CHAPTER 14

GEOGRAPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL

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After 26 years with Geology in a joint department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Geography was established as an independent unit in 1962. Small and understaffed at the start, it has evolved over four decades to its present excellence in faculty and graduate students, undergraduate and graduate courses and programs and degree holders. Its growth has been erratic, caused by variations over time in state budgets, administrative support, faculty shifts and curriculum changes. On the positive side, it has benefited from the strong leadership of its chairs, a core faculty who remained despite inducements elsewhere and quality students. The enhanced reputation of UNC-Chapel Hill as one of the nation’s leading public universities; its lovely historic campus and the attractive college town of Chapel Hill have been substantial assets for the department.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. Before moving into a summary of the department’s evolution by decade, it is important to introduce the broad growth patterns of the university itself. The University of North Carolina was chartered by the state legislature in 1784, had its first building (the first public university building in the United States) started in October 12, 1793, and opened for instruction on January 15, 1795. It was the only American public university to grant degrees in the 18th century. In the late 1850s, it had an enrollment of 425, the nation’s second largest after Yale University.

Dramatic decline during the Civil War and Reconstruction led to closure from 1871 to 1875. Rebuilding and slow growth was the usual condition until the World War I era, when student enrollment reached 1000. Sharing in the general American prosperity of the 1920s, however, the university had a remarkable growth in quality through the recruitment of many vigorous, ambitious and productive teacher-scholars and enlightened administrative leadership that supported academic programs and research.

Advances in humanistic and scientific scholarship were supported by a library of regional and national distinction, the first university press in the Southeast, and the Institute of Government, which demonstrated how university initiative could upgrade the quality of local and state government. In 1922, UNC was elected the 25th member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, an organization of American and Canadian universities that had attained distinction in graduate study and research. It antedated by three or four decades the general spread of graduate education across the Southeast.

These exemplary developments in the 1920s and 1930s found strong new UNC graduate programs in other fields staking out claims to intellectual ground that geography was cultivating in universities outside the South. That was especially true in sociology and economics. Sociology blossomed under the dynamic leadership of Howard W. Odum, a Georgian who had two doctorates, one in psychology from Clark University and another in sociology from Columbia University. A member of the UNC faculty from 1920 until his death in 1954, he created the Department of Sociology; the professional journal Social Forces; the Institute for Research in Social Science; and a program that became the Department of City and Regional Planning.

Odum’s scholarly focus was initially on African American society, shifted to the South as a distinctive American region and then to regionalism and regional-national planning. In his important book, Southern Regions (1936), and many other books and articles, he was a leader in analyzing the problems that retarded the South and identified the potential for improving its race relations, industrialization and regional planning. One of Odum’s distinguished colleagues, Rupert B. Vance, also strove to make the South a better place for its people. His well-developed geographical awareness was illustrated by the title and contents of his outstanding book Human Geography of the South (1932).

Economics in the prewar era was within the School of Commerce, later School of Business Administration. One of its most brilliant faculty members was Erich W. Zimmerman, a German with a Bonn University doctorate who came to Chapel Hill in 1920 as a specialist in international trade, resources and industry. His textbook World Resources and Industries (1934) quickly established itself as a national leader. Its strong geographical content made it a popular adoption in American and European economic geography courses. Zimmerman left UNC for the University of Texas in 1942 and his course and subject matter declined locally after the war.

Geography’s Early Days. Professor Collier Cobb, UNC’s main geologist from 1892 to 1934, taught an occasional physical geography course in the geology program, which was housed in New East building in the historic heart of the campus. He was an early member of the Association of American Geographers, traveled in the U.S. and abroad and gave public travel lectures illustrated by large glass lantern slides. The first graduate degrees in geography, one M.S. and one M.A., were awarded in 1926 and the first Ph.D. in 1932.

Geography got off to a real start with the appointment of Samuel T. Emory in 1933. He had come into geography relatively late. A Virginian, he got A.B. and M.A. degrees in English and Latin at Randolph Macon College and another M.A. in Education at Columbia University. For a decade he was a teacher and administrator in secondary education and a district sales representative for a textbook company.
Exposed to geography more formally while teaching summer session classes at present UNC-Greensboro, Emory came to Chapel Hill in the depths of the Depression as its sole geographer. His presence prompted the department's name change to Geology and Geography. A 1937–1938 leave of absence enabled him to complete a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. He was promoted to full professor in 1945 and from 1949 until his death in 1957 served as chair of the joint department.

A second geographer, Franklin C. Erickson, was appointed in 1936. Born of Swedish parents and raised in Massachusetts, he earned his Ph.D. at Clark University in 1935 after an extended period of study in Europe. He was an expert cartographer. In 1942, shortly after the start of World War II, he was on leave for one year to do cartographic work with the Office of Strategic Services and Board of Economic Warfare in Washington, D.C. After return to campus, he taught students in the wartime Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP).

The catalogue for 1945–1946, the first post-war academic year when the wave of former military personnel entered the university under the G.I. Bill, showed an ambitious list of geography courses taught by the two instructors. They were physical geography, industrial-commercial geography, soils, soil erosion and land use mapping, political geography, U.S. historical geography, climatology, conservation and the regional geography of North America, South America and Europe. Instruction was under a quarter system of instruction and some courses were taught only in alternating years. The few graduate students had to settle for special work and research registration in geography and cognate study in geology. A second Ph.D. in geography was awarded in 1945.

