

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Charles E. Greer

1942-2022

Charles Greer, faculty member in the Department of Geography from 1978 to 2006, passed away at the age of 80 on August 10, 2022. Fond memories of Charles have been shared by those here in Bloomington and by many former students from across the country and world. In late August, a memorial service was held in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he and partner Susan had returned after living in Bloomington for nearly 30 years.

Born and raised in Fort Collins, Charles received a B.A. in geology in 1964 from Dartmouth College, where he also was a wide receiver on the football team. He and Susan then married and moved to Hong Kong where they lived from 1964 to 1966. During that time, Charles taught at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Charles then enrolled in graduate school at the University of Washington in Seattle, receiving both M.A. (1969) and Ph.D. (1975) degrees in geography. His research focus was always on integrated human-environment interactions, primarily in China, but later elsewhere as his interests expanded. When Charles was hired at Indiana University, he had a 50/50 joint appointment in geography and East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALC). In EALC, Charles taught a popular course called Geographic Patterns in China. In geography, he was best known for teaching Environmental Conservation, where he had a following of undergraduates who loved his deep dives into classic works such as *Walden*, *A Sand County Almanac*, and *Silent Spring*. They also loved his Zen-like charisma.

Later in his career, Charles moved his appointment to 100% in geography, in part because he was developing a number of strong connections within the department. In particular, Charles had close ties with Dan Knudsen, Roman Zlotin, and Scott Robeson—as well as a growing cohort of graduate students for whom he became a mentor, collaborator, and inspirational life-long friend. During that time, Charles and Dan traveled to Denmark and Kazakhstan for field work and co-authored several articles and book chapters on landscapes and tourism. Reflecting on those travels, Dan Knudsen related that “Charles was at home in the world on the world’s terms, not his.”

Charles and Roman did field work in the U.S. Southwest and Mexico while Charles and Scott spent time together in the forests of southern Indiana, talking about nature, hunting, and more. Charles had a deep and reflective relationship with hunting, with some of his teaching and writing surely being inspired by time spent in a tree stand. While Charles remained a steadfast Coloradan, he often talked about how much he “loved the hardwoods” of eastern North America.

Anyone who knew Charles also knew how much he loved horses. His family had horses, for competitive and pleasure riding, at both their Bloomington and Fort Collins homes. Charles co-edited a volume of poetry titled “Say This of Horses,” which was published by the University of Iowa Press. Insight into the depth of those interests can be found in these recordings where Charles reads from his own poetry:

<https://indianapublicmedia.org/poetsweave/charles-greer-galloping-big-trails.php>

<https://indianapublicmedia.org/poetsweave/guest-charles-greer.php>

With his focus on landscapes, conservation, and environmental ethics, Charles would have fit right in with the modern intellectual landscape here at IU and in the Department of Geography. He also had an unwavering commitment to diversity, mutual respect, and inclusiveness. Charles Greer’s contributions

to the department and university went far beyond what we normally look for in academic careers and we deeply miss his calm perspective and friendship. While most of us understand that there is much more to being a scholar than publications and classroom instruction, Charles was an extraordinary example of someone who was influential in profoundly immeasurable ways.

Scott Robeson
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(With contributions from Dan Knudsen, professor emeritus of geography)