

THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS DR. H.

by David Frank

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After 26 years of dedicated service, Katie Hirschboeck formerly retired from the University of Arizona and the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research at the conclusion of the 2017 spring semester. This occasion was marked by an end-of-the-semester lecture given by Katie, and a subsequent gathering on May 3rd. Katie's lecture was entitled the "The Many Meanings of Climate — Insights from My Multidisciplinary Journey" to an appreciative audience that filled the Bryant Bannister Tree-Ring Building Room 110. Katie shared a very personal journey through her career — from her student days to present — delightfully weaving together the contributions from her mentors, advisors, colleagues, and students in jointly pursuing and advancing knowledge.

Katie's career focused on the climatology of extreme events and particularly the understanding and attribution of these highly relevant events to the underlying meteorological context. Yet, her research ranges from using wood anatomical features, so-called frost rings, to quantify the timing, dynamics, and climatic consequences from volcanic eruptions during the past millennia, to disaggregating long-term flood records to the different synoptic drivers and modes responsible for these events (i.e., there are many ways to make a flood in a given river basin, and understanding and quantifying this is important to proper management of water resources and infrastructure in light of weather/climate variability). Her research endeavors are detailed in numerous peer-reviewed journal publications and chapters, and supported by a consistent record of external funding. Katie has also had an extremely significant impact at the University of Arizona and the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research for her influential leadership role in education, innovative teaching

methods, and bridging the gap between basic research and resource management particularly as related to water allocation / planning in the Southwest US. Katie served as the Chair of the Global Change Graduate Interdisciplinary Program (2004–2014), and contributed to improving teaching across the University by initiating and advancing "active learning" strategies long-before their demonstrated role in student education. She has received many acknowledgements including being awarded the Provost's General Education Teaching Award.

Following Katie's talk and personal reflections, three LTRR Directors (two emeritus, and one present) shared their appreciation to, and for, Katie. All emphasized, in their own words, how she has been a true guardian for the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, and always finding ways (including subtle and not-so-subtle nudges to the directors or in faculty meetings) to advance the greater good of the department, and how it can best fulfill its varied missions in the complex UA, US, and international landscape of inter-disciplinary teaching, research, and outreach/service. Katie was presented with a display piece of a Bristlecone pine with a frost-ring in the year 1627 BCE labeled, as well as more personal gifts and acknowledgements from colleagues, friends, and former students. There are many anecdotes that testify to Katie's profound impact on the LTRR, the UA, as well as the thousands of students that she has taught during her career. She is known to most students as Dr. H.

While she formally retired in May, Katie continued to serve as a guardian for the LTRR and its, and her, role in educating students. Katie worked tirelessly to co-develop an online version to the Introduction to Global Change course that she has taught, refined,

and continually updated and advanced during her time at the University of Arizona.

Katie Hirschboeck will stay connected to the LTRR as Emerita faculty member, and now, Katie hopes to continue outreach in the environmental sciences to groups and individuals with strong faith-based connections, as well as the more senior populations that can draw meaning and knowledge from tree-rings, longevity, environmental change, chronology, events, and their own past.

Katie, you are most heartfully and sincerely thanked for all that you have done for the LTRR, for our science, and for your colleagues and students. We wish you continued fulfillment, happiness, health, and success as you write and live your future chapters.



Katie Hirschboeck, May 3, 2017. Photo: Stefan Klesse.