After Erickson resigned to go to Boston University, his position was filled by J. Sullivan “Hoot” Gibson (Ph.D., Clark) in 1947. Gibson had experience in land use planning with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Two years later, geographer David G. Basile joined the faculty. A doctoral student at Columbia University, he and his wife were on route to Ecuador in December 1941 to collect data for his dissertation when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Wartime service prolonged his stay in Ecuador to seven years.

In Ecuador, Basile became an American government agent for the collection of cinchona bark, the source of quinine, from wild trees in the rainforest to replace plantation supplies in Southeast Asia that were lost to the Japanese. Later he served as vice-consul in Guayaquil and finally had time for his original research project on rural landholding and land-use patterns in the major Andean basins of Ecuador.

In the first decade after the war, private foundation and federal funds helped create and strengthen foreign area study programs in major universities. Basile was hired to add strength to an already excellent Institute for Latin American Studies and its undergraduate degree program at Chapel Hill. His teaching assignment included introductory physical geography, economic geography and regional courses on Central America and South America. Also he was member of a campus committee that in 1956 launched an inter-disciplinary degree program in International Studies. He was an early winner of a Tanner Award for outstanding undergraduate teaching. During 1953–1954 UNC shifted from a quarter to a semester system in which the average teaching load was three courses per semester plus any extra time required for individual work with graduate students. The department continued primarily in a service role. The introductory physical geography course benefited from its designation as a laboratory science in the division of natural sciences. With all students required to take two lab sciences during their freshman-sophomore years, many with nonscience interests opted for geography or geology courses. The study of landforms was covered in the geology course and physical geography dealt primarily with weather and climate. All geography faculty members taught at least one section of the introductory physical geography course annually.

The School of Education was an important source of students. Students training for teaching social studies in state schools were required to complete at least two geography courses. Physical geography was a popular elective because it satisfied part of that requirement and counted as a lab science.

Lab sections and the offices of the few graduate students were housed in a two-story frame building, New East Annex, located adjacent to the department’s headquarters. Acquired from a military base as surplus property at the end of the war as a “temporary” facility for swollen postwar enrollments, it survived as a dilapidated eyesore until its removal in 1977.

Two new faculty members arrived in 1957. John D. “Doug” Eyre (Ph.D. Michigan), who replaced the deceased Samuel Emory, served as a Japanese language specialist in the Army for nearly four years. He taught at University of Washington from 1951 to 1957, at a time when its talented faculty members and graduate students were launching new directions for geography through the development of theory and the application of statistical methodology.

In Chapel Hill he taught political geography and U.S. historical geography courses, added courses in East Asia and Southeast Asia, was active in the International Studies program and participated in the gradual creation of an undergraduate Asian Studies degree program. Although the UNC library was a depository for maps produced by the federal government and had a large backlog of unsorted maps, it did not have a separate map room for their storage, display and use. Eyre worked with the library administration until such a facility, managed by a professional map librarian, was created in the 1960s. The other 1957 appointee was Sherwin Cooper (Ph.D., Michigan). He had traveled widely in the Americas when serving as a wireless operator in the U.S. Merchant Marine and on freighters. He taught physical geography and urban geography courses (Fig. 1).

The geographers were enthusiastic participants in the annual meetings of the Southeastern Division (SEDAAG) of the Association of American Geographers. Papers presented at the meetings were printed in a mimeographed Memorandum Folio, forerunner of The Southeastern Geographer journal. Both Gibson and Basile
were eventually elected division chair. University travel funds also facilitated faculty participation in the larger national meetings of the AAG.

THE 1960s. By the end of the 1950s, the geographers and geologists were pushing the administration for a friendly divorce because of diverging disciplinary directions. A formal appeal for the creation of separate departments made by the geographers in February 1960 was looked on favorably by the administration and the desired separation became effective July 1, 1962. Eyre was promoted to full professor and became the Geography chair for a five-year term. Two years later, Geography was transferred from the natural science to the social science division, where it remains. It became one of the few social science departments on campus to list selected courses that carry natural science credit. Geography was fortunate to retain its ability to award graduate degrees after the separation.

A remaining issue was housing for the two departments. A new building, Elisha Mitchell Hall, named for a distinguished UNC geologist of the past whose name was also given to the highest mountain in the eastern U.S., was already at an advanced planning stage shaped primarily around geology’s specifications. However, budgetary stringencies reduced its size by one-third, making it a tight fit for both departments. It was clear that Geography would be shifted to other quarters as Geology grew. In 1961 Geography petitioned and was granted permission to remain in New East when Geology moved out in spring 1963, even though its vacated space had been awarded to a small but growing Department of City and Regional Planning.

At that point it was a small department of four faculty members—Basile, Cooper, Eyre and Gibson—six undergraduate majors and 11 graduate students (six M.A. and five Ph.D.). Geography courses had 1282 registrations in 1962–1963, of which fifty-seven percent were in the introductory physical geography course. One positive trend was the gradual growth of the introductory world regional geography course.

Geography was on the brink of its first year as an independent department when Cooper resigned to transfer to University of Cincinnati. His replacement was Richard E. Lonsdale (Ph.D., Syracuse), a specialist in industrial geography and the Soviet Union. He also taught the cartography course required of majors.

