

Resolution in Memoriam  
Canute VanderMeer  
Professor Emeritus of Geography  
1930-2023

Presented by Shelly A. Rayback  
Professor  
Department of Geography and Geosciences  
18 May 2023

The University of Vermont's Department of Geography and Geosciences is sad to report the death of our colleague and friend, Canute VanderMeer who passed away on February 20, 2023 at the age of 92. Canute was born in China in 1930 to missionary parents, William and Alma VanderMeer. He left China in 1942 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, circumnavigating the globe, first on an Italian ship from Shanghai to Singapore and then onto Mozambique. There, his family boarded a Swedish Red Cross "Mercy Ship" to cross the Atlantic and arrive in New York City, a month after their journey began. In the US, Canute attended Blair Academy in New Jersey and then at the age of 16 matriculated at Hope College, Michigan where he graduated with a BA in History in 1950. Following two years of service in the US Army where he was stationed at Fort Sherman, Panama Canal Zone, he attended the University of Michigan obtaining his PhD in Geography in 1962. He taught for 11 years at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee before joining the faculty at University of Vermont in the Department of Geography in 1972.

Over a career that spanned three decades, Canute was a scholar of the geography of southeast Asia, Taiwan and China with a specialty in agricultural geography focusing on major crop production and irrigation practices. Over his career, his research was funded by the Ford Foundation Foreign Area Training Fellowship in the Philippines, the US National Science Foundation in Taiwan, and the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council in Malaysia. He held multiple visiting professorships at the University of Hawaii, University of the Philippines, California State University-Hayward, and the Institute of Geosciences at the University of Tsukuba, Japan. He was a lifelong member of the Association of American Geographers and the International Rice Research Institute and the former Vice President of the Shanghai American School Association. While at UVM, he served as the Chair of the Department of Geography from 1973-1985 and the Faculty Ombudsperson from 1989-1992.

Canute was an outstanding scholar and teacher over the course of his career at UVM and his contributions to the field of agricultural geography and the geography of southeastern Asia are significant. The Department of Geography and Geosciences is grateful for his 22+ years of service to geography and to the department.