



## Happy Fall...A Time of Transitions

by Susy S. Ziegler,  
President

I hope that your school year is off to a great start. Some of us are a third of

the way through the semester already, and other colleagues are just starting their quarters. In any case I anticipate that many of your chapters are inviting new members to join GTU, and I recommend that you to use the resources that we have on the GTU website to encourage students to invest in a lifetime membership in an organization accredited by the Association of College Honor Societies. Benefits of joining GTU are listed in the handy brochure available at

<http://gammathetaupsilon.org/documents/Gamma-Theta-Upsilon-Brochure.pdf>.

With a heavy heart I announce that James Lowry has resigned from his position as Executive Secretary of GTU. As an honor society we have benefited tremendously from James' ~20 years of service to GTU and his 12+ years as GTU Executive Secretary. His knowledge about the history of the group and its operation is irreplaceable. James invested an unfathomable amount of time into coordinating the many facets of the organization from processing initiate reports for new members, to helping institutions charter a new chapter, to answering questions in real time about procedures and membership guidelines, to maintaining the detailed records. I wish James the very best, especially with his increased administrative duties at Georgia Gwinnett College, and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to learn from him how special GTU is.

I am pleased to say that Burrell Montz is now serving as Interim Executive Secretary. As a former officer on the Executive Committee (she is Past Past President) and as the GTU chapter sponsor at East Carolina University, Burrell brings

incredible insights to the position. After a brief pause we are back to accepting initiate reports and applications to charter new chapters. Please be sure to ask Burrell or me if you have any questions about business that might have been initiated during our leadership change. Welcome back to the Executive Committee, Burrell!



Past President Mike Longan, as chair of the Nominating Committee, will coordinate efforts to seek a long-term Executive Secretary. Comptroller Michal LeVasseur's term ends on December 31, 2020 so we will seek to fill that position this year, too, to enable a smooth transition. If you would like to nominate someone for either position please contact Mike at [mike.longan@valpo.edu](mailto:mike.longan@valpo.edu).

GTU Executive Committee members are happy to help you reactivate a chapter, start a new one, or celebrate your accomplishments. Let us know how we may assist. Our contact information is available at <http://gammathetaupsilon.org/contact.html>.

Wishing you a wonderful autumn!



## New GTU Initiation Ceremony Published

by Michael Longan,  
Past President

In the spring GTU published an updated version of the initiation ceremony. Be sure to check it out before you welcome your chapter's next cohort of new members. The newly revised ceremony is customizable and is available at [https://gammathetaupsilon.org/documents/gtu\\_initiation\\_april2019.pdf](https://gammathetaupsilon.org/documents/gtu_initiation_april2019.pdf).



## Historian's Column

by Dawn M. Drake,  
Historian

Recently, long-time Executive Secretary James Lowry mailed me a box full of historic documents from previous Executive

Secretaries. As I was digging through the box looking at all the history of GTU, an item jumped out at me: the 1979–1980 GTU International Newsletter. Full of reports from chapters around the country, in the past this was a source of material for the Historian's Column. I was eager to see what I would find in this newsletter that was 40 years old. What were GTU chapters up to 40 years ago?

As I opened it, I found something that I had forgotten. In July 1979, GTU lost its founder, Dr. Robert Buzzard. As I opened the cover of the newsletter, I was confronted with the memorial inscription, dedicating the issue to Dr. Buzzard. A few more pages in, I found a moving obituary, written by GTU Immediate Past President, Alice Rechlin, for whom the GTU undergraduate Rechlin Scholarship is named. The obituary was more than just an accounting of Dr. Buzzard's career and dedication to GTU. It was also the story of GTU, as it stood in 1979, 51 years after Dr. Buzzard created the honor society.

I read the words and thought about where we stand today, 91 years after Dr. Buzzard's dream for a national geography organization for students was realized. Below I include the original text of the obituary. I then update the history to where the organization stands today.

*Robert Guy Buzzard*  
*December 14, 1890 – July 13, 1979*

*Dr. Robert Guy Buzzard, founder of Gamma Theta Upsilon, died last summer at his home in Laguna Hills, California, at the age of 88. To Dr.*

*Buzzard, we owe our existence, as it was he who gave birth to our organization more than fifty years ago.*

*As far back as 1916, at the age of 26, Robert G. Buzzard, then a geography graduate student at the University of Chicago, was dreaming of a national geography fraternity for students. His opportunity for spearheading the establishment of such an organization came some ten years later when he was Chair of the Geography Department at Illinois State Teachers College, Normal, Illinois. His Geography Club students declared themselves members of a national professional geography fraternity to be known as Gamma Theta Upsilon. Their declaration was officially recognized by the faculty of Illinois State on May 15, 1928. After at least a twelve year struggle the profession was ready for Buzzard's idea. The seed had germinated.*

*Since 1928, Gamma Theta Upsilon has granted over 190 chapter charters and more than 26,500 members have been initiated. Today GTU chapters are found throughout the United States, the organization reaching international status with the founding of chapters to the north and the south of our borders. And it has grown from a professional fraternity to an International Geographical Honor Society with full membership in the Association of College Honor Societies.*

