

Colgate University
Department of Geology
Testimonials from Graduates



Presented to Jim "Chief" McLelland

December 2019

Here's a synopsis of how my studies in Geology with Professors Woodruff and Linsley gave me a unique employment opportunity in the summer following my graduation. At the project start of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway in Southern California, I was assigned to assist the head geologist as he located and determined the positions of the five support tower sites, which were to carry the cables for two passenger tram cars from the desert floor to the Mt San Jacinto terminus at 8516 feet. Each day covering several months, Russ Hood and I were flown on a bubble top Bell 3G-B helicopter to the potential tower site locations and dropped off on rock outcroppings on the mountainside, which is inaccessible by foot. We exited the chopper with our equipment, and were picked up at the end of day. Russ studied and mapped the rock exposures, and I provided help and learned how to be of best assist. In hindsight, I feel Professors Woodruff and Linsley gave me the foundation that enabled me to be considered for this very rewarding job. It was a truly fulfilling and memorable experience.

The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway continues to operate to this day, having undergone several upgrades, including larger rotating tram cars since the mid 1960's. My job was completed when I was called to begin my military service in April 1963. If anyone has ridden the Tram, you will know how magnificent those views are, riding both up and down the mountain.

Harlan Moonan

Class of 1962

I graduated from Colgate in 1962 with a major in geology and a minor in education. I initially intended to teach earth science in a public school, but as my decision to major in geology was through a convoluted route, so was my life's work.

I initially entered Colgate intending to major in chemistry with a minor in mathematics, but as of the end of the first semester of sophomore year, I and the university decided that this was no longer a path of study that I was to continue. I decided to explore options that would allow me a career in an outside environment. I chose both botany and geology and met with Drs. Stanley and Woodruff to determine options available to me. I can remember my first meeting with Dr. John G. Woodruff, geology chair at that time. I indicated I would like to consider majoring in geology. He examined my record to date and stated that he was not sure he wanted me, however he decided to take a chance. Since I was already into the second semester of sophomore year, I had a lot of catching up to do. I doubled up on some course work and managed to cram the degree requirements into 2 1/2 years, graduating with a 3.9 GPA in geology.

My professors and mentors throughout were Dr. Woodruff, Dr David Trainer, and Robert Linsley. Classes were small as not many Colgate students at that time were intent on majoring or a career in geology. A very personal relationship was easily established with all three of the Geology Department staff. We went on field trips as far away as Louisville, KY. with Bob Linsley, as well as local trips and surveying exercises with "Doc" Trainer. "Doc" also had the seniors over to his house for a picnic during our last semester. Individual conversations were easily established and readily available with all three throughout my time at Colgate. I remember stopping in to visit Dr. Woodruff at his home about ten years after graduation. His wife entertained my wife while we talked about my life to date. He took me to an upstairs room filled with file cabinets and proceeded to pull my exam papers out of a file he had kept. I couldn't believe he had kept those records, but there they were. That is an example of how much he appreciated his students.

I also would stop in to visit with Bob Linsley whenever I was doing field work in the Hamilton area and we would discuss life in the field as a working geologist. I also would occasionally see "Doc" Trainer on the local ski slopes as he was a coach of the Colgate ski team.

When I graduated, there were no jobs available in geology, and being married and a soon

to be father, I needed a job and income. I accepted a position as a Claims Representative with the Social Security Administration in Utica, NY where I worked for five years. Suddenly, out of the blue, an individual contacted me to advise me that there was an opening for a Geologist at the US Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, in Syracuse, NY if I was interested. I applied for the job and was accepted. It was a simple transfer from one federal agency to another. I completed 32 years of federal service ending with what was to become the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Geologist and later a Resource Conservationist. I retired in April 1994 at age 53 1/2 through an early retirement offer as a part of downsizing government. I have never been sorry to have retired early and just recently enjoyed my 79th birthday.

Chris Hepburn

Class of 1964

I recall many great paleontological field trips with Bob Linsley but one to the southern states during a spring vacation was particularly memorable. We had spent the day at a famous fossil locality near Coon Creek, Tennessee, where we found a giant clam fossil, one that very much excited Bob. (It's now in the U.S. National Museum.) That night we stopped at a rural general store for supplies before heading to a local campground. There were several locals hanging out there and Bob, still excited, was explaining to them about this wonderful fossil and others we had seen. Soon it became obvious to some of us that many of the locals didn't believe in evolution or fossils, or liked hearing about them from a bunch of Yankees from New York State. But Bob was undeterred and was showing them some of the fossils, despite increasingly heated objections. Luckily for us, I guess, someone called the county sheriff, who soon arrived—looking like someone out of the old Dodge Boys ads. He then proceeded to “escort” us to the county line, told us to keep going and not come back, and to be sure not to camp anywhere nearby that evening. We didn't and eventually found a nice grassy spot to throw our sleeping bags out along a small dark road near the Shiloh Battlefield National Park. However, we were rudely awakened at dawn by the Park Rangers since we unknowingly in the dark had camped on the lawn of the Monument with several old cannons nearby. A memorable trip!

