

TITAN OUTCROP: NEWSLETTER

Where'd All the Time Go



Above: Dr. Karantanellis Engineering Geology class in Mission Viejo Field Trip April 2026

Hello Esteemed Alumni and Friends!

Wow! Our last newsletter posted in 2018 ... and so much has happened since. We've had several faculty retire, lost a legend in Dr. Prem Saint (more details inside), and hired a whole bunch of new faculty. We survived COVID. A big THANK YOU to Dr. Adam Woods who started as chair the same year that COVID hit. You saw us through some tough times, and we emerged a stronger department—thanks for a great 6 years, Adam!!

Our department continues to evolve to best meet the challenges of the future and the needs of our students. Our BS continues to produce Orange County's best and brightest geologists. Our BA in Earth Sciences provides an alternative path through the major preparing students for a variety of job opportunities that offer greater employment flexibility. Our MS remains strong with continued support from the College and University.

We have a wonderful group of faculty, excelling as educators, researchers, and department colleagues. Our greatest struggle is keeping the faculty meetings focused amongst the laughs, the playful jibes, and general hilarity.

We also have an amazing front office. In my year as chair, it has become more apparent than ever that our department would cease to function without Brian, Peter, Mary, and Christin. You are all saints! Overall, I think our department is as healthy as it has ever been in my 24 years here. Stop by and say "Hi." We love seeing our alumni.

My final words ... we are celebrating our 60th Anniversary with a weekend extravaganza October 2-4, 2026. Details will come out over the course of the summer. Block your calendars now. This will be an event to remember—friends, family, faculty, staff, and lots of laughs. See you there!

- Dr. Matthew Kirby, Chair

Alumni Spotlight

Tom's Journey from Earth Science to the Vineyard

Since graduating in 1975 with a BA in Earth Science. The breadth of studies required at that time for the BA has provided me with multiple rewarding career opportunities and amazing life adventures that began with natural resource exploitation, transitioned into environmental remediation, adapted to government administration and finally championed conservation and habitat protection. Along the way it also enabled me to volunteer as a naturalist on the waters, in the forests and along the beaches of the west coast, and now in retirement it provides a much keener appreciation of terroir for my interest in wine. All things I would have missed had not Drs. Bob Lepper and John Cooper coerced me into changing majors (actually, it may have been the discovery that I could get credit for drinking beer in the desert!)

I was a curious but not very rigorous student, and expected that a BA might lead to graduate studies in environmental sciences, rather than the traditional MS or PhD in geology. I had grown up traveling to many western national parks and thought my earth science destiny lay in a park service 'Smokey Bear' hat and green pickle suit. But the wind down of the Vietnam conflict produced so many vets with service points that it made my federal application irrelevant, so I followed the guidance of Dr. Prem Saint's work study program and took assignments as a soils tech and mapping field assistant for alternate experiences. Gratefully, Dr. Margaret Woyski (quite remarkably) recommended me to an oil service industry recruiter and everything changed. Who knew that the oil patch paid those kind of wages?

But I recall that it was that broad exposure to geology, hydrology, oceanography, meteorology and earth history that the BA provided, and in the absence of a formal field camp, the experiences of the many field trips organized by Drs. Cooper, Saint, Maloney and Buckley, that enabled most of my significant career pivots. I should note that much of my later career was influenced by my MBA. I was once told by my mentor at Dowell, "you're good at dirt

Tom Kartrude

**BA Earth Science
1975**



and dead things, but we need you to run a profitable business, too." The BA combined with the MBA provided a path that led me across the country and to some far corners of the world, but while living back in SoCal during the late 80's it was my privilege to serve on the CSUF Council of NSM Alumni and as Treasurer of the CSUF Alumni Association.

To this day I read articles and papers in the AAPG Explorer and Bulletin and wonder 'what if?'. But I can also say that after 30+ years of bouncing about I ended up managing one of the nation's largest urban wilderness preserves and had that 'Smokey Bear' hat hanging on the wall after all. And I remain a bit confused by critics that claim to 'taste' the minerality in their wines.

Tom Kartrude, Class of 1975



Above left to right: Richard Schmidt, Don Schaefer, Dr. John Cooper, Al Ballog, Tom Kartrude, and Jack Bergeron



Joe Roe
BS Geology 2001

ALUMNI OF THE YEAR: 2025

Fill a room with geologists, and Joe Roe will stand out, not just because he is usually a head taller than everyone around, but because of his big and gregarious personality. I can't imagine my time as an undergraduate geology major at CSUF without "Big Joe" around, making everyone laugh and asking great geology questions.

