



Michigan State University Department of Geography, Environment,
and Spatial Sciences

Harm de Blij Scholar Award

Dr. Harm J. de Blij (1935-2014) was a professor of Geography at Michigan State University from 1960 – 1969, when he left for the University of Miami and subsequent other appointments. In his long scholarly career, he authored more than 30 books, including a number of widely adopted textbooks – several of which have gone on to multiple editions – and over a hundred scholarly articles. He served as editor for National Geographic Research, the National Council for Geographic Education’s Journal of Geography, and as co-editor of the Wiley/National Geographic College Atlas of the World. He made a significant mark outside of the world of academia by becoming the popular Geography Editor on ABC television’s Good Morning America and as a frequent analyst at NBC. He was a tireless champion of geography and was constantly on the lecture circuit over the last decades of his life, speaking to a wide variety of audiences about the importance of the discipline of geography for understanding the world and its many issues. He returned to Michigan State University as the John Hannah Distinguished Professor of Geography in 2000, and whenever he was on campus he would make a point to visit with graduate students and undergraduate classes. He authored several widely read trade books: The Power of Place, Why Geography Matters, and its expanded second edition Why Geography Matters More Than Ever.

Eligibility:

He also established the de Blij Scholars Award Program, designed to offer scholarships to outstanding students who choose one of the four degree programs in the Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Sciences at Michigan State University (BA in Human Geography, BS in Economic Geography, BS in Environmental Geography, BS in Geographic Information Science). Incoming students recognized as ‘de Blij Scholars’ will be awarded **\$1000 each Fall/Spring semester** that they are a primary major in one of the Department’s degree programs. Applicants must have fewer than 56 earned credits at the time of application. Award recipients will be asked to write a letter of appreciation to Harm de Blij’s estate.

To apply:

In order to apply for this award and carry Professor de Blij’s generous legacy forward, interested students are invited to submit an essay of no more than 500 words that responds to the question, “why does geography matter in the contemporary world?” Submissions should be sent as a Word attachment to Dr. Ryan Shadbolt, Undergraduate Academic Advisor (shadbolt@msu.edu). The document should be double-spaced and saved as Lastname_Firstname_deblijscholar; the subject line of the email should be ‘Lastname de Blij Scholar Application.’ The applicant’s name should **not** appear on the document itself. Submissions will be evaluated based on sophistication of response, connection to Professor de Blij’s work and orientation, and quality of written communication. **Due date of application materials is Wednesday, March 01, 05:00PM ET.**