGowin  
Edward Heath Robinson

**BA/BS Degrees in Geography**

Jennifer L. Baker  
Timothy Cook  
Damien M. Franklin  
Blake B. Goodsell  
William Radford Pruett  
Chris Riseling  
Theodore Seale  
Michael E. Stevens  
Wiley N. Swain, III  
Ryan Thompson  
Angie LaNell Watkins  
John C. Watkins

**BS Degrees in Environmental Science**

Nathan P. Bryant  
Willis Scott Estis  
James H. Franks  
Angela B. Harber  
Stephen Gregory Kone  
Annalyn Victoria McRae  
William A. Paddock  
Tyler James Sansing

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