Joe was part of a non-traditional group of students that arrived in the department in 1998. Several of us had spent time in the military, many years in community colleges, and were somewhere looking for a new career. Most of us were in our late 20s and somehow found our way to geology. After leaving the U.S. Navy, Joe headed to community college to become a firefighter, but fortunately for our consulting community, he took some geology courses and realized that geology was his path.

After graduating from CSUF in 2001, Joe began his professional career as a geotechnical geologist with Converse Consultants. After graduating, Joe had the opportunity to go right back to CSUF and drill and log the geotechnical boring for a new parking structure (he could not get enough of us).

In the last couple of years, Joe has been a regular at the South Coast Geological Society (SCGS) meetings and field trips. Through these events, everyone has realized how important Joe is in the Southern California geologic consulting community. Over the last two decades, Joe has developed professional relationships with many important geologists and firms across our state. He has also spent his career mentoring young geologists, many from CSUF and CSULB. As a Senior Principal Geologist for Leighton Group, Joe has become an expert in many geologic investigations, including Alquist-Priolo fault studies, mass grading, drill logging, test trenching, and micro-tunneling. Results from a fault study in which he was the engineering geologist of record changed how the California Geological Survey (CGS) interprets the geologic fault model of the area, as evidenced by CGS's approval of his report. Joe holds two California professional licenses, Professional Geologist (PG) and Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG).

As a member of the geology community of southern California, Joe has spent the last couple of years volunteering with SCGS. During 2022, he worked with the officers of SCGS to plan the annual field trip to Havasu Lake and the Parker area of Arizona and eastern California. Earlier that year, Joe also presented the findings of his investigations of a potential fault in western Los Angeles County in one of the monthly meetings of SCGS. At the beginning of 2023, Joe officially became the new President of SCGS and has begun working on this year's trip, which will give us insights into California's mining history and activities.

DR. PREM SAINT



Dr. Prem Kishor Saint, Professor Emeritus of Geological and Environmental Sciences, passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home surrounded by family in Laguna Niguel, California, at the age of 90.

Born in Peshawar, India, Prem's journey took him from India to Kenya in 1949 and eventually to the United States, where he earned advanced degrees at the University of London and the University of Minnesota. In 1972 he joined the faculty at California State University, Fullerton, where he taught for 32 years, founded the Hydrology Program, and led the beloved summer hydrology field camp in Mammoth Lakes. Students remember him rising before dawn to cook a hearty breakfast, always the first one up the mountain, arranging special fireside chats with Dave McCoy, the legendary founder of Mammoth Mountain, and effortlessly bringing the Eastern Sierra's geology and hydrology to life.

Beyond the campus, Prem lived with joyful energy and a lasting sense of wonder. A lifelong child at heart, he loved parks, playgrounds, (especially Disneyland) and all things nature and would whisk family members and visitors alike to these places along with Mount Baldy, Grand Canyon and Yosemite, to share the quiet magic he found in forests, rivers, and mountain air.

He treasured family trips across Europe, long hikes, e-bike rides, sunsets, tide pools, and explaining with enthusiasm how rocks and glaciers shaped the world around them. He devoured books on history, philosophy, spirituality, religion, fiction and hydrology—and always saved room to enjoy a sweet treat.

Prem's greatest joy was his family. When Mona and Shaila were teens, he filled the VW bus with Shaila and her giggling friends for midnight toilet-papering adventures and drove Mona and friends to the slopes when fresh powder fell, filled with joy.

In Loving Memory of Prem Kishor Saint, PhD December 25, 1934 – November 24, 2025

In later years, he loved hours of playing Splendor, Rummikub, ninety-nine, and other games with his family, always smiling and saying, “Just one more game.”

With his grandchildren, he loved, laughed, and played with boundless delight. Many of the grandchildren’s most treasured memories are of those adventures together with their Nanaji/Grandpa PK—hiking, climbing trees, biking, getting lost in nature, watching sunsets, and Christmas lights, and fully savoring in the present moment.

He loved attending the grandchildren’s matches, plays, performances, and especially graduations, because education meant so much to him and he believed deeply in encouraging their dreams.

A lifelong tennis/table-tennis player and yoga practitioner, he patiently passed on these practices to his children, who later traded their tennis racquets for pickleball paddles and embraced the competitive spirit he never quite shared. After doubles matches at Carbon Canyon Park, he would smile and say, “It doesn’t matter who won; it’s such a lovely morning.”

He also loved swimming, and swam as often as he could, with a final joyful swim with his family at his beloved Laguna Niguel community pool in September of this year.