*Dr. Buzzard also initiated the GTU loan fund, which has increased enormously, and has aided many struggling students over the years. Each fall GTU also offers two monetary awards, The Robert G. Buzzard Scholarships, to worthy students.*

*In April of 1978, Gamma Theta Upsilon celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary with a banquet in New Orleans. While Dr. Buzzard was unable to attend, he was honored in absentia for his life time of service to GTU and five decades of geography students. We owe him much as we bid him farewell.*



*Following his association (1922–1933) with Illinois State Teachers College as Chair of the Geography Department, Professor Buzzard was President of Eastern Illinois State College, Charleston, Illinois, until his retirement from that post in 1960. Even during those years of heavy administrative responsibilities, he never ceased to be interested in GTU. At the age of 87, he was still enthusiastically corresponding with your officers.*

*Robert Guy Buzzard was laid to rest on July 19, 1979. He is survived by four sons and six grandchildren. His wife, Irene Couchman Buzzard, preceded him in death in 1974.*

*Alice T.M. Rechlin – Immediate Past President  
Gamma Theta Upsilon  
International Geographical Honor Society*

Despite the fact that Dr. Rechlin's words are 40 years old, many things about GTU remain the same. Today we have chartered 325 chapters not just in the U.S., but also in Canada, Mexico, and, in 2014, we welcomed the Mu Psi Chapter at the United Arab Emirates University. Our chapters span from the Alpha Chapter, chartered by Dr. Buzzard at Illinois State Teachers College in 1928, to our newest chapter, Nu Lambda at Fort Hayes State University in Kansas, which was chartered in April 2019...with another university in the process of submitting paperwork for a charter this fall.

Our total number of members has also expanded greatly since 1979. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Epsilon Eta Chapter at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse inducted Chelsey Clare Slone as the 70,000<sup>th</sup> member of GTU. Just as it was in the beginning, all GTU members remain members from the day of induction for the rest of their lives, making them part of a special community among geographers. GTU is also still a member of the Association of College Honor Societies, an affiliation from which our members benefit greatly, including pay increases for federal employees.

We still have the two Buzzard Scholarships, but these have now been joined by the Maxfield, Rechlin, and Richason scholarships, all named for influential members of the GTU Executive Committee. We also have added the AAG-GTU Travel Award to help student members travel to the annual AAG meeting. Though the loan fund has long since ended, its records live on, and I hope to explore them in the future, seeking out those wonderful stories of the ways in which GTU helped encourage the education of future geographers.

In 2003, at the AAG meeting in New Orleans, we celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GTU, in the same city where the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was held. We do not know where the AAG meeting will be held in 2028, for GTU's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but if tradition holds, we should be back in the Big Easy (hint to all of you in AAG leadership roles).

While there will never be another Dr. Buzzard, GTU has been fortunate to have many people serve on the Executive Committee, sometimes for long periods of their careers, simply out of a dedication to the mission of GTU and its members. I am proud to have served on the Executive Committee for as long as I have. I have been honored to work with many distinguished colleagues in geography, all who believed in the goals and purposes of GTU, the same goals and purposes that Dr. Buzzard set out for the organization in 1928.

As I close this column, one last note. I am planning a trip to the archives at Eastern Illinois University in October to conduct some research about the Loan Fund and the initiation ceremony. If any of you are looking for particular nuggets of GTU history, please reach out to me at [d Drake4@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:d Drake4@missouriwestern.edu) and I will be glad to see what I can find. Stay tuned for the next issue of the *GTU Newsletter* to see what I find.



## An Active Chapter is a Healthy Chapter

by Randy Bertolas,  
Outreach Coordinator

The days are getting shorter but the semester is heating up. Time to

'put up or shut up' for planning Gamma Theta Upsilon campus events. Midterm exams will be here before we know it, then the crush of research papers can herald a quick slide into holiday preparations. Bottom line: It's never too early to celebrate the excellent work of your outstanding Geography students!

Planning for successful GTU activities involves cooperative effort and advance planning. For instance, several chapters across the country are currently in the process of inviting speakers and locking down details for public presentations. These occasions are a golden opportunity to promote your programs, broaden current students' knowledge, and recruit new Geography majors/minors.

In a similar vein, performing public service can be a great way to get chapter members better acquainted with each other. Many young people want to be involved in giving back to both their campus and community. Successful chapters can raise their visibility through efforts including trash collection, garden clean-up, library book transfers, and other volunteer endeavors.

In the case of smaller GTU chapters, partnering with other clubs or honor societies can often be a key to success. Some geography clubs work alongside other social sciences clubs to conduct voter registration drives, raise money for homeless shelters, or connect with programs offering outreach to senior citizens.

Having fun in your GTU chapter is important as well. Why not hold a Game Night with prizes and refreshments? Some chapters stage an annual Geography Bowl competition that is not only entertaining but also serves to introduce the discipline to a wider campus audience. Displays showcasing student cartography, term papers, Honors projects, and conference presentations allow attendees at your events to better understand our discipline.

