

## Indiana Jones, Professor Gierke, and Me

Indiana Jones slowly trudged across the barren desert. His canteen dangled, dry and dusty, at his side. Thousands of miles away, Professor Gierke slowly trudged across the hall of Michigan Technological University, preparing for yet another geology class. He had just answered an email from a high school student, who wanted an interview for an essay contest. Hundreds of miles away, the student slowly trekked to his computer, with visions of a big-screen explorer and his dry canteen.

While Indiana Jones is being dragged by a truck through dust and dirt, the professor is examining that dust and dirt under a microscope. As a geological engineer, I see myself also searching for minerals. According to Professor John S. Gierke, Ph.D., P.E., geological engineers serve the public through "the development of natural resources": "exploration for and production of groundwater, petroleum, and minerals." I would enjoy finding natural resources, helping my fellow man in the process. While researching geological engineering, I ran across a project by Scott Pike, a University of Georgia doctoral student. Pike developed a database that might enable archaeologists to pinpoint the location of quarries. These aren't just any quarries, though; these are the quarries that the Elgin marbles came from. That's the kind of project I see myself attacking.

When Indiana Jones teeters on the edge of a slimy snake pit, the last thing on his mind is preserving water, another task of the geological engineer. "Geological engineers serve the public in the protection of groundwater resources," says Professor Gierke. I would love to "help" the earth by preserving water and preventing its waste. So much water goes down the drain, literally, that we need to keep up with what we've got, and use it wisely.

Although an earthquake might have opened under Indiana Jones a few times, he never tried to stop one. According to the professor, that's another task of geological engineers: the mitigation of natural hazards. Imagine helping thousands of people and getting paid for it! As a geological engineer, I would really enjoy knowing that I helped prevent a catastrophe. If geological engineers had been present before Vesuvius erupted, it might not be as infamous.

Indiana Jones will trudge across the barren desert as long as movie rental stores exist. Professor Gierke will continue to explore geological engineering and teach new engineers. As the high school student, I have my entire life ahead of me. I might search for minerals under a microscope. I might preserve water with the best of them. I might prevent earthquakes. Indiana Jones would be proud.

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