UNC was soon involved in the greatest single-decade growth in student numbers in American history, involving children of the post-World War II baby boom, combined with growing national prosperity. The student body grew from 8,500 in 1960 to 18,200 in 1970 with a parallel growth in faculty numbers. The opening of new geography departments and the expansion of older ones elsewhere to accommodate large enrollment increases came at a time when new Ph.D.s were few in number. This created a seller’s market in which qualified personnel were difficult to attract and hold. Although UNC was able to hire three new faculty members in 1963 and two more in 1965, four of them had resigned by 1971.

Those hired in 1963 were Karel J. Kansky, Louis DeVorsey, Jr. and Donald R. Currey. Kansky (Ph.D., Chicago), a former refugee from the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, added strength in urban geography and quantitative analysis. However, he transferred to the University of Pittsburgh after only one year. He was replaced in 1964 by DeVorsey, an American who was completing a Ph.D. at University of London. He taught his specialty, historical geography, Europe and a new course in photo interpretation. In 1967, he accepted an attractive offer from the University of Georgia, where he fashioned a career in Southern historical geography. Currey (Ph.D., Kansas) added skills in physical geography but left in 1966 for a position at University of Wisconsin.

The two 1965 additions were Richard G. Smith and Clyde E. Browning. Smith (Ph.D., Wisconsin), was a physical geographer with Alaskan experience and a skilled photographer. He stayed five years, then left for Western University. Browning (Ph.D., Washington) was an urban geographer with quantitative skills and applied experience with the Chicago Area Transportation Study. He was a real estate specialist in the School of Business Administration, University of Oregon, for six years before coming to Chapel Hill.
After these several years of faculty shuffling, the department attracted and held five new faculty members: Stephen S. Birdsall and Richard J. Kopec in 1967, Arthur J. Hawley in 1968, and John W. Florin and Barry M. Moriarty in 1969. Birdsall (Ph.D., Michigan State) brought quantitative and research design skills and an Africa specialty. Kopec (Ph.D., Clark), who had teaching experience at Wayne State University, specialized in physical geography, climatology and cartography.

Gibson retired in 1966 and was replaced temporarily by Visiting Professor John W. MacNab of Victoria University, New Zealand. Hawley (Ph.D., Michigan) filled Gibson's slot with a background in agricultural geography, field methods, photo interpretation and remote sensing. Florin (Ph.D., Penn State) brought strength in historical geography and population geography, while Moriarty (Ph.D., Michigan State) had strength in quantitative measurement, economic geography and industrial geography.

The department had assembled a relatively stable and balanced faculty of nine members by the end of the decade. Eyre was awarded a Fulbright professorship at Kyoto University in Japan and was on leave 1965–1966. Basile was acting chair during his absence and in 1967 succeed him as chair for two five-year terms.

The geography course structure underwent numerous modifications. The main emphasis was on building some depth in economic geography, urban geography and climatology while keeping the broad undergraduate entry courses strong, adding regional courses and a broader and more inclusive range of topical courses. Most faculty members taught three courses per semester, including at least one large introductory course section each year. Enrollments remained strong, totaling 2300 in 1970.

The graduate program evolved more slowly, due mainly to the small size of the faculty, its heavy undergraduate teaching load and the initial difficulty in attracting students to a relatively new and unknown department. There was also the competition of established geography programs and their more generous graduate fellowships elsewhere in the country. The department's early success in attracting qualified graduate students from other states was due in part to the national reputation of UNC.

The rapid increase in graduate student numbers at UNC soon put severe pressure on departmental faculties and budgets. In response, the Graduate School established a maximum enrollment figure for each unit in 1964–1965. The control remained in use with flexibility for annual variations and long-range growth. Geography's initial ceiling of 15 graduate students in residence rose to 30 by 1970. The number of admissions each year was the difference between the ceiling figure and the number of slots opened by students finishing degree programs, remaining off-campus or dropping out. Entering student quality increased with the heightened competition for admission.

Almost one-half of the 1969–1970 geography graduate students were supported by state funds as lab assistants in the introductory physical geography course. In the same year, a faculty committee reviewed the university's science offerings. The introductory physical geography course lost its one-hour lab credit but remained a regular three-hour natural science elective. Enrollment dropped to one-half its former size and it took the remainder of the decade to bring it up to the earlier level.

**THE 1970s.** Campus anti-war demonstrations in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not as severe at UNC as at many other major American universities, largely because of an already established practice of including students in university governance. Student pressures did result in some short-range and long-range changes that were felt in all departments. In geography two graduate students elected by their peers attended all regular monthly faculty meetings to feed student concerns and suggestions into discussions and to better circulate news of developments. Another body blow to the program was the physical relocation of the department. City and Regional Planning secured federal funds to upgrade New East for its own graduate program and in January 1968 the geography faculty were transferred to temporary quarters in Nash Hall on the western edge of the campus. A frame building erected by the Navy during World War II, it had only one small classroom, so that geography classes were scattered around the campus where space was available. The graduate students remained in New East Annex. This separation negatively impacted enrollments during the five years of enforced exile that followed.

Geography also scheduled one “freshman seminar” each semester for several years. Begun to let beginning students operate in a more informal, personalized setting, the seminars were loosely structured, limited to 12 students and were conducted by faculty members on a voluntary basis.