I was in my senior year when a new, fresh-faced, enthusiastic young professor with a crew cut arrived at Colgate. I wish I had taken a picture of Jim McLelland that year, as no one would believe that this would be the same person who became the “Chief” in future years. In later years, after I became a geology professor myself, I fondly recall shared field trips with Jim and his classes to the Adirondacks and Vermont. Sitting around the campfire, pouring cups of Ripple wine for the camp raccoons was among the favorite pass times in the evening.

I owe Bob and Jim, along with Doc Trainer, a great deal. They enthused an Economics major about geology and set me on a lifetime love of the subject and a career as a professor of geology. Now retired myself, I have never regretted the decision to follow in their footsteps as best I could.

David Howell

Class of 1966

I will make it simple, Colgate showed me the path.

As a freshmen I took "rocks for jocks" to complete a science requirement. I thought that would be the last time I would ever think about rocks. After a problematic first semester sophomore year Dean Griffiths insisted I take another geology course, presumably because I got an A in the last one. All my other grades were C or worse. He said this next course however would not be so easy and it would be with a young professor, Dr. James McLelland from University of Chicago, who recently arrived on campus. It was take the class or head off to a junior college. Reluctantly I complied and off to the races. McLelland, then Linsley, then Swinchatt and others lit a fuse that I did not know I had.

Here I am today after 55 years practicing geology, getting a Ph.D., researching around the world with the USGS, teaching at Stanford University, still doing geology, albeit on the lighter side, teaching and leading tours called geology and wines of California and France. Thank you Dean Griffiths, thank you Jim et al, thank you Colgate.

Robert Thurrell

Class of 1968

Having a father and grandfather as professional geologists probably in the rebellious 60's that would be the last thing that I would major in. After a very generic geology class with "Woody", fate would involve me with "Mac" and "Aveni" in astrogeophysics and an entirely new way of relating these disciplines. I spent an incredible time with Bob Lindsey and his Eurytrides {sp?} As well with enjoying Swinchatt. I finally decided to have Geology be my major and went on to pursue a Ph.D at U of Rochester. The lure of teaching { as so artfully and enthusiastically done in the Geology Department} consumed me and for the last 50 years have been teaching all aspects of science in grades [4 - 12] a Waldorf School in Maine.

John Hoffman

Class of 1968

There were only 12 of us who majored in geology in 1968. A few of us were hardcore Linsley groupies. Devonian fossils, esp. snails. I just couldn't get enough. I remember collecting eurypterids, using sledge hammers and crowbars. In the summer of 1967, John Cottrell and I joined Bob up in Traverse City, MI. Along the way we stopped at Silica, OH to collect enormous *Paraspirifer* brachiopods, many of which had shells that had been replaced with quartz or pyrite. Farther north, we collected large (Devonian) snails and then worked on them in Traverse City and then later in Hamilton when John and I house sat for Bob. Fond memories in Traverse City playing Yahtzee with Bob during our lunch breaks. There was a lot of kid in him. Almost everything was fun. Even those long paleo labs, with him smoking Lucky Strikes and drinking coca cola through a straw.

The camaraderie that I felt as an undergrad was certainly aided and abetted by Bob's easygoing style and grace. Because of him, I got a MS in geology and spent 36 years teaching middle school and high school earth science and physical science. Thanks, Bob.

Kevin Padian

Class of 1972

Although there were many professors and departments that were personal and welcoming in the late 60s, Geology stood out as a science department in those respects. Yes, there was a lot of charisma, swagger, and frat-boy atmosphere; it was a different era. There was also a lot of support, care, and affection, and genuine interest in the success of students. It began with Jim and Swinch, and extended through Blaine, Don, Bob, Dan, and after I left, Bruce, Rich, and many others. That humanity as much as the quality of instruction defined the greatness of Colgate's Geology tradition.

As a science-phobe gobsmailed by the first-year Core course in physical sciences, I had my life changed when, in about the third lecture on Cosmology, Jim McLellan (he was not yet called Chief) opened by saying, "You know, some of you guys may not be into this stuff. If you'd like to do some independent readings instead, come down and talk to me after class." I was down like a shot. "I can't do this, I can't do this," I told him. "Well, what are you into?" he asked. I told him that I'd always been interested in evolution and paleontology but I'd never been taught anything like that. Jim said, "Why don't you go up to the third floor and see Linsley. He's a paleontologist, and he'll give you stuff to read. He can tell me your grade at the end of the semester."

I went upstairs and found the kindest and most effective mentor I would ever encounter. Bob, with his eternal Coke bottle and Lucky Strikes, sat me down and we talked about what would be good to read. He handed me Loren Eiseley's "The Immense Journey" and I never looked back. I declared a major in Independent Studies entitled "Evolution," and I took geology, biology, anthropology, philosophy, and literature courses. I loved all those departments and their professors, especially integrative thinkers like Bob and Tony Aveni. They gave us inspiration, wisdom, humor, and personality. And the confidence to succeed. After graduation I hung around for a MAT and then taught school for a couple of years. I wanted to teach science because I felt it had been done so poorly in my experience. But soon I felt I didn't know enough science to do the job well, so I went back to graduate school. After five years at Yale I somehow was hired by Berkeley in the Paleontology (now within Integrative Biology) Department. This is my 40th (and final) year. Although I had great training at Yale, I never would have been there, or here, without the support from Geology at Colgate. Bob's support in particular inspired me to establish an annual Linsley Prize for a rising senior who, in the faculty's view, can best use the support for field or lab work, or for attending conferences to get a leg up on a graduate career. I hope other grads will find ways to give back to the place that has meant so much to us, and pay it forward for future generations who deserve the same opportunities.

