

# The Macalester Years: A Symbiotic Partnership

Jacquelyn F. Betsworth



Jacki Betsworth with former students Pa Houa Xiong, Jessica Del Fiocco and Erin Porter (from right to left) assisting in the production of HIMALAYA on the Macalester College campus.

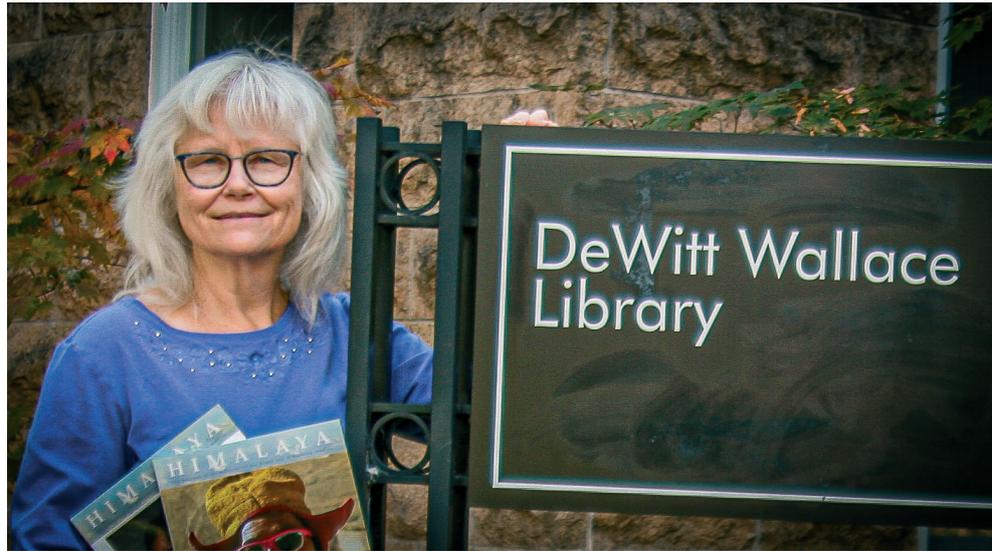
I joined the HIMALAYA production team in spring of 2009, when I was invited by the Macalester Library Director Terri Fishel to make the acquaintance of both the journal and its incoming editor, Macalester Professor Arjun Guneratne. Terri and Arjun had already laid the groundwork for HIMALAYA's transfer to Macalester from Portland State University (PSU). A plan was in place to make all its issues and those of its predecessor

publication openly accessible and permanently available in digital format at Macalester. My colleague Janet Sietmann had created HIMALAYA's new online home in Macalester's repository, 'Digital Commons@Macalester', digitized and published twenty-two years' print copies of the ANHS *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, and transferred four years of expanded issues created by PSU under the new journal name HIMALAYA to the repository. My role was to

provide the organizational and technical expertise that would allow us to create a sustainable workflow and support publication of future issues.

Thanks to the dedication and expertise of editors, contributors, and the publication team, HIMALAYA grew significantly in scope and content during its time at Macalester. I am proud to have been involved in supporting that growth. In the early Macalester years, the collaborative team produced one double-issue journal each year that contained seventy-five to one hundred pages of content and half a dozen high quality photos; by 2019, the team produced two issues each year, and it was not uncommon for each issue to contain double that number of pages and photos. The design and layout became far more sophisticated as well, providing opportunities for our student team to gain publication experience and skills.

The partnership between the HIMALAYA editors and Macalester's library office team was mutually beneficial. The labor provided by undergraduate students hired with library funds made it possible for journal issues to be produced at an affordable price point. In return, the students gained valuable experience in publication tools, graphic design, and project management. Student team members also enjoyed a unique opportunity to collaborate on a high



quality publication project that was of value to an international community and whose reach was global.

Between 2008 and 2019, Mac's design team grew from myself and a single student to three, and then five students. As the workload grew, we developed a formal workflow process, internal training tutorials, and a detailed style guide that allowed us to maintain continuity through editorial transitions. In later years, the students under my supervision were also involved in cover design creation and direct communication with HIMALAYA's printing partner during the hand-off process. The synergy among the students as we neared each issue's completion was palpable. Kudos, cheers, high fives, and celebratory coffee runs were not uncommon in the office as the final few articles of an issue were reviewed internally and then declared "complete" by the editors.