Another initiative, still practiced in modified form, was the creation of a pass-fail procedure in which undergraduates could take a limited number of nonrequired courses on a nongrade basis. Grade inflation became rampant during the war years and continued in some departments and by individual instructors for another decade or more. The fact that geography held to its prewar grading practices hurt its enrollments to some degree in the 1970s and 1980s.

In contrast to the large turnover of faculty in the 1960s, Peter J. Robinson (Ph.D., McMaster, Canada) in 1971 and Melinda S. Meade (Ph.D., Hawaii) in 1979 were the only 1970s additions. The former was a climate and meteorology specialist and the latter brought strengths in population geography, medical geography and Southeast Asia. Lonsdale resigned unexpectedly in spring 1971 to become full professor and chair at University of Nebraska. He had been an excellent teacher, scholar and leader. As editor and chief cartographer, he completed the well-received *Atlas of North Carolina*, published by the UNC Press in 1967. He served as the editor of *The Southeastern Geographer* and was Visiting Professor at University of New England, Australia in 1970. Basile completed ten years as chair and was succeeded by Kopec in 1967.
A 1972 report showed that UNC had one of the smallest geography faculties in the country, ranked 41st in size among the 46 Ph.D.-granting departments. In many ways it was surprising that the department was able to assemble a stable and quality group because its faculty salary scale was among the lowest in peer universities, especially at the associate professor and professor ranks. One internal response to the continuing need for additional personnel was to employ experienced doctoral level students as teaching fellows in the introductory courses and to increase the average class size.

Whereas the main aim of the 1960s was a broad-based curriculum, the aim of the 1970s was course depth in core subject areas. Five such areas, based on existing faculty strengths and the desired direction for improvement in the graduate program, were urban-economic, physical environment, population, regions and spatial analysis techniques. A sixth, health delivery systems, was added later.

Such decisions emerged from self-examination and from the advice of outside professional reviewers. For example, in 1975 Geography was one of the first UNC departments to respond to a new Graduate School program of outside evaluation. In a comprehensive review, Dr. John Sherman (Washington) and Dr. Lawrence Summers (Michigan State) found progress sound and commendable given the size of the faculty but also identified some shortcomings.

They recommended more advanced courses and seminars for graduate students, more funds for equipment as the computer age was gaining momentum, and better utilization of advanced graduate students as teachers in the introductory courses to give them teaching experience and to free faculty for more concentration on the graduate program. Such recommendations matched departmental aspirations and gave the administration a suggested blueprint for the future development of geography. However, annual budgetary shortages and the small faculty continued as barriers to their realization.

By the end of the 1970s, the department's rank structure was five full professors, three associate professors and two assistant professors. Teaching loads were reduced to a total of five courses per year, three in one semester and two in the other semester. Faculty could arrange for occasional released time for research, important because the university did not have a regular system of sabbatical leaves. A trickle of small grants helped individual faculty research activities.

Eyre, Florin and Moriarty served as college advisors, a function not rewarded with a reduced teaching load. Eyre was assistant to the Provost in overseeing campus international programs, prepared a first faculty handbook that was circulated to all faculty and was a Visiting Geography Scientist to five Southern colleges under an AAG program funded by the U.S. Office of Education. Most of the faculty attended the inaugural meeting of the North Carolina Geographical Society in May 1972 at Beech Mountain, North Carolina. Florin and Birdsall co-authored a textbook, *Regional Landscapes of the United States and Canada* (Wiley), that was widely adopted and went through subsequent revised editions. Birdsall was editor of *The Southeastern Geographer* during 1972–1975.

Among major developments, in May 1974 the department hosted a symposium on the current status of medical geography, which was enjoying rapid growth in the U.S. and abroad. The seven invited participants, all leaders in the field, were: Stanley Brunn (Michigan State), John L. Girt (Guelph, Canada), C. Gregory Knight (Penn State), Jacques M. May (American Geographical Society Emeritus), Malcom A. Murray (Georgia State), Gerald F. Pyle (Akron) and John Hunter (Michigan State), chair. Florin, Meade and other UNC specialists served as discussants.

In 1972 Moriarty established an Institute for Economic Development that gained a national reputation for quality during the ten years under his direction. It consisted of a one-week course for 40 economic development personnel from chambers of commerce, public utilities, banks, engineering and management consulting firms, federal and state divisions and planning agencies. It was jointly sponsored by Geography and state agencies in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Maryland and was accredited by the American Economic Council. Management of the program was later transferred to the Department of City and Regional Planning.

Kopiec established the nonprofit UNC-CH Cartographic Lab within the department. It provided campus-wide service in graphic consulting, data compilation and manual and computer-driven cartography. A first digitizer was bought with funds from several campus sources. Robinson was appointed to a new office, State Climatologist for North Carolina, in 1976.

The department launched a series of in-house monographs, *Studies in Geography*, in 1970 to provide faster publication for its faculty and to make the department better known nationally. Eyre and Browning were co-editors and Eyre was general manager. The main market was university and other libraries. The first number, a bibliography of dissertations in geography 1901 to 1969, sold well and helped pay for later volumes with weaker sales.