Jon Powell

Class of 1974

My experience with the Colgate Geology Department has defined my life. During my freshman year at Colgate as a potential physics major, I spent most of my time and energy partying and going to marches to protest the Vietnam War. At the end of my first semester, I went to the March on Washington and blew off finals and other course related work. Not surprisingly, the Dean of Students informed me that I could no longer continue as a student at Colgate.

But before I left for Washington, I met Jim McLelland in the Geology Department and realized that I found geology far more interesting than physics. Upon receipt of my letter from the Dean, I went to Jim, we had the first of many long talks and he told me, among other things, that if I want to play hard, I have to work hard. And if I work hard, then I can play hard. This lesson has stayed with me since that time. Jim also went to bat for me with the Dean and facilitated my re-admission to Colgate.

Jim and his colleagues on the faculty also instilled in me a love for the study of the earth and to observing the universe around us.

At Colgate I studied with Jim, Jon Swinchatt, C. Dan Miller, Don Newberg, C. Blaine Cecil, and Bob Linsley. I spent a January on a Jan Plan with Dan Miller and group of other geo students tromping around the volcanoes in Mexico learning about geomorphology and glacial features. Later, in the fall of 1973, I spent four months living in and out of a van on the Geology off-campus. We followed the sun starting in September studying the Sudbury Basin nickel eruptive in Ontario, moving south to the Adirondacks, then to coal country in West Virginia, and ending the semester in Key Largo with Bob Linsley studying carbonate deposition. Living very closely with a small group of students and faculty provided a great framework for learning about the earth as well as how to build a community and live with others. This entire experience was nothing I could predict in applying to or coming to Colgate and was among the most wonderful experiences I could imagine for a college education.

In addition to the academic and field experiences I had with the Geology department, I became very close friends with Jim McLelland and his family. In fact, I practically became a family member. I spent much of my spare time post-Colgate visiting the McLellands in Hamilton and at their camp in the Adirondacks.

Their friends became my friends. I went on field trips with Jim, went to professional meetings, and helped Jim with maintenance around his camp. I did this throughout the time I was in grad school at Brown.

In 1983 I was running a geochemical isotope lab in New Jersey and Jim suggested that on my next visit to Hamilton, I might like to meet a woman who had just joined the Colgate Geology faculty. I came to Hamilton, met that new faculty member, Cindy Evans, and fell in love, and now we have been together for 36 years and have two grown sons.

While Cindy was still teaching at Colgate, I made a whole new set of Colgate faculty friends during my weekend visits, including Art Goldstein and Bruce Selleck in the geo department. Many of those folks are still among our closest friends whom we try to see as frequently as we can.

All of this illustrates that my Colgate Geology experience has defined my life. I could never have predicted this during my senior year in high school while taking SATs, writing essays, and applying for colleges. The Colgate geology department focused on the dual goals of bringing out the best in individual students and establishing a lasting community. While the professors who were my teachers may no longer be with the department, they defined the direction and objectives of the department which have remained in place to this day.

Jonathan Husch

Class of 1975

Jim, Bob, Bruce, Don, Dan, Blaine and everyone else associated with the Colgate Geology Department changed my life. Jim and Bob, in particular, became mentors, surrogate fathers, and life-long inspirations for just about everything I've done, both professionally and personally, since my time at Colgate.

I have tried, as best I can, to replicate, and pass on, at least some of what they gave me to my own geology students over the past 40 years at Rider University. And, although I know I've fallen far short of their standards, because of them I always knew the goal I was trying to reach.

I can never adequately express my gratitude.

Ralph Sacrison

Class of 1976

My introduction to Colgate was through the example of a family friend. Garrett McCandless ('50) was a geologist for the Orinoco Mining Company in Cd. Piar, Edo. Bolívar, Venezuela, where my father was Production Manager. Many years and miles later, while I was a student at Ossining High School interested in having a career working outside, dad told me that Mr. McCandless (Jerry) was a Colgate grad. Though my enthusiasm was for economic geology, Bob and Chief amusingly tolerated me and taught well, as did Charlie McLennen, Don Newberg, and all the faculty. Upon graduation I joined a short-handed exploration project in the Sangre de Cristo mountains of northern New Mexico. The firm wouldn't title me as geologist/associate/assistant without a Ph.D./M.S./B.S. So, they made me drill superintendent, quite the unexpected kick up the career ladder. When drilling ended, a soft metal market presented the prospect of needing an advanced degree if I wanted to use my geology at all. Wanting to stay in mining, engineering could provide some job stability. Mining rather than metallurgy was the choice – again to enhance my chances of working outside... or underground.