In 2023, Prem published his memoir, *Wading in the River of Time*, celebrated with a book signing near the CSUF campus. The book reflects the gratitude, curiosity, and purpose that shaped his life through four continents.

He was the quintessential lifelong learner.

Prem is survived by his devoted wife of 64 years, Raksha (Riki); his children and their spouses—Sanjay and Veronica Saint (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Shaila Saint and Rob Ragland (Long Beach, California), and Mona Saint and Gerry Goldstein (Laguna Niguel, California), seven cherished grandchildren and a large extended family.

Students, colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family all say the same thing: Prem changed their lives. With kindness, patience, and love, he had a rare gift for seeing the best in people and guiding them gently toward their greatest selves.



He listened deeply, offered wise counsel with a smile, and shared knowledge with humility and encouragement.

Family, friends, colleagues, and generations of students will remember his warmth, generosity, curiosity, and irrepressible joy. His gentle and caring presence touched countless lives.

Prem lived fully and departed peacefully.

Our department will be forever grateful for Prem’s thoughtful contribution and enduring legacy.

Donations: It was his long-held wish to see the Prem K. Saint Hydrology Award fully endowed, ensuring that future generations of students could pursue the education he cherished at his beloved CSUF.

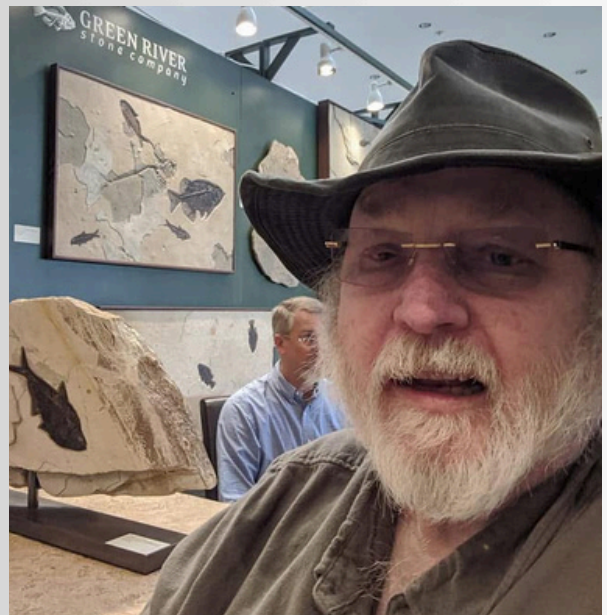
Celebrating and Remembering our Alum Mark Unruh



Mark Unruh was an Alumnus who graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Earth Science. Mark continued his education and graduated from California State University, Northridge with a Masters in Geology.

Mark was a California certified engineering geologist and hydrogeologist with extensive experience in site assessments, geotechnical investigations, and site characterizations focused on hydrogeology, structural geology, stratigraphy, and seismicity. Most recently he was serving as a Project Manager at Bhate since October 2018, Mark held similar positions at CB&I since February 2013 and at Shaw Environmental, Inc. from 2001 to 2013. Previous roles include Project Manager and Hydrogeologist at IT Corporation from 1984 to 2001 and Engineering Geologist at The IT Group. Mark specialized in geotechnical aspects of landfill and waste facility siting, design, construction, and remediation, with expertise in soil and slope stability analysis, fault assessment, and evaluation of site geologic hazards.

Mark was well regarded and well respected in his industry. Mark Unruh recently passed away in 2025 and he donated his rock and fossil collection to California State University, Fullerton. Mark loved school so much his family referred to him a professional student. His collection will help to continue to teach present and future geological students for years to come. CSUF Geological Sciences is profoundly thankful for his contribution.



ALUMNI UPDATES



Dr. James Kubicki
BS Earth Science
1983

(Above from right to left)

Dr. James Kubicki (1983 Alum), Dr. Candace Martin, and Dr. Mike Palin (1981 Alum)

Cathy Lash

BS Geology 1998



Cathy (Catherine) is working as a paleontologist (fossil preparator) for the North Dakota Geological Survey at the North Dakota Heritage Center & State Museum.

James Kubicki (Class of '83) had a good 2025. CSUF Geology alum Mike Palin and his wife Candace Martin who have been professors at the University of Otago most of their careers came by to visit UTEP on their summer tour of the Southwest. Jim was recognized for his achievements and service by the organizers of the Interfaces for Energy & the Environment Conference in May at Pacific Northwest National Labs. He is looking forward to a symposium at the American Chemical Society meeting in Atlanta this March “MolecularFrontiers and Interdisciplinary Pathways in Geochemistry: Honoring the Scientific Legacy of James D. Kubicki” to look back on 40 years of research and mentorship. His current interests are in promoting geothermal energy and the domestic mineral supply chain. The latter is coming to fruition as UTEP is restarting its Mining Engineering B.S. program after a 60 year hiatus. We look forward to being truly “Miners” again and years of collaboration between Earth, Environmental & Resource Sciences with Mining, Metallurgy and Materials in the College of Engineering.