The department's first endowed fund was created by a gift of Geography alumnus Andrew McNally IV of Rand McNally, Chicago, for an annual McNally Award for Excellence in Geography. The stipend of $100, later increased, and a fine world atlas went to the best senior geography major on the basis of academic performance.
The graduate program continued to evolve with new courses and lab equipment and good job placement. It had three Afro-American students supported by funds from COMGA, the Committee of Geography and Afro-Americans, a program of the U.S. Office of Education administered by the AAG. On a recreational note, the department’s volleyball team won the intramural campus championship under the unlikely name of the Ham Bolts, derived from a corrupted Humboldt's. That explains the name,” The Bolt,” that was given to a periodic graduate news sheet for internal circulation.

THE 1980s. The UNC student body had grown to 21,465 by 1980. One of the key trends for Geography in the following decade was the involvement of faculty in two types of activity that took them wholly or partially away from the department. Both types brought some temporary disruption in instructional programs and the amount of published research. At the same time, both gave the department positive exposure and yielded some short-range and long-range benefits. Fixed-term appointments were used for temporary replacement personnel.

Florin was visiting professor in the Department of Geography and Computer Science, U.S. Military Academy at West Point during 1980–1981. Moriarty was the Director of Geography and Regional Science representative at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C. during 1979–1981. Robinson was also in Washington as an administrator of the National Climatic Program Act, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during 1980–1982.

Short-term appointments to fill their vacancies were Dr. Barbara Bailey, formerly at Appalachian State University; Dr. Edward Hellman of the Energy Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory; and Dr. Arthur V. Dodd, retired director of the Environmental Sciences Division, Army Reserve Office-Durham. Dodd remained on the staff for many years as either a full-time or part-time lecturer on weather and climate.

A new faculty appointment in 1980, G. Joseph Meneley (Ph.D., Iowa), specialized in health delivery systems, spatial analysis and computer operations. After two years in Chapel Hill, he resigned in favor of a commercial position and was replaced by Wilbert M. Gesler (Ph.D., North Carolina). Gesler grew up in India, the son of missionary parents and earned two college degrees in mathematics in the U.S. before coming to Chapel Hill as a doctoral student. After getting his Ph.D., he taught at Rutgers and was a Fulbright Research Scholar at University of Sierra Leone in Freetown. His specialties were medical geography, quantitative measurement and Africa.

Assignments in campus administration attracted Florin and Birdsall in 1982 for substantial amounts of time that made it necessary to reduce their teaching loads. The former became Assistant Dean in Academics in the College of Arts and Sciences and in 1987 succeeded Kopec as departmental chair. After completing a two-year term as president of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG), Birdsall became Associate Dean for Budgets and Planning in the College of Arts and Sciences. He spent the rest of the decade in the dean’s office, one year as Acting Dean, while also serving the AAG two times as treasurer and SEDAG as regional councilor and national councilor. As temporary replacements, April Veness (Ph.D., Minnesota) served three years before joining the University of Delaware faculty and Kent Mathewson (Ph.D., Wisconsin) two years before his Louisiana State University faculty appointment.

Kopec needed immediate assistance in the exploding field of computer graphics, remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) that was met for one year by Grady Meehan (Ph.D., North Carolina). In 1986 the department was able to attract a talented and experienced geographer, Stephen J. Walsh (Ph.D., Oregon State), who had honed his skills in remote sensing and GIS at Oklahoma State University. Having done so much to bring the computer age to the department, Kopec completed his ten years as chair and was replaced by Florin in 1987. Basile had retired two years earlier after 36 years of dedicated service to the department. He continued to teach part-time for two more years.

As replacement for Basile, Karl Zimmerer (Ph.D., Berkeley), a biogeographer fresh from field work in the Peruvian Andes, was appointed in 1988. Two years later he accepted an attractive offer from University of Wisconsin. Ezekial Kalipeni (Ph.D., North Carolina) was a visiting lecturer on Africa for one year, then joined the University of Illinois faculty. The department was finally given the position of an applied staff cartographer and facilities manager in 1988.

The department benefited from the presence of two visiting foreign scholars and three adjunct professors. The former were Professor Takashi Todokoro, an urban and economic geographer of private Ritsumeikan University of Kyoto, Japan, and David Sharon, an internationally known climatologist from Hebrew University, Israel. Three adjunct professors were recruited from the large number of high-quality professionals in the nearby Research Triangle Park. They were Dr. Sharon LeDuc and Dr. Peter Finkelstein, research scientists in the Environmental Protection Agency’s climate research program, and Dr. Jared Bales, a research hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. Each served on occasion as consultant and seminar participant and on graduate student doctoral committees.

Geography shared in a decade of growth in numbers, especially in its second half. The university grew to 23,810 students in 1990, and the department registered a high of 3500 enrollments, 48 majors and 45 graduate students. Faculty research grants were increasing in number and total amount, faculty teaching loads had moved lower to an average two courses each semester plus work with individual graduate students in theses and dissertations, and all faculty offices were equipped with computers. Following a 1983-1984 administrative directive for all departments, Geography reworked its course offerings and assigned new course numbers where appropriate.
The department’s campus quarters were shifted again. They were in Nash Hall for five years until moved in 1973 to more permanent housing on the second and third floors of Saunders Hall in the central campus. Further repairs of Saunders, completed by February 1978, necessitated another short shift to an adjacent building.