One departure from geology was in my M.S. thesis – digital analysis of mine ventilation systems. And though I occasionally revisit ventilation, much of my time is in ground characterization and control – underground and surface, hydrology, and environmental fields. In large, my career efforts are related to construction and development at mines across the Western Hemisphere. Though primarily working at metal mines, my own exploration efforts typically have been for construction materials and groundwater. That would include a tip of the hardhat to Bruce Selleck.

The recent fifteen years have been as an independent mining consultant, continuing to use a wide range of geology and engineering. Essentially, the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. The grounding from the Colgate Core and the scientific method also have helped apart from straight work endeavors. I am a signatory of the Petition Project and in Elko County, Nevada have been an advisory commissioner for natural resources. Recurring campaigns by the Southern Nevada Water Authority to mine water from northern Nevada typically receive my attention in one venue or another. I am on board with mining minerals wisely, but mining water has never seemed wise.

Bryan Luftglass

Class of 1977

I entered Colgate not knowing whether to pursue a degree in Geology or Biology. WOW, did I make the right decision! I'm indebted to all of the profs who taught and shared their valuable time with me but, in particular, Chief who became the first mentor in my life and Bruce the second. I looked up to them like fathers and they influenced my life in so many fundamental ways. (I also appreciate the tolerance they shared for my propensity to be immature.)

There are many special moments to recall. Just a few... Visiting Chief's place on Canada Lake in the summertime was insanely enjoyable. I also remember Bruce's first ever class teaching Seds and he was SO nervous that I felt awful for him. But, by the second class he REALLY had it down. I remember him showing me the house he was building just out of town later on (in the 90s?). There were only a few courses of cinder blocks down, but he was SO proud and excited. I still remember Bob's words of wisdom during the first Paleo class I took, which were something like "Pretty much everything you learn in this class will be proven wrong in the next 5 years." And I never saw him miss a fly with those rubber bands. (Pre-PETA days.)

It was also exciting to be part of this truly world-class department during the revolution in plate tectonics.

And then there was Paisano.

David Chaffin

Class of 1978

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Amy Gonzales

Class of 1981

Colgate geology set me up perfectly for my very successful environmental career! Charlie, Bruce, Chief, Bob, Rich and Paul were all were so dedicated to teaching and mentoring. We were taught so much more than the facts - lots of honesty, integrity and good natured fun came along with it all.

Of course I can't forget my fateful dive in upstate NY during Chief's off-campus study - got a real taste of hard rock geology that day! Although I still have a dent in my head, I have wonderful memories from my days at 'gate!

Dan Fridgen

Class of 1992

I remember coming to Colgate without declaring a major. I met Chief and the late Bruce Selleck early on as they were hockey fans. Being from Canada, the ride to and from Colgate presented some interesting scenery and outcrops of rock which peaked my interest. I decided to take some Geology classes, and I was hooked. I met other professors in the department (Rich April) and enjoyed meeting other students on some infamous field trips.

One story I can share - I had become sick my sophomore year and missed a week of classes. I had fallen far behind in my school work. The team was headed to California to play a couple of games and instead of making the trip, I stayed back at Colgate and was tutored by Chief. I will never forget this kind act, as Chief was not only passionate about what he taught, but he loved his students as well.

I graduated as a Geology major, which helped shape my academic future. I have never used Geology in my professional life, but, those rides to and from Canada are a lot more interesting, especially with anyone who will listen!

Tom Donahoe

Class of 1982 ½

I am in my 32nd year as an Earth Science teacher in Mahopac, NY. My experience at Colgate greatly influenced my decision to teach (and coach football). I model my approach to students and the content of many classes after similar lessons in Lathrop Hall or on the Summer Off-Campus semester.

I am reminded of Rich when we do minerals or acidic weathering. I am reminded of Chief and Boz when we do structural geology. I am reminded of Bob in our Geohistory unit. I am reminded of Bruce when we study sediments. I am reminded of Paul and Charlie when we do our unit on Oceanography and coastal processes, as well as meteorology.

More important than the content of lessons, though, is the sincerely caring and challenging approach each of these professors had with us. Perhaps that is what I try to model the most with my students.

Aside from imparting a wealth of content knowledge, the Geology Staff at Colgate taught me how to think critically and analytically. I still recall many of Paul's "lateral thinking" exercises in class, and I have used many of them in my classes.

I thank each of my Geology professors for providing me with an experience that ultimately lead to a very rewarding career.

Andy Marks

Class of 1986

Many fond memories come to mind from my time as a Geology major at Colgate. In many ways it made my experience.

Great people (faculty and students), and great friends. In no particular order... Chief-isms... The Opportunity (sophomore year Petrology), SWUBA... Rich April's Mineralogy class endless nights drawing each mineral as it appeared under the microscope, I never knew I had such artistic talent! Adventures on multiple off campus trips... to the Southwest U.S. and Mexico my sophomore January term with Professor Art Goldstein... camping in the Mexican desert under the stars telling coyote stories and drinking tequila around the bonfire, hiking up a volcano the next morning with a hangover... endless rounds of hacky sack, and some actual learning too! Summer after my junior year off-campus mapping project in upstate NY, Rhode Island and Maine with various Professors Art Goldstein, Bruce Selleck, Paul Pinet, and Chief.

