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# U'S "INDIANA JONES OF MATHEMATICS" NAMED FELLOW OF EXPLORERS CLUB

CYNTHIA LUU (HTTP://WWW.DAILYUTAHCHRONICLE.COM/AUTHOR/CYNTHIA-LUU/) - NOVEMBER 24, 2014  
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(Photo Courtesy of Kenneth Golden)

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U professor Kenneth Golden, known as the "Indiana Jones of mathematics," was recently named a fellow of the Explorers Club.

The Explorers Club promotes science and education surrounding exploration of the earth, space, the oceans and more. There have been several renowned members who are famous for firsts of exploration, such as Neil Armstrong with the first lunar landing, Robert Peary with the first North Pole expedition and Sir Edmund Hillary with the first summit of Mount Everest.

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Golden studies the role of sea ice to improve the projection of climate change. He's made 17 expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic, and his work has been widely recognized in many scientific publications. An offshoot of his study is looking at the similarities of sea ice composition to human bones.

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While giving a lecture at the National Museum of Mathematics in New York City last March, Golden was encouraged to apply for the Explorers Club by a member of the board of directors. Golden said his application was 30 pages long and a nostalgic experience for him.

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"It was really interesting revisiting my history and putting it all down in a professional way," Golden said. "It gave me a chance to go back to look at the big scientific issues at the time: what were the big questions, what were the expeditions all about and how were the results published."

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He straddles the science world as well as the mathematical world and has done everything from giving lectures at worldwide math conferences to surviving a burning ship in Antarctica during an expedition. He was first publicly recognized as the mathematical equivalent of Indiana Jones during the Porter Public lecture in 2013.

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"They had done an article about me in the *Union-Tribune San Diego* the morning of the lecture and called me [that]," Golden said. "When I was introduced, the President of the Math Association of America referenced the article. As I took the stage, they start blaring the theme for Indiana Jones. It was crazy."

But Golden embraces the title.

"I think it's good for mathematics," Golden said. "[Math] is something most people tend to avoid because it often brings back bad memories. From that perspective, I think it defies peoples' perspective of what math is and what mathematicians do."

Golden said the Explorers Club's main objective is collecting like-minded individuals who are interested in exploration of the world through scientific means. Being a member also allows access to different types of funding for research.

Jasmine Bishop, a junior in physics, had Golden as her calculus professor during her freshman year at the U, and she wasn't surprised when she heard of his accomplishment.

"He was the math teacher always doing these incredible things [that] he would mention offhandedly, like how he would be a keynote speaker at a math conference in Paris," Bishop said. "Obviously he's done a lot of worldly things, but he also taught us a lot of the material and foundations that are still applicable to what I'm doing now."

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