Emphasis on individual faculty links with other departments and programs continued. On-campus interaction was with Carolina Population Center, School of Public Health, Institute for Research in Social Science, Institute for Environmental Studies, Water Resources Institute, Institute for Nutrition, Ecology Curriculum, and such area study degree programs as International Studies, American Studies, African and Afro-American Studies and Latin American Studies. Off-campus ties were formed with the Environmental Protection Agency and other Research Triangle Park scientific agencies and several departments in state government.

The overall quality of graduate study applicants improved and more of the top applicants elected to come to Chapel Hill. One inducement was the in-state tuition rate, one of the lowest among peer schools, which accompanied a fellowship award. The increase in female applicants reflected national trends. Medical geography, GIS/remote sensing and climatology were the main fields of interest. The number of graduate degrees awarded annually increased to two Ph.D.s and six M.A.s in 1987 and two Ph.D.s and seven M.A.s in 1989. Following an established practice, Friday afternoons were kept open for enrichment talks by visiting professionals, discussion of faculty and graduate student research in progress and topics of general interest.

Undergraduate majors worked with Hawley to establish a chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, a national honorary society for geographers. Once the U.S. Congress approved a Geography Awareness Week petition of Senator Bill Bradley, members prepared a campus program annually. One year they held a campus open-house for students interested in summer travel in Europe. To help with job placement, the department assigned a teaching assistant with counseling experience to contact representatives of big firms, educate development and business personnel about the marketable skills of geographers, circulate a news sheet with findings about career opportunities and teach seniors how to design a resume that highlights their geographic skills.

Among noteworthy developments in the department, Robinson and Kopec cooperated with the Department of Geosciences at North Carolina State University to create a North Carolina Climate Program. Robinson became its Coordinator. Newcomer Walsh set up a Remote Sensing and GIS Laboratory in the department in 1986 and shortly thereafter consolidated it with the existing Cartography and Computer Graphics Laboratory into a comprehensive Spatial Analysis Laboratory. Funds from a variety of sources kept it fully equipped and periodically updated. Moriarty served as president of the Regional Science Association.

Kopec chaired a committee investigating geographic illiteracy in North Carolina. Its dismal findings, reported in the national press, helped prompt the National Geographic Society of Washington into financing remedial action through state geographic alliances. The North Carolina alliance was led by faculty of East Carolina University and Appalachian State University. Both schools had long teacher training experience and many alumni among the state’s teachers. Florin was UNC’s representative in the alliance, taught in its summer programs for selected school teachers and eventually authored geography textbooks for elementary school pupils.

Kopec carried the geographic illiteracy issue to Raleigh with a proposal that geography be removed from the social studies format and be taught as a free-standing and required subject in high school. Social studies usually had little geographical content and were taught by teachers with minimal geographic training. Kopec’s proposal was not approved but it did stir action to get additional teacher training in geography and to inject more geography into the social studies courses.

A printed newsletter, “Perspectives: News from the Department of Geography,” edited by Walsh, was circulated in late 1989 to all undergraduate and graduate alumni but failed to build interest in and support of the department. Following issues were circulated at about one and one-half year intervals.

The department took another step in endowment building when Eyre started a general Geography Fund in 1985 as the receptacle for gifts from alumni and friends. All gifts were invested by the university and the fund’s annual payout was used by the department to supplement its state budgets. The fund grew slowly for the first ten years due to the department’s short history and small alumni group.

Four years later, two major funds were endowed by alumnus Dr. Voit Gilmore (M.A. 1985 and Ph.D. 1987). They were the Voit Gilmore Distinguished Research Professorship ($500,000), the department’s first endowed chair, and the John D. Eyre Geography Travel Fund ($200,000). The latter honored his academic advisor and provided travel funds for faculty and graduate student research or for faculty travel to gain new insights and information that can enrich their teaching. Gilmore graduated from UNC Phi Beta Kappa in 1939 and fashioned a career in such diverse fields as politics and government, business and conservation. Coming to the department later in life, his experience, contagious curiosity about places, people and travel enlivened the life of the department and stimulated younger graduate students.

The further growth of the department on most counts improved the external stature of the department. In the 1984 national ranking of doctoral faculties by size and scholarly achievement by the National Academy of Sciences, UNC-CH was in the 50th percentile and ranked second of six in the Southeast. Only the University of Georgia department, which was the first to gain regional prominence and had one of the largest faculties (23) in the country, ranked higher. Studies in Geography, the department’s monograph series, published five more titles before a combination of declining library sales and restrictive accounting regulations brought about its demise. The five were about the Kentucky Bluegrass, medical geography issues, careers of prominent geographers, Nagoya, Japan, and an updated bibliography of...
dissertations in geography. Two additional monographs appeared later under separate funding.

A New York Times article in January 1987 on new directions in geography said that "many geographers in the field believed that the Universities of Minnesota and Penn State are leaders in the field, followed by the University of California at both Berkeley and Los Angeles and the University of Wisconsin, Illinois, Washington, Georgia and North Carolina." Other estimates rated UNC-CH among national leaders in medical geography and climate modeling. Remote sensing and GIS were measuring up to general national standards in new undergraduate and graduate courses and in popularity among graduate students.