Freshman Paleontology with Bob Linsley. His beard yellow from cigarettes and the ever present bottles of Coca Cola. Making that subject come to life with a twinkle in his eye and a sense of humor, as only he could do and helping me cement my decision to commit to my concentration in Geology.

Though I did not ultimately become my profession, it has informed my love of and respect for science and the natural world. I have at various times used the foundational education I received in my work in combining media and entertainment with sustainability, environmental responsibility and social impact.

I treasure my time at Colgate and my experience with the Geology department and faculty. Thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts!

Chris Vyhna

Class of 1987

I think it's safe to say that Colgate's Geology Department put me on my life's path... working with Bruce Selleck, Rich April, Art Goldstein, and Jim McLelland was undoubtedly what inspired me to pursue a master's degree in Geology, a PhD in Geochemistry, and a career as a science teacher and science department chair at a private boarding school. They taught me a love of scientific research that continues to this day. And we had a helluva good time while doing the work--the collegiality between faculty and students, being on a first-name basis with our professors, was something that I only understood later to be unusual. I can recall holding onto the pool table with the Chief at a bar in the Taconics during our stint mapping on the OC, defeating all comers for about 2 hours, with Chief waving his pool cue around the room and bellowing, "Who's next? Who's next to lose?"

Likewise, the research experience I acquired as an undergraduate student--January term projects with both Bruce (atomic absorption flame spectroscopy of marine sedimentary rocks to characterize paleosalinities) and Art (plasticine and clay deformation experiments to model structurally deformed boudins that Art had observed in the field), a senior-year independent project on pinwheel garnets with Jim, and a summer's worth of field work with Art before I headed off to start my master's program at Tennessee was a uniquely Colgate experience that really put me on my path.

I can't thank them enough for the education they provided and the laughs we shared.

Mike Schulist

Class of 1991

I have fond memories of trekking up the hill on cold winter nights to study and finding the geology teachers hunkered down in their offices, absorbed in their study of the earth.

They loved what they did, and this was shown in so many ways - from the geology field trips all over the east coast, to geology lunches, to their informal and fun rapport with each other, to their open-door policy to meet with students and help us understand. Their influence certainly made a strong impression on me as I am now a science teacher - often spending my nights and weekends immersed in the process of helping young minds share some of the excitement about science that I learned from the amazing group of geology professors at Colgate.

Martha McConnell

Class of 1993

Colgate geology has had a profound impact on my life and career. Bruce, Chief, Connie, Paul, Art set me on a course of becoming an earth and ocean scientist, educator, and conservationist.

The O.C. '96 was instrumental for me finding me.

Thank you.

Bonnie (Kubit) Abend

Class of 1995

Chief took me under his wing Sophomore year at Colgate and I will be forever grateful that happened. He became my advisor and I went on the off-campus a year early. I had never been out west before, and being able to see the geology at the parks and map in the mountains was an amazing experience. A whole new world opened up for me on the off-campus. We had beautiful weather to hike in Bryce and it is a day I still vividly remember.

The Geology courses were wonderful at Colgate, TC taught us so much, but always put in a picture of us in the field at the end of a lecture to make us laugh. Chief accepted me and treated me like family, and this is the greatest gift that one can give.

Jennifer Murray

Class of 1996

It was from the Chief that I first heard the adage "work hard, play hard". Bruce, Chief, Richard and Art could not have been more serious about producing quality research and holding us all to the highest standards in our own work- but they also taught us about the dignity and satisfaction of having earned the privilege to kick back afterward. They never failed to apply themselves with intensity and conviction, yet made time enjoy life. I've never forgotten that. I keep making time to have fun, and hope I've earned as much as I take.

Our professors and class cohorts became like family to us in our time at Colgate. We all remember a critical life conversation with a relative or friend. I recall sitting in the front seat of the maroon van with Art Goldstein at the wheel, streaming across a long stretch of Ohio in the wee hours of the night- and a long conversation we had that stands out in my mind as a turning point in terms of how I perceive my place and worth in this world. My college memories are full of some wonderful party stories that still make me laugh, but I love that there are stories like that too- making real connections with some wonderfully wise folks.

You will no doubt hear from many alumni that Paul Pinet shaped their lives in ways we can never completely express. In his wilderness ethics course, we first learned the concept of deep ecology and pondered the gravity of our responsibility to this planet we all share. This was before Colgate had an environmental science program, at a time these concepts weren't nearly as hip or widely embraced. I had never been challenged to think about environmental ethics before, and the world-view Paul introduced us to has never left me. Like the mentors previously mentioned, Paul was a real person to us- accessible, spending time with the group of us outside the classroom.. and in this way he was able to inspire us by who he was and how he lived his life. I pursued a career as a hydrogeologist in the world of environmental consulting before pursuing my Master's and finding my way into the field of community and land use planning. I'm currently Planning Director for the Town of Middlebury, VT - a path that was inspired by seeds planted back at Colgate, which grew into a commitment to creating strong communities and inspiring residents to take social/environmental responsibility for the places they live. I'm forever grateful for my Colgate experience, and the mentorship and support of the Colgate Geology Department.

