

Jay Reginald Harman

Long-time geography faculty member at Michigan State University, Jay Harman, passed away suddenly on November, 18, 2014, aged 73, after suffering from a stroke and associated complications

Jay Reginald Harman was born in Hammond, IN, in 1941. He graduated from Illinois State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1963 and a Master of Science degree in 1964 then moved to the University of Illinois for a Doctorate (1968). Following this, he spent his entire career on the faculty of the Department of Geography at Michigan State University.

In the early phases of his career Harman's research and teaching interests were in physical geography, particularly plant geography (mostly of the eastern United States) and synoptic climatology, and often in some combination.

His research was published widely in journals, particularly in the *Annals of the AAG*. He was also a co-author of *The Climatic Atlas of Michigan* (1990) and sole author of *Synoptic Climatology of the Westerlies: Process and Patterns* (1991).

Harman was strongly committed to field instruction and organized fieldtrips to a wide variety of environments in the eastern United States including Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the Ozark-Ouachita Upland in Missouri and Arkansas, the Coastal Plain in northern Florida, and the southern Appalachian Mountains. His favorite was the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (North Carolina/Tennessee), a trip repeated many times over the years from which hundreds of students benefitted. Everyone who went on that trip was touched by the grandeur of the place and Harman's deep affection for it.

During the latter portion of his career, Harman became increasingly interested in philosophical matters, especially epistemology and ethics/morals, particularly as they interfaced with his specialization in the physical environment. He began writing about environmental ethics in scholarly journals and developed a new class on the topic in the 1990s which was taught frequently thereafter to very extremely good reviews.

Harman also wrote about the state of geography and his concerns for the long-term health of the discipline, exemplified by his papers entitled "Whither Geography?" published in *The Professional Geographer* in 2003 and 2005.

Harman became Professor Emeritus in 2009 and reduced some of his academic activities but continued to research, write, teach and run fieldtrips.

His last book was *Collateral Damage: The Imperiled Status of Truth in American Public Discourse and Why It Matters to You* published earlier in 2014. It is a culmination of his work and thought about untruthfulness in American popular political discourse – transmitted by politicians and the media – and reflects on how the public may separate truth from spin.

Jay is survived by his loving wife, Theresa Amelotte-Harman, and daughters Sara Renee and Rachel Anne. He will be long remembered by his students, colleagues and friends as a very thoughtful fellow who loved a good conversation on any subject from politics and bee keeping to alternative energy and the weather forecast.