THE 1990s. The 1990s brought maturation to many aspects of the geography program. The decade is remembered for its Clinton prosperity that brought new faculty positions and salary increases, larger operational budgets and increased alumni financial support. Undergraduate and graduate programs were fuller and more comprehensive, enrollments held steady at the 3000 student level and undergraduate majors reached a peak of 75. There was a steady output of M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and excellent job placement. Holders of UNC-CH doctorates were selected for faculty positions in such universities as Michigan, Michigan State, Texas, Maryland, Indiana, SUNY-Buffalo, Old Dominion and UNC-Greensboro. It was another decade of self-examination reports, departmental retreats and future planning (Fig. 2).

The geography faculty went through a shuffle involving seven losses due to three retirements, one death, one internal shift and one resignation. The end of the decade found a faculty of 13 in place. Retirement ended the full-time services of Eyre, Browning and Kopec. Eyre, the last member of the pre-1962 faculty still teaching full-time, reached the then mandatory retirement age of 70 in 1992 but remained in a part-time capacity for nine more years. He continued to oversee the department's fund-raising activities and was active in library affairs. Browning had served for 27 years. Kopec retired in 1993 after 26 years, ten of them as chair, credited with having led the department into the computer age. Dodd ended his many years of full-time and part-time teaching of weather and climate in 1992.

Moriarty kept his regular teaching and research schedule despite many painful years due to kidney problems until his death in 1995 at age 63. He was active in geographical societies and the Regional Science Association. He lectured in a number of European countries and Australia, where he became known as a leading economic development specialist. David Butler (Ph.D., Kansas), a geomorphologist who came to Chapel Hill in 1992 from the University of Georgia, resigned in 1997 to accept a challenging position in Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos. Among the executive secretaries who kept the department's central office in good order, none was missed more than Mrs. Marie Blalock when she retired in 1993 after 18 years of service.

Fig. 2. A gathering of senior UNC geographers in May 1994. From left to right: Will Gesler, Clyde Browning, Doug Eyre, Dave Basile, Steve Birdsall, Rich Kopec, and John Florin (Browning, Eyre, Basile, and Kopec already retired).

Eight new faculty members were recruited. Two brought depth to the Latin American offerings. Thomas J. Whitmore (Ph.D., Clark), a 1991 arrival, specialized in cultural ecology, with a focus on the impact of the Spanish conquest on Native American populations and agricultural systems. Altha Cravey (Ph.D., Iowa) studied the role of gender in Mexican manufacturing and American political geography.

The department gained by the decision of geographer James H. Johnson (Ph.D., Michigan State) to accept an endowed distinguished professorship at UNC in 1992. A native North Carolinian, he had taught at University of California at Los Angeles for 12 years and had established an outstanding scholarly record in inner-city studies, urban planning and policy, and energy planning and policy studies. Competent authority called him "one of the five leading Afro-American social scientists."

Besides his geography courses and a demanding research and writing schedule, Johnson soon designed and found local foundation financial support for several applied programs in nearby Durham to heighten the educational achievement levels of groups of selected Black children from elementary school to college. He also taught a course on managing diversity in the work place as an adjunct professor in the campus Kenan-Flagler Business School. However, geography lost him when the administration transferred him and his professorship to the Business School in 1998 so that he could concentrate upon his social uplift programs.

Two new physical geographers were hired. Aaron Moody (Ph.D., California-Santa Barbara), a 1994 addition, was a biogeographer interested in global vegetation
and the application of remote sensing and GIS techniques. Charles E. Konrad (Ph.D., Georgia), who came in 1993, was a climatologist specializing in synoptic and hydroclimatology, climate change and meteorology.

Birdsal was elected Vice-President of the AAG in 1993 and President in 1994, thereby serving as Past President in 1995–1996. On campus he was Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in 1991–1992 and was appointed Dean in 1992 following a national search. Upon completion of his five-year term in 1997, the position was filled after a national search with another geographer, Risa Palm (Ph.D., Minnesota). Palm had achieved recognition in urban geography, housing and natural hazards research at University of Colorado and came to Chapel Hill from the deanship at University of Oregon. Although formally assigned to Geography, she had no role there but remained an administrative friend.

In a separate but related Geography appointment, Palm’s husband, David E. Greenland (Ph.D., Canterbury, New Zealand), brought interests in alpine environments, climate and vegetation interaction and long-range climatic change. Florin’s ten years as chair ended in 1997 and his replacement for the next five years was Leo Zonn (Ph.D., Wisconsin–Milwaukee). Zonn had been Visiting Lecturer at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, was on the Arizona State University faculty and served as chair of Geography at East Carolina University for 11 years. There he built a quality MA program in both geography and international studies. His scholarly interest was the depiction of geographic reality in cinema.

Physical geographer Lawrence E. Band (Ph.D., UCLA) came in 1998 as the first occupant of the department’s endowed Voit Gilmore professorship. He had a spectacular career at University of Toronto, rising to full professor in seven years. He was an established scholar in quantitative and environmental geomorphology, hydrology and forest ecology, using remote sensing and GIS techniques. Dr. Raymond Krishchuyanas (Ph.D., Moscow State), a Russian geographer who specialized in Russia, South Asia and geographic education, taught during 1992–1993 while collaborating with Florin and a larger group of Russian and American geographers in a cross-cultural study that involved extensive field excursions in the U.S. and Russia.