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William Willis

Class of 1996

Chief, Art (Goldstein), and Bruce (Selleck) were the core geology teachers of my Colgate experience, not just because they taught most of the courses I took, but because they gave so much of their time to the department and students like me out of class, too.

Having been in education for many years now and currently teaching environmental science at the high school level, I still look up to them as model teachers, thoughtful human beings, comedians, supportive colleagues to one another, true experiential educators, and motivators. They made learning incredibly fun and even a little mischievous, while still demanding high-quality work of their students.

Dan Gaudiano

Class of 1996

The Colgate Geology experience changed the path of my life and opened my eyes to science and wonders of the natural world. I am hugely grateful for the education that the professors provided and for the way it was taught. The focus was on inquiry learning through investigative lab and field work. I was introduced to new ideas, practices and ways of thinking that I have held close since I graduated. Specifically I love being able to think on multiple time scales and the gift of grasping deep geologic time. I also appreciate the skill of looking at landscapes for hints and clues about the formation history.

After Colgate I completed my graduate work in Geology and then went into secondary science education. Colgate's Geology program was the strong foundation that my science and teaching career was built. I was inspired not only by the content and teaching styles, but also by the intellect and quality of my professors (Pinet, Selleck, McClennen, McLelland and Goldstein). In my own teaching I have found myself drawing on the lessons of my time at Colgate to influence what I do now ~25-30 years later.

The OC experience made a huge impression on me and now I spend a great deal of time working to create immersive field educational experiences. At the moment - I am planning a science trip to Grand Teton National Park and I have Colgate's 1994 Geology OC experiences guiding me still.

Gail Holloway

Class of 1996

Chief was actually extremely influential in my decision to attend Colgate. I knew I wanted to study geology and had tailored my college visits towards that end. We toured numerous schools over the course of a week, with the Colgate visit towards the beginning. I was very impressed by the school and the department. We met Chief at that time and he was a great selling point for the program. However, that wasn't what influenced me the most. A few days later, I toured Union College. I wasn't as impressed by the school, but visiting their geology department just to be sure. To our surprise, Chief was there visiting a colleague. Not only did he recognize us from the Colgate visit, but he actually remembered our names - all from a brief visit days before. As a high school student, that was amazing to me!

At Colgate, I was lucky enough to do work study research with both Rich April and thesis research with Chief. I loved both experiences. I'm still somewhat amazed that they trusted me to use such expensive pieces of equipment without someone watching my every step. I loved all of my classes from the Geology Outdoor Freshman Seminar with Rich April (I was the only major at the start of the class and one of many by the end) to field camp (an El Nino year with LOTS of rain and snow). All of them taught me so much about the discipline, but also a lot about myself - for example, I realized I was a lot tougher than I thought after surviving field camp. I was fortunate enough to work in the department as a TA for Mineralogy and IgMet (2 semesters each) and as a tutor (2 years). Given that this is now my job (university instructor), it was wonderful practice.

One of my favorite memories of Colgate also involves Chief. He was very helpful in my applications for graduate school and was very interested to hear each acceptance when it came in. When I told him I was in at the University of Arizona, he was so excited, he gave me a big hug. It was so nice to know that my professors were just as excited by my successes as I was. :)

Kelly Knotts

Class of 1997

I loved every minute of my geology career at Colgate!

Freshman seminar with Rich April set me on my college and career path. My experiences in the geology department and out on sites still have real-world value as I teach 6th graders about our magnificent Earth referencing my experiences, knowledge, and passion.

I sincerely thank the Geology Department, especially, Rich April, Bruce Selleck, Art Goldstein, Jim "Chief" McLelland, and Di Keller who were the ones who challenged and guided me the most through my geology career at Colgate.

Chip Brackett

Class of 1998

Summer field work with Chief was an opportunity to learn about Geology as well be introduced to old classics like "El Paso" by Marty Robbins. Chief academically challenged me like I had never been challenged before in his Petrology class; the class taught me how to work hard and persist, skills that I use to this day. Chief made an effort to get to know each student on a personal level - as a manager at Boeing, I try to follow his lead and do the same. Heading to his office on the top floor of Lathrop was always a worthwhile visit.

Jann Vendetti

Class of 2001

Professor Connie Soja in 10 memories:

1. Taking her Invertebrate Paleontology course in 1998/1999 because I had a scheduling conflict with the Art History course I'd signed up for. Little did I know how much that would change my life!
2. Being shocked that I could call her "Connie" (and learning that referring to professors by their first names was common in Geology, unlike professors in other departments)
3. Noting her surprise that I figured out/guessed that a crinoid "stem" segment (columnal) was from an echinoderm. She's taught thousands of students, so I don't imagine she'd remember that tiny moment, but as a person who never collected a fossil as a kid she made me feel like maybe Invert. Paleo. was for me.
4. The O.C. and looking at cross sections of giant stromatolites in upstate N.Y.
5. Her calmly snorkeling merely feet above a giant barracuda among the coral reefs of San Salvador, Bahamas.
6. Collaborating on the *Fistulella* project that began an adventure between myself and Christy Visaggi (Class of 2002), which included fun and smelly laboratory experiments in extant hydroid taphonomy.
7. Emailing Connie as a post graduate with a list of topics that I was interested in and asking, "What is this called?", to which Connie emailed me back, "Paleobiology". Because of this I applied to Paleobiology graduate programs.
8. My first discussion section in graduate school at UC Berkeley (in Invert. Paleontology) during which I conversed (quite confidently!) with Kevin Padian (a dinosaur/bird paleontologist at UC Berkeley professor and Colgate graduate) about bivalve dentition. Of course, I learned this from Connie.
9. Connie writing a recommendation for me while I was a first year graduate student before I knew my professors well enough to ask them. She was kind but firm in telling me that she'd write me this recommendation, but I had to make it on my own after that and ask my graduate school professors.