ALUMNI UPDATES:



Adam Piestrzeniewicz

BS Geology 2012

with his wife Katie and their dog Millie

Adam Piestrzeniewicz

BS Geology 2012

Adam worked briefly in geotechnical consulting before completing an MS in Geology at the University of Cincinnati. Adam has since spent over 10 years working in environmental consulting as a geologist and hydrogeologist for Haley & Aldrich (Southern and Northern California), ERM (Northern California and Colorado), and HDR (Colorado). Adam is a Professional Geologist (CA) with experience in contaminated site investigation, characterization, and remediation as well as in groundwater resources. He is currently a Senior Hydrogeologist at HDR in Denver, CO where he supports EPASuperfund projects at historical mine and industrial sites, manages groundwater programs for energy clients with large coal combustion residual (CCR) programs, and consults on groundwater resource projects. Since moving to Colorado, Adam and his wife, Katie (also a geologist), have become avid skiers and house project DIYers. They enjoy traveling and exploring Colorado with their 3 year old Australian shepherd, Millie.

Jenifer Leidelmeijer

MS Geology, 2021

Jenifer is a Geologist and Laboratory Manager at the U.S. Geological Survey's Geosciences and Environmental Change Science Center, where she oversees laboratory operations and supports multidisciplinary research in sedimentology, geochemistry, geochronology, mineralogy, paleoseismology, paleoecology, and hydrology



ALUMNI UPDATES

Chris Baker, BS Geology 2016

Chris is a Professional Geologist who is currently employed as a Senior Engineering Geologist and Project Manager with the Department of Water Resources. Since graduating he has built a diverse background across multiple geologic disciplines with experience and expertise in fields related to environmental geology, geotechnical engineering, hydrogeology, mining, and regulatory review. He has also demonstrated a strong commitment to the geoscience community by facilitating professional society meetings and helping to award numerous scholarships to students in Southern California and Nevada through his roles as president of the South Coast Geological Society, the GRA SoCal Branch, and Geological Society of Nevada. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Groundwater Resources Association and as Secretary of the LA Section of Professional Engineers in California Government.

Chris Baker BS Geology 2016



Outside of industry Chris has travelled the US, played many rounds of golf, attended numerous concerts and festivals, spent a lot off-roading, and attended the Oscars. Most recently and importantly his family grew as they welcomed a beautiful baby girl to the world in September 2025.

Kenneth J. Heitkamp BS Geology, 2017

KJ Heitkamp is a Senior Project Manager for the State of Michigan managing former defense sites as the lead environmental regulator in the Superfund section. His sites include KI Sawyer Air ForceBase, Defense Fuel Supply Point Escanaba, Fort Custer, Raco Army Airfield, and others across Michigan, managed under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) programs. The primary contaminants of concern at these defense sites include PFAS, solvents and munitions.

KJ and his wife, Casey, at Lake Oeschinensee, Switzerland



Bill Leever

BS Geology 1990

Principal Hydrogeologist OCWD



Cynthia Leng

BA Earth Science 2018



My name is Cynthia Leng I graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor’s in Earth Science from CSUF. I am now working as an Environmental Scientist for the State of California’s Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). As an Environmental Scientist I research sustainable materials and help implement programs that mitigate plastic waste and pollution. I provide technical assistance to the legislative branch for policy making. During my free time I enjoy baking, hiking, and traveling. Proud to be a CSUF Earth Science Alumni!

Go Titans!

ALUMNI UPDATES

Margaret Gooding

BS Geology 1994

I am no longer working anywhere. After I got laid off from LSA in 2018, I was unemployed for a few months. I then started work at the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters in the late spring of 2018. I worked there doing GIS for 4 years, full time at first, then 3 days a week after I turned 70. I am still Treasurer of Inland Geological Society and Committee Chair at Redlands Art Association (I do photography and ceramics). I also have a large raised garden in my backyard and several fruit trees that occupy part of my time. We have two dogs, a 12 year old Corgi mix and 3 year old Queensland heeler. My husband, Butch, and I will be celebrating our 52nd wedding anniversary in May. Our son Matthew still lives with us and is a great help around the house.