Funds were finally found to restore the department’s long vacant computer technician position. Sean McKnight and Philip Page were instrumental in guiding the development and maintenance of the department’s instructional computer labs and the faculty and graduate student research lab.

Sam Pearsall (Ph.D., Hawaii) of the North Carolina Chapter, The Nature Conservancy, became an adjunct professor in 1993. Five visiting faculty interacted with faculty and graduate students. Dr. Kiira Aavikso, senior researcher in geography at University of Tartu, Estonia, was in residence during fall 1995 studying the use of satellite data for land use inventory and change as a basis for decision making in planning. Dr. Donald J. Zeigler of Old Dominion University and then president of the National Council for Geographic Education worked on cartographic nationalism, the way nations depict themselves on maps, during spring 1997.

During the same semester, Dr. Mohammed Elsabawy of Elminia University, Cairo was doing research in medical geography. Dr. Inn Kim, holder of a UNC doctorate and senior professor at Seoul National University, Korea, studied how selected metro-governments deal with the spectrum of problems faced by Seoul. Dr. David Sharon, an outstanding Israeli climatologist, made a return visit to Chapel Hill in spring 1998.

Already felt in the 1980s, administrative pressure on the faculty to garner more research grants and to publish more scholarly articles and books intensified in the 1990s. Teaching had to be at an acceptable level, measured in part by student evaluations, and service was commendable, but research and publication counted most for getting tenure, promotions and salary increases. As a result, younger faculty felt the pressure most acutely and had little free time to reach outward beyond their departmental obligations.

Older faculty continued to be involved in numerous service activities as was normal in earlier times. Florin took on the responsibility of Director of UNC’s Study Abroad program, one of the largest in the U.S., on top of his chair duties. He was also selected as a member of the Carolina Speakers, faculty who represent the university in talks to alumni and other civic groups around the state. Robinson was Director of Research, Southeastern Regional Climate Center, consultant for the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Geological Service, and served on numerous federal advisory boards and national evaluation panels dealing with climatic matters.

Walsh and Gesler were honored with three-year distinguished professorships that recognize faculty who have achieved excellence in their academic disciplines. Geographers proved successful in securing grants, especially in environmental and health areas. In 2000, a banner year, six faculty members participated with 38 non-geographers in 16 major grants totaling more than 17 million dollars. Some of the largest grants were for multiple years from the late 1990s into the early 2000s. Walsh figured in ten grants, Band in four, Gesler in three and Cravey, Moody and Conrad in one each. Walsh’s sustained research collaboration with Carolina Population Center faculty was especially productive, attracting large grants from a host of funding organizations.

Some of the topics supported by grants included land use systems in northeastern Thailand and colonization and land use in the Amazonian part of Ecuador (Walsh), ecosystem change in metropolitan Baltimore (Band); rural health care in western North Carolina (Gesler); ethnic variation in knowledge and belief concerning diabetes (Cravey); precipitation forcing features of eastern United States (Konrad); and impact of drought on managed and unmanaged ecosystems of North Carolina (Moody). Graduate student assistants employed by grants got valuable
The additions brought the faculty to 16, the largest thus far. In rank, there are seven full professors, five associate professors and four as yet untenured assistant professors. In the UNC student body, women outnumber males 60% to 40% and the three women in geography are part of a larger representation on the faculty as well. In speciality, physical geographers have increased to seven, bringing greater diversity and depth in related courses and seminars and scholarly productivity. Their larger presence reflects the nationwide popularity of environmentalism and the development of remote sensing and GIS as research technologies.

The human geography component has also grown in depth and diversity in step with the national upsurge of interest in globalization. The introductory world regional course is arguably the only campus course with a comprehensive global coverage of nations, issues and problems. Pickles leads the way in the International Studies curriculum, which has a number of geography courses, three members are in Latin American Studies and one is in South Asian Studies. Worth noting has been the gradual reduction in the importance given urban geography and economic geography, once core subject areas.

Positive developments of late included Florin’s 2002 receipt of a prestigious Tanner Award for outstanding undergraduate teaching, a recognition that was won by Basile and Meade earlier. Walsh had been awarded Research Honors from SEDAAG in 1999 and in 2001 received National Research Honors from the AAG. The department’s endowment, which took a hard hit in the stock market decline of 2000, stabilized at a current market value of $1.8 million and has registered steady gains in value. Income from the two travel funds has enabled faculty members and some graduate students to do research, attend professional meetings and gather enriching course materials in the United States and many other parts of the world.

Geographers will follow with self-interest the selection of the new dean replacing Palm. The department has operated since 1984 under a succession of three deans, two of them geographers and one a historian with college exposure to geography. Each viewed geography as worthy of support among its peers in the social and natural sciences and not merely as a service unit. Space needs for the larger faculty and its electronic equipment is a perennial concern. Saunders Hall currently stands vacant awaiting full renovation over a period of one and one-half years. For the third time geography faculty, graduate students and facilities are in scattered locations on the campus edge, a temporary dislocation that is bound to be detrimental to enrollments and numbers of majors.

Closing on a positive note, renovated Saunders Hall will provide superior facilities. The department has always been a pleasant place for its faculty and students with a shared collegiality that favors unity of purpose and the avoidance of factionalism. It is now rich in human resources and with continued administrative encouragement and support can build upon its 40-year foundation and be an even stronger educational force on the Chapel Hill campus and at regional and national levels.