10. Seeing Connie at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County in 2018 where I am a Malacology curator (and oversaw the Invert. Paleo. collection for 4 years) and feeling like no time had passed.

Professor Paul Pinet:

Going to Manchester, U.K. in 2000, with Paul as our cohorts' Colgate professor. We took his "Philosophy, Ethics, and Wilderness" course and it changed the way I thought about the world and humanity. Paul also led us on many adventures to sites of the Industrial Revolution in Wales and England (e.g. aqueducts, canals, steam engines, iron smelters) with his Industrial Revolution course co-leader at U. Manchester, Joe Marsh.

Professor Bruce Selleck:

Bruce let me take an upper division course without having a prerequisite. He gave me a book and advised me to learn it in preparation. I went on to get an A in Stratigraphy and Sedimentology, one of my favorite classes at Colgate. I also took his course in Reefs and learned more about Ordovician mud mounds than I thought possible. Some years after graduating I visited Colgate with my boyfriend (now husband) and was showing him around Lathrop Hall and the Geology O.C. pictures and the staircase "tower of time" when I heard Bruce say, "Jann? What are you doing here?" It was Bruce and he hadn't seen or heard much from me in at least 3 years and still recognized my voice and knew my name. He was one of my favorite professors and favorite people of all time.

I am now an Assistant Curator of Malacology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. I was, until recently, also the interim Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology at this Museum. I am convinced the reason that I got this job is because of a neontology and paleontology background, which started at Colgate. I never could have known how exceptional the Geology faculty was from '99-'01, how lucky I was to be part of that department, or how important Colgate Geology faculty and alums would be in my future.

Emily Rodgers

Class of 2002

From Geology 101: Earth, the Active Planet with Art Goldstein, I was hooked. Over the next four years I spent countless hours in Lathrop Hall learning about rocks and life from so many tremendous professors and mentors: Rich, Bruce, Connie to name only a few.

My Colgate experience was intimately affected by the Geology Department and I think very fondly of that formative time of my life very often. Colgate is special; Colgate geology even more so.

Andrew Koff

Class of 2004

Colgate Geology change my life both personally and professionally.

I learned so much from the professors about geology and beyond in my time at Colgate. I was inspired to learn about the world around us and I'm now professional hydrogeologist working for the state of New Hampshire on public drinking water supply wells.

OC02 was a formative experience for me and I still think about that time.

Linda Meyers (Chernak)

Class of 2005

I had an incredible experience in Colgate's geology program! I started at Colgate as a biology major but during my second semester freshman year I decided that wasn't for me. I had liked Earth Science in high school so I thought geology might be a good fit! I was fortunate to get in contact with one of the wonderful geology professors who helped me enroll in both an introductory geology course as well as mineralogy for my first semester of sophomore year so that I wouldn't get behind in the course sequencing. It didn't take me long to be "hooked".

I was extremely fortunate to get involved early on in research with William Peck, who was a great mentor and wonderful to work with. I still can't believe the high level research I was exposed to so early on. I also couldn't believe that I was a sophomore geology major who had keys to the lab! I felt so important!

I had the opportunity to be a teaching assistant for Economic Geology and Paleontology, which were great experiences that prepared me for graduate school.

I have Rich April to thank for my undergraduate honors thesis and for helping me gain acceptance to a Ph.D. program in rock deformation at Brown University. After studying abroad in Wollongong, Australia, in the fall of 2003, I decided I wanted to go back to the following summer to collect samples to study for my honors thesis. Rich, who wasn't my advisor at the time, agreed to be the faculty liaison for the project, and I am extremely grateful for that. Rich was also kind enough to invite me to his home to celebrate holidays that I wasn't able to go home for. He was a very important person in my Colgate journey!

One thing I don't want to forget about was the 4th floor of Lathrop. During my senior year, I spent countless hours in that top floor computer lab doing homework and labs and spending time with other geology majors. It felt like my geology "home" and while I'm thrilled the geology department has moved into a beautiful, new building, I was sad to know that other geology students wouldn't get to enjoy the 4th floor of Lathrop like I did.

The Colgate geology department had it all! Incredible professors, wonderful staff, and great students, some of whom I am still in touch with to this day! I'm so glad I found my way to Colgate's geology department in the spring of 2002!

Shannon Sweeney

Class of 2007

Colgate Geology gave me a true love of science, when I didn't think I was capable. It also provided me with friendships and memories particularly from trips to Hawaii and Ecuador to last a lifetime!

