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**Contact Holli Koster**  
**979-458-3982; FAX 979-847-8752**  
**Orders: 1-800-826-8911**  
E-mail: [holli.koster@tamu.edu](mailto:holli.koster@tamu.edu)  
[www.tamupress.com](http://www.tamupress.com)

***Texas A&M University Press Director Retires; Editor-in-Chief Assumes Role***

College Station, TX—Texas A&M University Press Director Charles Backus has recently announced his retirement, effective May 17, with current Editor-in-Chief Shannon Davies immediately assuming the director role.

The Edward R. Campbell '39 Press Director, Backus's retirement culminates a nearly 16-year career at Texas A&M University Press, following more than three decades in scholarly publishing.

Davies, who is the new holder of the Campbell press director's chair, became a senior editor for the Texas A&M University Press in 2000, after serving as a science editor at the University of Texas Press for nine years. She became the Louise Lindsey Merrick Editor for the Natural Environment in 2004 and ascended to the role of editor-in-chief in 2014.

"Shannon has developed an outstanding list in her areas of focus on nature and the environment, matching and showcasing many of the university's academic hallmarks," said Backus. "There is no one anywhere who is better qualified to assume the reins at Texas A&M Press."

During Backus' tenure at Texas A&M, the press has increased both in publication output and in annual sales, through collaborative initiatives and the expansion of sponsored series established within Texas A&M and the Texas A&M System and also with compatible academic departments and other scholarly publishers and agencies throughout the state of Texas.

He has also developed the press's advancement board, an expansive 40-member organization that serves to promote and augment funding and support for the press.

Backus came to Texas A&M following previous assignments as director of the university presses at Vanderbilt and Syracuse. He began his career in scholarly publishing as the first acquisitions editor at the University Press of New England, based at Dartmouth College.

Backus earned his PhD in Chinese history from Princeton in 1978 after completing his undergraduate study at the University of Southwestern Louisiana and the University of Hawaii's East-West Center.

Davies, who earned her PhD in American civilization from the University of Texas at Austin, was a Fulbright scholar and a board member of the Thinking Like a Mountain Foundation. She is currently on the board of Madroño Ranch: A Center for Writing, Art, and the Environment.

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