Margaret Gooding

BS Geology 1994



ALUMNI UPDATES

Lynne (Gossett) Yost and Bernard Yost

**BS Geology 1996
BS Geology 1997**

Time sure flies! 30 years later is not too late for an update! Barney has been a retired highschool science teacher/administrator for over 7 years (code for "golfing as much as possible") and Lynne is still working full time as an engineering geologist with NMG Geotechnical. This year also marks her 30th anniversary at the company. Although the company is based out of Irvine, Lynne works a "snowbird life" from their homes in west Michigan and Arizona much of the year (Arizona because winter in Michigan lasts 5 6months), with jaunts back to southern California for mentoring, marketing and to see family and friends. She is still enjoying work and plans to continue to do so for a few more years, in spite of Barney's efforts telling her every day how wonderful it is to get paid to not work! Speaking of family, our niece, El Fieni, is completing their junior year as a Geology major at CSUF! It has been a great joy to listen to field trip tales, review essays and hear about the geology classes and students. Lynne absolutely loves to see El following in Aunty's footsteps! Expect to see us at the graduation ceremony in 2027 cheering all the graduates! Speaking of friends who are also family, Lisa (Rochford) Henderson, geology alumni class of 1997, and Lynne did a bucket list 8 day geoporn filled rafting trip through the Grand Canyon in May 2025, starting at Lee's Ferry and ending at Lake Mead. It was an incredible experience, all the more so as 8 of the 27 rafters were geologists and the trip was geology heavy, including an incredible morning lecture on Earth History by retired SDSU geology professor, Monte Marshall.



Megan Porter

BS Geology 1997



I'm currently working as the Department Manager of Geotechnical Services at Terracon, where I continue to grow professionally and take on new leadership responsibilities. I live in Lodi, California, and outside of work my life revolves around my 4-year-old daughter, and two wild dogs, who keep me busy, and constantly smiling. We still spend as much time as possible skiing and exploring. Balancing career growth with motherhood has been challenging and rewarding, and I'm grateful for this season of both professional and personal development.

Mark Milligan BS Geology 1992

Hello fellow geology alumni. I am thankful for the many opportunities that my education at CSUF has afforded me. After graduating in 1992, I earned a master's degree in Geology (stratigraphy focus) from the University of Utah in 1995. My next stop was a job as a hydrogeologist with the State of North Carolina's Groundwater Section. The south was amazing to visit but never truly felt like home. I moved back to Salt Lake City in 1997 for a job as a geologist with the Utah Geological Survey's (UGS) Information and Outreach Program, where I have been ever since.

My career has been an eclectic journey of public service and has included: preparing non technical geologic brochures and booklets, responding to public inquiries, writing articles for the UGS's Survey Notes magazine, creating geologic signage for state and local parks, responding to press inquiries, serving as legislative liaison, public speaking, and organizing and leading field trips in the most geologically astounding state (fellow California natives, you may argue otherwise). I have been lucky enough to author or co author roughly 50 technical and non technical articles on a wide variety of geologic topics published by entities ranging from the UGS, to the Society for Sedimentary Geology, to the L.A. Times.

My next stop in life's grand adventure will be retirement on the Central Oregon Coast. Thank you CSUF Department of Geological Sciences!

Mark Milligan, class of 1992

ALUMNI UPDATES



Mark Milligan with his family in front of Taj Mahal, India, 2025.



Thomas Feistel BS Geology 2012

Thomas Feistel is currently working as a hydrogeologist at Thomas Harder Company. He works with fellow alumni Mathew Hutchinson, Ben Lewis, and Celeste Flores. He recently switched over into the field of hydro after spending most of his career in engineering geology. He is currently serving as the South Coast Geological Society president and in his work there he really enjoys providing scholarships for and giving back to students.

Phil and Tish Armstrong-Butcher

It's hard to believe it has been seven years since we retired and moved to Bend Oregon, where we've embraced the Central Oregon lifestyle. It was our colleague Jeff Knott who said, you need to work hard to "give retirement a good name". Well, we've tried to do that. Here's a bit of what we've been up to. We bought a house that's in perpetual re model on a wooded half acre in an area of Bend called the King's Forest. Plenty of room for all our toys (boats, trailers, etc) and beautiful gardens we try to keep at bay well mostly Tish does. We built a camper van that has been a game changer for travel and adventure. We've enjoyed the seasons and got into Nordic skiing (mostly skate skiing) in the winters, until we discovered life in Baja (see below). In the summers we play in the mountains hiking and running and mountain biking.