Brian White

Class of 2008

The Geology department at Colgate changed the direction of my trajectory at Colgate. I thought for sure I would end up becoming a Chemistry major and eventually go the medicine route, but a conversation with Karen Harpp changed all that, and led to a life long love of volcanoes. While I am no longer in the geology field, the mindset of thinking outside the box, researching every angle, being scrappy, and my love of teaching all stem from my experience in the program. Without the Karen and the rest of the department, I would not be where I am today.

Stephanie McClellan

Class of 2009

The Geology Department at Colgate has a very special place in my heart. I found my passion, felt more than supported in my academic endeavours, and truly felt that it shaped the way I saw the world and our planet.

I had the privilege to join Amy Leventer (the legend) in Antarctica in my sophomore year and what a formative experience! Absolutely amazing! I will always be in debt to what the department has given me. I remember my first class with Martin Wong who opened my eyes to such cool science and that enthusiasm hasn't left me. I now write about science for a living.

I wouldn't be on my career path without the incredible people and support of the department. Thank you.

Samantha Elekes (Hunt)

Class of 2009

Working with Bruce Selleck and learning about the oil and gas industry inspired me to become a petroleum geologist, which I have now been doing for 8 years. Bruce had so much patience and passion for geology and he passed it on to me.

Clementine (Dunne) Dulieu

Class of 2013

My favorite memories with Colgate Geology range from truly epic (reaching the summit of volcanoes in Chile and Ecuador) to downright silly (creating trilobite-shaped pizzas at the annual Geo Pizza Party).

As a freshman, I didn't know what I wanted to study, or what I wanted to become. Thanks to the support and encouragement of my Geology professors, I am now a geologist in the environmental consulting world -- the dream job I never knew I wanted!

I am forever grateful to the Colgate Geology professors for believing in me and helping me find my life's passion (and having a good time along the way).

Lucas Jackson

Class of 2017

I'm constantly reminded, in both big and small ways alike, how incredibly fortunate I am to have been a part of something as incredible as Colgate Geology. I don't think anything has had such a profound impact on my life as the geology department, and for that, I'm forever grateful. The friendships, the mentors, the lessons learned—they're all things I carry with me every day.

On Amy Leventer:

Many of my friends and family (both inside and outside of Colgate Geology) know the impact Amy's had on my life. I talk about her all the time.

Many know Amy has my 'second mother'. She was my advisor, boss, mentor, colleague, confidante, therapist, and more. There wasn't a single thing happening to me academically that she didn't know about. Because I worked with Amy my entire Colgate career, she undoubtedly had an interesting seat to watch my life unfold over the course of four years. The subtle ways our relationship grew and matured over four years was also a tangible reflection of the ways I was growing and maturing in myself: as a student, a researcher/academic, a friend, etc.

I remember the first time I approached Amy after one of her oceanography lectures. I wasn't really sure what I was looking for... but I knew I loved oceanography and that was enough. We walked from Persson all the way to her office (I was more out of breath than she was) and continued talking about nothing and everything. Four years later I was sprawled out on the floor of her office at 4am, academic papers and post-it notes everywhere, writing (and rewriting and rewriting) my thesis while she was away on her research trip. There's a lot I could say about Amy, but I'll focus on one thing in particular: how tough she was. If you asked a group of students to describe Amy, 'tough' probably wouldn't make the top answers. You'd probably hear things like passionate, caring, approachable, accommodating, and driven, but you might not hear a lot of people say tough. But I knew Amy, and Amy knew me, and she was tough. She trusted me with a lot of responsibility, and she had high expectations for the people she trusted. She was tough on me when my writing wasn't as strong as it should have been. She was tough on me when poor time management was hindering my ability to perform. She was tough on me when I wasn't thinking critically enough about the science behind my work. She was tough on me when it came to defending my work and my results.

When Amy first started to really push me, when she really got tough on me the first time, I remember shutting down. I hadn't failed a lot of times in my life, especially not in front

of someone who I respected so much, and I wasn't quite sure how to handle it. But even though Amy was tough, she was also one of the most supportive people I've ever met. She was tough because she knew I could do better... and she wanted me to recognize for myself that I could do better. Out of this came lessons in how to be confident and articulate. She helped create a space where I was able to be curious, and so I learned to be passionate about things and find an inner drive, instead of relying on that passion to come from someone else. And when I did succeed, Amy would be one of the first people I would tell about it.

I would not have had had the Colgate experience that I did, or be the person that I am today, without Amy's incredible trust and support.

On Karen Harpp:

I wouldn't consider myself a messy person... Karen simply wasn't having that. She taught me—in more ways than one—that things can be messy, are likely to get messy, sometimes should be messy, and that success can ultimately be found inside a mess. Experiments in her volcanology lab were undoubtedly messy. The datasets were always messy— at times it seemed results were purposely flirting with what textbooks deemed the 'ideal state' and then would veer off course and get messy all over again, forcing me to think critically about why things in nature aren't textbook (this may seem obvious but as a freshman I thought academia wasn't messy—accepting geology as messy was a big step for me).

Karen taught me—and more importantly, showed me—that success, not just failure, is messy. So when things seemingly aren't going according to plan, that doesn't mean you've failed, you might just have to get a little more messy to reach your goal.