Travel with IIHO

Ashley Thomas, a junior anthropology major, was the featured speaker at IHO’s annual Travel and Learn with IHO program, which is designed to bring IIHO students and faculty from around the globe to see firsthand the environments and cultures that shaped human evolution. Thomas, who is pursuing a double major in Anthropology and Geology, participated in the 2016 Ask An Anthropologist website.

‘Lucy’ in 1974:
AETOS: An Exploration of Human Evolution

This year, the Institute of Human Origins (IHO) is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the discovery of ‘Lucy’—the first known female of the species Homo habilis. IHO will mark this milestone at the 2017 HIGHLIGHTS event, which will feature a series of lectures, discussions, and activities. For more information, visit iho.asu.edu/2017highlight.

“Lucy” in 1974:
AETOS: An Exploration of Human Evolution

For three days this summer, middle and high school students had the opportunity to Tanzania and Rwanda to search for chimpanzees and mountain gorillas. This is a rare opportunity in which students can gain insight into how the human lineage has changed since diverging from the rest of the great apes. The teachers are part of the Big History Project, a joint effort between teachers, scholars, students, and organizations to bring a multidisciplinary approach to learning around the world. Questions ranged from the effect of climate on human evolution to why some human ancestor species became extinct. To see the teachers and discover their academic work, visit askananthropologist.asu.edu.

Dear Friend of the Institute of Human Origins,

It’s hardly believable that this year marks the 30th anniversary of IHO’s founding. Arizona State University at the hot, but Phoenix summer of 1987! If you have followed our progress over the past two decades, you will already have become convinced of IIHO’s success. Since its founding in 1987, IIHO has grown to four major research programs and expanded to include 15 resident scientists, 8 international affiliates, and 35 PhD students, with field projects around the globe. We have embraced an interdisciplinary approach, from the fossil and behavioral evidence of our origins to the social behavior and genetics of our great ape relatives. And, since 2002, the IIHO-affiliated faculty have mentored 26 PhD graduates—17 of them women—who are pursuing their own careers in human origins science, carrying with them the IIHO brand of excellence in research and public outreach.

As you join us in celebrating IIHO’s 30th anniversary, please let us know how you can become a part of our future. We would love to have you and your organization become a partner to bring a multidisciplinary approach to learning around the world. For more information, visit iho.asu.edu/2017highlight.

Thank you in advance for your generous gift!

William H. Kimbel, PhD
Director
Virginia M. Ullman Professor of Natural History and the Environment

Institute of Human Origins

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

On the Eve of the Dawn

A special issue highlighting IIHO’s 30 years of research and discovery and join the quest for our origins by supporting IIHO with your tax-deductible gift. For more information, visit give.secure.azcentral.com/IHO.

Give online at: asufoundation.org/IHO using the appeal code M0418

Thank you in advance for your generous gift!

William H. Kimbel, PhD
Director
Virginia M. Ullman Professor of Natural History and the Environment
In the Field and Lab

When, where, and how did the unique human capacity for complex cognition, cumulative culture, and large-scale cooperative enterprise emerge? The three-year $4.5 million U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) expedition to the Mongolian Altai is a critical step in answering this question. Our team, led by project director and IHO Research Affiliate Matthew Zeller, is investigating the origins and evolution of modern humans in northern Mongolia. The goal of this expedition is to discover Paleolithic human communities and the fossil remains in the Darkhad Valley and the Ulz River area. The team will use a cutting-edge combination of cultural adaptation and large-scale cooperation.

The team’s research is being conducted in partnership with the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s School of Human Evolution and Social Change, the University of Michigan’s Bioarchaeology and Paleoenvironments Laboratory, and the University of Oregon’s Department of Anthropology.

IHO Research Affiliate Kevin Hill has completed his second round of fieldwork in Ethiopia’s Omo Valley. Hill’s work is focused on understanding how the hominin species Homo erectus evolved to become the most dominant species on Earth through a combination of cultural adaptation and large-scale cooperation.

The research team aims to return to Ethiopia in February 2018 to follow up on their groundbreaking discovery. The team is working across more than 15 million years of great ape and human evolution, providing critical new information for the study of the ecological contexts of the transition from apes to humans. Researchers published an article this year in the journal *PNAS* that shows how chimpanzees, which are our closest living relatives, have evolved to become the most dominant species on Earth through a combination of cultural adaptation and large-scale cooperation.

The project, called “Culture in a Chip computer,” has 3,000 participants.

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IHO Research Affiliate Chris Campisano, who was a postdoc at IHO, leads the African Rift Valley Research Consortium (HSPDP), a 10-year, $110 million project made possible by IHO, the Hyde Family Foundations and the ASU Strategic Initiative Fund. The consortium includes researchers located in South Africa, Italy and Morocco, working across an array of disciplines to investigate the origins of modern humans. The consortium was started by Jane Goodall in 1965. The Gombe Stream Research Center was started by Jane Goodall in 1965.

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