We love to long distance backpack and we spend 4-5 weeks every summer with packs on. We've done the John Muir Trail a couple times, the Colorado Trail, and much of the Pacific Crest Trail in Oregon. I (Phil) continue to love wind sports and took up wing foiling a couple years ago it's the one of the hardest things I've learned to do physically, but also the funniest. And then there's fly fishing; one of us spends more time than he should chasing trout around the western US with a fly rod. Both of us caught the pickleball bug a few years ago and we play 2-5 times a week. It's just a ton of fun with the added benefit of a huge social scene and fun folks.

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A couple years ago we started spending most of the winter in southern Baja. We live December to March in the dusty little town of La Ventana. It is ground zero for wind sport addicts from around the world and just has a super cool vibe. Mornings spent playing pickleball or walking the long beaches and afternoons wing foiling or hiking or mountain biking, eating tacos and two for one margaritas.

Our daughter Ema, who grew up in the geology department, is finishing her Ph.D in geology at Utah State University studying thermochronology and rock mechanics. So, it's fun to discuss science with her, and it's how we stay connected in some way with what's going on in geology. Last July, Ema married Bennett and they are expected a baby in October. We are so excited to be grandparents! We had wonderful careers at CSUF and have so many good memories. CSUF geology is and will always be special to us. And though we've moved on to a new life chapter far removed from academia and CSUF, it's the interactions with students and colleagues we miss the most. We hope to reconnect with everyone before long, hopefully at the next Geological Sciences alumni celebration.

Cheers, Phil and Tish

JOHN FOSTER Emeriti

Hello to all my friends, former students and colleagues. I'm glad to see a new newsletter emerging and look forward to seeing how everyone is managing these awkward times. I retired in 2010 and since then have spent my time working partly with Dr. Laton, traveling and playing golf where I now live in Oceanside, CA. I went through triple bypass right before a scotch and golf expedition to Scotland with Dr. Laton and friends in 2022 where I generously contributed a vicious case of covid to all concerned but we all lived and managed to have fun. I live down here with my two sons, Cameron and Brian, and near my sister and her two daughters' families and I enjoy the closeness here. I still go on SouthCoast field trips annually and make it over to Tucson for friends, golf and the rock and mineral show at least once a year but have little room left for more rocks. I am still an emeritus member of the university and attend the occasional emeriti function but since losing my wife Candace in 2018 I have become a bit more of a loner these days. Still, I do get out for a pub crawl and evening soiree now and again. I hope when I see you I recognize you but if I don't just mention your name (people change) and it will slowly come back to me. My best to all.



John Foster

FACULTY UPDATES



DIANE CLEMENS – KNOTT Emeriti

In July 2024 I enrolled in Beginning Golf at Fullerton College and was recruited to play on the women's golf team I competed two seasons (Go Hornets!), so often at sunrise you'll find me teeing off the back 9 at Fullerton Golf Course. While I was a full-time student, I completed an AA in Spanish and now continue to work on my speaking ability (or lack thereof) with an online tutor. No end to homework just yet. Between classes I managed to squeeze in some writing, publishing two papers last year: one with former CSUF colleague Natalie Bursztyn (Reading the Rocks: The Geology of National Parks as a Platform for Climate

Change Education) and another in Geosphere with Michelle Gevedon (BS 2011, MS 2013) focused on gabbros from the Kern Plateau. We just began another paper on potential tectonic implications of weird zircon geochemistry from granites, which I'll present at the Cordilleran GSA meeting in Baja Sur this spring. This summer I'm taking a solo trip to

(cont. Diane Clemens-Knott)

Transylvania to practice yoga in the shadow of Vlad's castle. I'm planning stops along the way to hike in the Alps with an old Ivrea Zone friend and practice Spanish in Madrid's tapas bars, Jeff and I slip away to Maui a few times a year to dive, hike the volcanoes, and raise our glasses to the setting sun. We were thrilled to be included in last summer's wedding of Natalie Hollis (BS2013), whose senior thesis research is included in a manuscript (in review) focused on the Mesozoic detrital zircon record of the California Cordillera. She and new husband Phil picked a stunning venue where we all dance as the sun set behind Mt. Rainier (see picture of Diane and Jeff Clemens Knott)



Matthew Kirby

As I finish up my 24th year, I realize how much time I have wasted not skiing.

Ginny Isava

Ginny Isava (pictured here with her dog, Muskrat) joined the department in Fall 2021. Her research focus is in geoscience education studying how geoscience experts think, how geoscience undergraduates think, and how to help undergraduates think more like experts. Ginny teamed up with Nicole Bonuso to establish the Geological Sciences Department peer mentoring program, which matches sophomores and first year transfer students with senior and graduate student mentors and teaches these students the field skills, professional skills, and soft skills that they will need to succeed in college. One of her research projects, conducted with undergraduate Matthew Garcia (class of '25), was recently turned into a manuscript and is currently under peer review. Her first graduate student, Quiroz, is scheduled to defend her masters thesis in April.

