

MC Geography Professor Travels to Africa

November 1, 2010

Africa is the focal point for Martha Hutson's world geography classes at Mississippi College this fall.

And that's worked well for the MC professor who utilized her many pictures and materials collected from her summer tour of four countries in South Africa.

Her travels took Hutson to places like the Matopos National Park in Zimbabwe where she witnessed spectacular boulder formations and cave paintings in addition to white rhinos and Victoria Falls. In Antelope Park, the Mississippi College professor and other educators got the rare thrill of walking with lions and elephants.



Martha Hutson

In Mozambique, they spent a few days on the Indian Ocean's Bazaruto Archipelago, a World Heritage Site for outstanding natural beauty.

But along with their fantastic adventures roaming South Africa, Hutson and other educators took time to visit schools, students and teachers.

Their trip in July and August was sponsored by Global Explorations for Educators Organization. Founded in 2007 by Jesse Weisz, the Pennsylvania-based non-profit group provides opportunities for educators to travel overseas, learn from their cultural trips and share their remarkable achievements with their students when they return home.

Hutson, who's a teacher consultant for the Mississippi Geographic Alliance, recently wrote an article about her journey for the MGA newsletter. "Visiting Africa had been a long-time dream of mine as a geography educator," Hutson wrote.

One of her memorable moments along her 28-day trip in South Africa, she says, was seeing fourth graders “studying geography and English from their perches on a dirt floor – we experienced a bond with the learning community in a far-away place, a gentle reminder of our connectedness.”

Hutson says she hopes her students, who are future teachers, will see the benefits of travel abroad on missions to broaden their educational horizons.

Traveling long distances is nothing new for the Mississippi College educator. In the summer of 2009, Hutson collected caterpillars in the rain forests of Ecuador where she stayed for two weeks.

A Grenada County native, Hutson has served on the MC faculty since 2000 after 28 years teaching in Mississippi public schools. A graduate of William Carey University with a master’s from the University of Southern Mississippi, Hutson was named Mississippi’s Teacher of the Year in 1997-98.

For additional information on Global Explorations for Educators Organization, visit the website www.geeo.org.

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