And we want to hear all about your efforts, too. Send photos of chapter activities to the GTU Outreach Coordinator ([raberto1@wsc.edu](mailto:raberto1@wsc.edu)) or post your pictures and captions on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/GammaThetaUpsilonInternational/>.

Finally, don't forget to share snapshots of your initiation ceremonies. Last spring, the Theta chapter at Arizona State University won the 2019 GTU Chapter Initiation Photo Contest. They received a ginormous inflatable beach ball globe, courtesy of the Geographic Educators of Nebraska. Hours of fun for the whole Geography department.

Recognize geography's next generation of leaders!

## Congratulations to 70,000<sup>th</sup> GTU Member Chelsey Sloan

This summer former Executive Secretary James Lowry announced that Chelsey Clare Slone from the Eta Chapter at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse was the 70,000<sup>th</sup> member to join GTU. Chelsey was recognized with a GTU pin and a stole embroidered for the occasion.





## 2019 Scholarships Announced



by Jimmy Wilson,  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

Congratulations to the 2019 GTU Scholarship recipients! Each year GTU holds a competition to award five scholarships of \$1000 each to four undergraduates and one graduate student.

Through their academic excellence and considerable service to GTU and their departments, the awardees have demonstrated that they are some of the outstanding future leaders in geography.

Many talented students applied for funding, and the scholarship committee was impressed by the accomplishments of the applicants. GTU is pleased to announce the following scholarship recipients:

Buzzard Graduate: Samuel Nielson, University of South Carolina

Buzzard Undergraduate: Holly Roth, Northern Michigan University

Maxfield: Lindsey Kurtz, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Rechlin: Christopher Jarrett, East Carolina University

Richason: Seth Kannarr, Southern Illinois University at Edwardville

Next spring in a future newsletter these scholarship recipients will share how the funds helped support their professional activities. Students interested in applying for scholarships in 2020 should look for updated application information after Feb. 15 on the GTU website

<http://gammathetaupsilon.org/scholarships.html>.

Thanks to every GTU member who applied for a scholarship, and to the scholarship committee members for the time they spent carefully considering many applications.

## Honors Chapter Awards

by Karen D. Johnson-Webb,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President



This year five chapters earned GTU Honors Chapter Awards based on their active commitment to promoting geography.

The recipients of 2019 GTU Honors Chapter Awards are

Eta Chi	Northern Michigan University
Lambda Zeta	Wayne State College
Mu Kappa	Hofstra University
Mu Pi	University of West Florida
Nu Theta	University of Southern California

Now is a good time to review the criteria for the Honors Chapter and Presidential Honors Awards to plan for a productive year for your GTU chapter <https://gammathetaupsilon.org/chapter-awards.html>. We look forward to reading each chapter's annual reports submitted by June 15, 2020.





## 2020 AAG-GTU Travel Awards: New Deadline

by Jimmy Wilson,  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

The GTU Scholarship Committee announces a change in the deadline for submission of applications

for our AAG-GTU Travel Award, which provides a limited number of \$200 travel awards intended to support student members of GTU who are attending the annual national AAG meeting. This is a competitive award, and preference is given to geography undergraduate and graduate students who are attending an AAG meeting for the first time and who will serve as an author or co-author on a paper or poster being presented at the meeting.

The competition will be held in the Fall to enable the GTU Scholarship Committee to evaluate the applications and select the recipients by the end of the year. The process and requirements have not changed, but the deadline is November 1. Adjusting the application timeline also affords recipients more time to plan their travel to AAG. As in past years, recipients of the AAG-GTU Travel Award will pick up their check at the GTU booth in the exhibit hall at the annual national AAG Meeting.

If you are a student who is a member of GTU, we encourage you to apply. If you are the adviser of your school's GTU chapter, *please advertise this award and the new deadline of November 1.*

## Visiting Geographical Scientist Program

As your chapter plans events consider applying for a grant to help offset costs of bringing a geographer to your campus through a partnership with Gamma Theta Upsilon and the American Association of Geographers. Details about the program are available at <http://www.aag.org/vgsp>.

## GTU Merchandise

Order GTU cords, stoles, and pins for your induction ceremony and graduation at

<https://www.hjgreek.com/products/showCategories/OrganizationID/635>.



Display your "GTU certificate suitable for framing" in a custom frame from Framing Success

<https://www.framingsuccess.com/category/list/sid/19667>.

## Share Your Chapter News

We invite you to submit content for consideration in the next edition of the GTU Newsletter. Send your news to [suziegle@nmu.edu](mailto:suziegle@nmu.edu) with the subject line of GTU Newsletter. Thank you, and may you have a productive school year!

## Check Us Out on Facebook

We enjoy seeing pictures of your chapter's events (e.g., initiations, speakers, conference attendance, or community service). Post them at <https://www.facebook.com/GammaThetaUpsilonInternational/>. The Theta Chapter from Arizona State University won the 4<sup>th</sup> annual GTU Initiation Ceremony Photo Contest and shared this photo on Facebook. Be sure to enter this year's contest.