Sean Loyd

Sean Loyd is a low temperature geochemist. He and his students explore the formation conditions of carbonates in energy resource and mineral resource associated environments. These often involve complex mineral, hydrological, hydrocarbon, and microbial interactions across variable spatial scales and can lead to the creation and destruction of economically important materials.



Vali Memeti

Memeti lab

In the last four years, the Memeti lab continued to work on magma processes and their time and length scales in the Sierra Nevada with about a dozen undergraduate and graduate students. Our NSF and USGS funded projects have focused on both the Cretaceous Tuolumne intrusive complex in Yosemite National Park and the much smaller, and more heterogeneous, Jackass lakes pluton just to the south. We also conducted geochronologic and geochemical work on Jurassic plutons in the central Sierras and the western metamorphic belt. Student projects have ranged from mapping plutonic increments and contacts at the km² scales in the remote wilderness to mineral scale lab studies examining the formation of K feldspar megacrysts and what they tell us about magma processes. Several student first author papers are currently in the works. Recent Memeti graduates found employment in the industry or continued with their MS at CSUF or elsewhere. Two recent MS graduate students are pursuing their PhD degrees on full scholarships: Sadie Durning just started at Texas Tech, and Caitlin Bates is headed to UC Riverside in Fall 2026. Go Titans!



Patrick Phelps

The department has a brand new scanning electron microscope with the ability to measure element chemistry! Students are starting to use it for their theses, and I've even started incorporating it into parts of igneous and metamorphic petrology. Picture caption: Two students from igneous and metamorphic petrology using the SEM to measure chemistry of a tuff sample.

Marie Johnson

Dean, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Marie Johnson recently ran 26.2 miles in a loop around Carlsbad, CA looking for cool geologic things. Unsubstantiated reports are that she rocked it, but she may still be running somewhere.



Nicole Bonuso

As of late, my work focuses on leadership, mentorship and creating more inclusive pathways in the geosciences. Over the past five years as a full professor, I have concentrated on building programs that support students and expand access to research and professional development.

As Director of the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Center (UROC), I led a major revitalization of the center, including reopening and rebranding the physical space, launching its first website, expanding professional development programming, and creating new funding opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research. These efforts have increased student participation in research and raised the visibility of student scholarship across campus.

Within the Department of Geological Sciences, I work closely with Dr. Ginny Isava to support the Geoscience Peer Mentoring Program, which is embedded in a new course she teaches, GEOL301. The course is designed to support sophomores and transfer students, and each week participants meet one on one with trained peer mentors to build community, confidence, and a sense of belonging. The program is now sustained through dedicated curriculum and IRA funding. Beyond campus, I serve as Chief Financial Officer of the Paleontological Society. Outside of work, I enjoy my family life and competitive rowing with the Long Beach Rowing Association

Wayne Henderson

Hello everyone. 2026 marks my 25th year at CSUF and, even after this time, there are few better feelings than taking a new crop of students into the field for the first time. I continue to teach a mixture of courses physical geology lecture/lab, historical geology, natural disasters, national parks, and environmental geology classes. I am also still an officer at PSSEPM along with two of my former students. My wife and kids are doing well with my two oldest at Long Beach State and UC Santa Cruz and Nathan working on high school and hockey. My pet total number is still high and currently numbering four dogs, two cats, two Kune Kune pigs, one African Grey Parrot, one Sulcata tortoise, six cockatiels, four red eared slider turtles, ten chickens, and two fish tanks.



Figure: Dr. Carlin doing what he does best - dancing on a beach. He performs every third Thursday of the month down in Newport Beach. Come check it out!

Joe Carlin

Dr. Carlin has been busy over the past several years. Real busy. Most of his time has been spent digging in the mud while his students do the real work.

Recent research projects including investigating sediment accumulation in Upper Newport Bay associated with a living shoreline restoration project, sedimentation in the Tijuana River Estuary over the past 50 years, and sediment accumulation in San Francisco Bay in a former salt pond now a restored marsh. In addition to coastal sediments, his students have been working on projects using offshore sediments from Monterey Bay and the Santa Barbara Basin. Dr. Carlin has also enjoyed collaborating with Dr. Kirby on projects in lakes in Northern California and in the Mojave Desert. Well....not so much “enjoying,” “tolerating” is a better way to describe it.



