

Robert J. Mason, PhD

by Melissa Gilbert, Chair Geography and Urban Studies

The Department of Geography and Urban Studies at Temple University is greatly saddened by the death of our friend and colleague, Professor Robert Mason on November 15, 2017 after a brief illness. Rob was well known for his scholarly contributions to geography particularly in the areas of land use management and environmental policy in the United States, Japan and China. He was a highly respected teacher, mentor, and friend to many in the department and in the larger academic community. Rob was passionate about the need to address pressing environmental issues through his research and training the next generation of environmental leaders. He believed strongly in international educational opportunities for students, for whom he cared deeply. He also was an experienced world traveler, enthusiastic hiker, and adventurous food aficionado.

Rob received his BA degree in Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Buffalo in 1977, his MA in Geography and Environmental Studies from the University of Toronto in 1979, and received his PhD in Geography from Rutgers University in 1986. He joined Temple's Department of Geography and Urban Studies in 1986, following a short period as visiting lecturer at Ohio State University. He taught at Temple University Japan in Tokyo from 1993-1997. After returning to the Main Campus in Philadelphia, he became Director of the new program in Environmental Studies. Rob built this program into a very successful major over ten years. During the 2004-05 academic year, Rob held the Bryant Drake Guest Professorship in the Department of Biosphere Sciences at Kobe College in Nishinomiya, Japan. Most recently, Rob taught at Temple Rome in 2016. He was serving a three-year term as Regional Councillor of the American Association of Geographers and had previously served as President of the Middle States Division of the AAG. He also served for many years on the Board of Directors of the Kobe College Corporation/Japan Education Exchange including as Co-President.

Rob's research and teaching focused on environmental policymaking and land use management. He was the author of *Collaborative Land Use Management: The Quieter Revolution in Place-Based Planning* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), *Contested Lands: Conflict and Compromise in New Jersey's Pine Barrens* (Temple University Press, 1992) and the *Atlas of United States Environmental Issues* (Macmillan, 1990, with Mark Mattson). He wrote articles and book chapters about metropolitan growth management, greenline parks, conservation land trusts, and management issues in New York State's Adirondack Park and New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve. More recent interests included evolving policy responses to environmental shocks, Delaware River watershed issues, metropolitan growth management, suburban sprawl, and protected areas at the state (New Jersey, Pennsylvania), regional, and national levels in the United States. He was also interested in the evolving role of Japan's citizen environmental organizations at the national level, metropolitan land use and sprawl issues in China, and management of Japan's Shirakami Sanchi World Heritage Area.

Rob's leaves a lasting legacy through his many contributions to geography and environmental studies as well as the students he taught and mentored through the years. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues, students, and friends in the department and around the world.

Rob is survived by his brother Donald, his sister Linda, and his nephews.

A version of this obituary can be viewed on the Geography and Urban Studies Department website at <http://www.cla.temple.edu/gus/professor-rob-mason-1955-2017/>



Rob Mason