

## NCGE MEMBER NEWS

### NCGE Member Spotlight

Every month NCGE picks a current member to spotlight.

#### MEET OUR LATEST MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - January 2013

#### Dr. Vernon Domingo



Vernon Domingo is a professor of geography at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts and also one of the coordinators of the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance. He is originally from South Africa and being classified as a Coloured South African, he directly experienced the role of geography in establishing and mapping places so that inequality would become institutionalized.

### Questions

1. How long have you been an NCGE Member?

Since 1983.

2. What led you to geography education?

While I teach at the university level, I first qualified as a K-8 teacher in South Africa. In that program I chose geography as my subject specialty. I had known since the 5<sup>th</sup> grade that I wanted to be geographer - those grade school projects allowed me to travel to distant places in my mind. That and actual travel to places far and near is what makes geography education so special.

3. Your favorite place you've ever travelled to?

It would have to be Suriname, South America. I spent a 6 month sabbatical there, with my family. It has the most fascinating cultural geography with indigenous peoples, descendants of west African people who were brought there as slaves by the Dutch and the British and also Javanese and people from India (there's a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the capital, Paramaribo).

4. How has your NCGE membership advanced your career?

It had grounded me in the framing my career and my academic approach as a geographer, one who uses the spatial approach in analyzing and teaching about our diverse world.

5. What is your favorite part of being an NCGE Member?

I always find something valuable in the Journal, some article that helps me in my university teaching and some ideas that I can use in the teacher workshops that our geography alliance presents. The NCGE annual meetings are especially fun and a great time to renew my enthusiasm for geographic education. NCGE members are particularly fun to be around; they have an interest in the world and a passion to convey their geographic vision to students, to area specialist, and to the public.

### **Additional Information**

I am a professor of geography at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts and I am also one of the coordinators of the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance. I am originally from South Africa and as a Black (classified as Coloured) South African, I experienced directly the role of geography in establishing and mapping places so that inequality would become institutionalized. That was a major factor in me deciding to be a geographer, knowing that geography and geographic tools can be used to create a better, more equitable society. Today geographers are doing just that in South Africa; they are researching critical issues of development and exploring spatial and non-spatial solutions to the regions challenges. Geographic educators are re-writing geography textbooks that reflect the realities of society and they are teaching about the real world issues that need to be addressed. I hope that my own research on racial and class disparities in access to clean water helps in this

process of social development.

Thanks so much for participating and being a more engaged member of our community!

