

Don Morgan

Professor of Geography

Amid the stacked bookshelves and photographs of white billowy clouds in Don Morgan's office, there is a sign that reads, "PEOPLE DON'T CARE WHAT YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW THAT YOU CARE." It is a statement that describes Morgan and his ability to earn the respect and admiration of his students and peers alike.

For five consecutive years, Morgan has been nominated for the Outstanding Professor Award. And yet his manner is calm and unassuming as he begins to explain how his research background in meteorology and hydrology led him to a career as a geography professor.

"I was at U.C., Davis doing research in hydrometeorology and micro-meteorology when I had an opportunity to help develop a course program in atmospheric science," says Morgan. "When the program was established, I got involved teaching a couple of classes and discovered that teaching was it!"

According to Morgan, his department chairman advised him to get a doctorate if he intended to pursue teaching on a university level. "I knew he was right," he says, "but at the time I didn't want to go any deeper into meteorology. I was trying to decide what area to study when one of my students—bless her heart—suggested geography. She said geography was much more than maps and boundaries between states; it was weather and climate; it was land forms, soil, and vegetation; and it was people."

Q: Did geography meet your expectations?

A: Most definitely! I found it was the type of integrating science that brought together many of my interests. For example, my dissertation topic dealt with human comfort in a variety of meteorological settings. I was particularly interested in how weather affected runners. Did hot weather affect their performance? Did it affect them physically? I also studied the comfort of individuals in other settings—including buildings and in the high Sierra—to quantify the relationships between physiologic parameters of height, weight, and metabolism, and the environmental factors of temperature, sunshine, wind, and humidity. I find it very satisfying to study how our environment directly affects us and geography has allowed me to do this.

Q: When did you first become interested in meteorology?

A: When I entered junior college, I thought geology was fascinating. I