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Jacquelyn F. Betsworth in front of the DeWitt Wallace Library at Macalester College

The students took pride in their work and recognized the benefit to themselves and others. In their own words:

I loved my experience working on HIMALAYA. The skills I gained as a student editorial assistant—from layout design to time management—helped prepare me for my career in communications. (Jessica Del Fiacco)



Jessica Del Fiacco

Working on HIMALAYA was one of my main tasks as a student worker in the library office. This opportunity allowed me to hone my InDesign skills and learn new tools, skills that I have continued to use in my professional career. Working as an editorial assistant for the journal allowed me to work closely with the journal editors

and made my time as a student employee feel productive and genuinely useful. Being able to collaborate on HIMALAYA as a student made me feel like the work I did was important and impactful. (Erin Porter)

HIMALAYA was an amazing learning opportunity for me. I gained valuable skills in inDesign and editing that I still use in my current job. It was really interesting to learn about the printing process, and oversee a process from start to finish. It was so gratifying whenever we received the physical copies and got to see our work in its tangible form. (Stella Wang)

Working on HIMALAYA allowed me to use a different part of my brain: there were rules and order, and I found enjoyment from concentrating on the details of the layout, a skill that came in handy when editing handbooks at a later job. Plus, as an anthropology student, it was cool to read the articles while working on them. (Emma Wellman)

HIMALAYA was a project I always looked forward to working on



Erin Porter

as a library office aide. Initially, the publication felt massive and intimidating. However, under Jacki's guidance, I grew to love the challenge. HIMALAYA was one of my first major stepping stones into layout design, and its impact has served me well as I currently pursue my career in graphic design. Beyond the invaluable skills that I earned, HIMALAYA also enabled me to nurture collaborative relationships, learn what it takes to deliver a successful project of this scale, and see the world page after page (I couldn't help but read the articles!). At the end of each issue when the printed copies would come to us, I remember turning through fresh pages and seeing my work come alive—it was one of the most rewarding feelings!

I am so glad to have been part of the journey and I leave it knowing it rests in good hands. (Pa Houa Xiong)



Pa Houa Xiong

I first worked on HIMALAYA as a first year college student with negligible InDesign skills. It was intimidating, challenging, and it taught me so much. From being the scariest task on my to-do list at work, it became the project I would look forward to the most, and when I got to coordinate the layout of a whole issue I was ecstatic. Working on HIMALAYA not only taught me invaluable design skills, but it also helped me learn about myself and the kind of detail-oriented work I thrive in (I have never had more fun on a job than when I revamped

the entire style guide—and that says it all). This is an experience I will always carry with me, especially how wonderful it was to collaborate on the project with the other library aides and Jacki. (Amelia Medina Blanco)

There was nothing quite as satisfying as seeing the final copy printed out, the beautiful cover art on the front, and flipping through to see all of the pages we worked on. As someone who grew up in the foothills of the HIMALAYAs, each and every article we edited struck me in a different way and I can't wait to see what content will be published in the future. (Shaherazade Khan)

I am extremely grateful to Terri Fishel for tapping me to be involved in such a satisfying opportunity for professional growth. I also owe a debt of thanks to the generous and supportive editors with whom we collaborated: Arjun Guneratne, whose meticulous notes and in-person visits to the library office gave me context for his editorial vision and Macalester's role in it; Sienna Craig, Mark Turin, and Jessica Vantine Birkenholz, who expanded the journal's vision with new

branding and design for the print publication and web presence; Mona Bhan, David Citrin, and Scott Halliday, for their direct guidance for and collaboration with my student team, empowering them to trust their own expertise; and finally, to current editors Michael Heneise and Jeevan Sharma, for reaching out with the invitation for me to provide a personal reflection on Macalester's, and my own, role in the HIMALAYA story.

Macalester's involvement with HIMALAYA's design process was brought to an abrupt close when Covid-19's worldwide appearance and our institution's resulting move away from in-person classes made it impossible for me to assemble the student team needed to complete the work. The closure of that door has opened a new one for the journal, one that places its production with a skilled team of designers based in the Himalayan region and fully vested in its content. We rejoice together in this carefully considered transition plan and its promise for the next twenty years of publication.

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