Rich Laton

Twenty six years already??? It's quite hard to believe that I've been traversing the hallways of McCarthy Hall for over a quarter of a century now. It's been a lot of work, fun, responsibility and has provided me with so much positivity in my life... I'm grateful as I begin to wind down my career here at Fullerton. (Don't panic!)

The biggest highlight of my time has definitely been working with the students. At the past few annual Christmas parties we host, I've been overwhelmed to take a moment to count and appreciate all of the current and former students who I see around my house. Some of them were students when I first started teaching and I'm so glad we're now friends and colleagues. It's also fun connecting the current crop of students with alumni who over the years have been incredibly gracious in giving many of them their first career jobs. Thank you, all of you.

During my tenure, I've worked on many different areas of research and am proud to be sopragmatic in my studies. I'm still working (but slowing down on) mapping the North Orange County aquifers. I'm also working with current and immediately past students to fine tune bestpractices when using glass beads in the welldesignprocess. It dovetails my teachingwith theassociation I've been most active with, The National Groundwater Association.

Outside of teaching and mentoring at the University, I've been very involved with the Geology Department Alumni Dinner held each autumn and the Department Research Day held each spring. If you've attended either event, Thank you. If you haven't yet it's time! The department is celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year. Don't hesitate to get involved... it's a great way to see old friends, and make new friends and business connections.

On a personal note, during my time here my wife Catherine and I have raised our three children to adulthood (yeah!). The oldest graduated from Cal Maritime and has been living in Atlanta for the past few years. Our son attended Sac State and has lately been pursuing a career as a commercial pilot. We're looking forward to him having to shuttle us around soon. Our youngest is currently in Spain for a six month language program while she works out her plans for the future. It seems like it'll be bright. After retirement, I hope to join Catherine on some wide world adventures between golf games and some consulting.

All in all, I look back at my years at CSUF with pride and gratitude. Thanks to each and everycolleague, student, administrator and friend of the department for shaping me. It hasn't alwaysbeen easy, but it's always been worth it

2026 CSUF Geological Sciences Research Day Highlights:



Research Day 2026 Awards

There were 33 posters presented this year.

New Undergraduate Proposal:

- 1) Madelynn Ledesma
- 2) Angie Gonzalez
- 3) Audrey Gonzalez

Undergraduate Thesis:

- 1) Leon Kindig
- 2) Tammy West
- 3) Cyrus Snyder

Graduate Proposal

- 1) Adrian Rene Escobar - Tie for first
- 1) Megan McCabe - Tie for first
- 2) Alondra Ruiz

Graduate Thesis

- 1) Kaelyne McFadden
- 2) David Rogoff

597 Graduate Project

- 1) Roberto Ruiz
- 2) Alyssa Garrett
- 3) Brennen Woodard



NSM Awards & Scholarships 2026:



NSM Awards & Scholarships 2026

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| Outstanding Graduate Student Award in Geology | Kaelynn McFadden |
| Outstanding Graduate Teaching Associate in Geology | Megan McCabe |
| Outstanding Major Award BS in Geology | Cyrus Snyder |
| Outstanding Major Award BA in Earth Science | Katrina Beckman |
| Outstanding Academic Achievement Award BS in Geology | Jaime Rhode |
| Outstanding Academic Achievement Award BA in Earth Science | Kianna Barr |
| Candice L. Jones Outstanding Service Award | Yelitza Cabrera |
| Prem K. Saint Hydrology Award | Roberto Ruiz |
| Searchers Gem and Minerology Award | Tammy West |
| John D. Cooper Field Camp Award | Julian Walicki |
| Marilyn A. Brown Award | David Rogoff |
| Dr. Margaret Skillman Woyski Scholarship | Angel Beltran Corona |
| Clemens Knott Scholarship | Yelitza Cabrera |
| John D. Cooper Field Camp Scholarship | Aaron Hernandez |
| David L. Willogby Scholarship | Aaron Hernandez |
| Coppel Graduate Award | Adrian Escobar |



October 2-4, 2026
ALUMNI WEEKEND

EXTRAVAGANZA

Celebrating

60 Years

The Department of
Geological Sciences at
California State University,
Fullerton

More Info:

ALUMNI WEEKEND EXTRAVAGANZA

Celebrating 60 Years

October 2, 2026

Campus Tour and
Alumni Night at The Eliot
Fullerton, CA

October 3, 2026

Golf, Day at the Beach,
Whiskey Brewery Tour, and
Banquet at Coyote Hills
Fullerton, CA

October 4, 2026

Joshua Tree Tour or CSUF
Arboretum

More Info: