Gone Too Soon, Remembered Always: Chris Weaver and the Power of Visual Thinking

Pak Chung Wong ⓘ, *Rocketgraph, Seattle, WA, 98101, USA*

June Abbas ⓘ, *University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, 73019, USA*

Chaomei Chen ⓘ, *Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, 19104, USA*

Christopher Collins ⓘ, *Ontario Tech University, Oshawa, ON, L1G 0C5, Canada*

Danyel Fisher ⓘ, *Consultant, Seattle, WA, 98104, USA*

Chi-Wing Fu ⓘ, *The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China*

Samuel J. Huskey ⓘ, *The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, 73019, USA*

Andreas Kerren ⓘ, *Linköping University and Linnaeus University, SE-602 33, Norrköping, Sweden*

Alan M. MacEachren ⓘ, *Penn State University, University Park, PA, 16803, USA*

Mike Potel ⓘ, *Wildcrest Associates, Los Altos Hills, CA, 94022, USA*

Anthony C. Robinson ⓘ, *The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 16802, USA*

Michael Sedlmair ⓘ, *University of Stuttgart, 70569, Stuttgart, Germany*

We are deeply saddened by the unexpected passing of Dr. Chris Weaver on the morning of Sunday, 29 June 2025. Chris was a valued and longtime member of the *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications* (IEEE CG&A) editorial board and most recently served as Associate Editor-in-Chief of Special Issues.

An associate professor in the School of Computer Science at the University of Oklahoma, Chris earned a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. From 2005 to 2008, he worked as a research associate at the GeoVISTA Center at Penn State, where he cofounded the North-East Visualization and Analytics Center (NEVAC) and led the development of several award-winning visual analysis tools. His research combined visualization, human–computer interaction, databases, and data mining to support the exploration of complex data.

Chris was in the prime of life, and his sudden passing has been especially difficult for all who knew and worked with him. His colleagues from IEEE CG&A, the visualization and visual analytics community, NEVAC, and the University of Oklahoma mourn his loss and honor the lasting impact he made on the field and on those around him. Figure 1 shows a portrait of Chris, whose warmth, brilliance, and generosity touched so many. The following tributes reflect the deep respect and admiration he inspired throughout his career.

JUNE ABBAS AND SAMUEL J. HUSKEY (PROFESSORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA)

Working with Chris Weaver on Digital Humanities projects was a joy. He relished having a good problem to solve, and the delight he took in visualizing complex subjects led us both to look at our fields with new eyes. His keen wit and good humor balanced his penetrating insights and his uncanny ability to find potential flaws in a plan. We valued and esteemed him highly as a collaborator on grant-funded projects, just as his graduate students valued, respected, and admired him as a mentor and guide. Most of all, we cherished his friendship. We will miss him greatly.

CHAOMEI CHEN (EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *INFORMATION VISUALIZATION*)

I was fortunate to collaborate with Chris on several projects, mainly during his time with the NEVAC. Our first joint work—a paper on visual analysis of

analytics. I will miss Chris as a generous mentor, valued collaborator, and dear conference friend.

DANYEL FISHER (CONSULTANT IN DATA VISUALIZATION AND USER EXPERIENCE)

Chris was not only a colleague but also a friend. At every conference, we'd find each other at some official event and decide to get away. We'd retreat to a nearby bar; other attendees would find us to explore exciting ideas and discuss the future of visualization late into the night. Chris always had new directions he was exploring: while Improvise was an early look at managing multiple coordinated views, he could be found editing IEEE CG&A, running symposia on the future of the field, and researching data analysis techniques for text, games, and progressive visualization.

CHI-WING FU (IEEE CG&A ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

Chris was a great colleague in the team, handling IEEE CG&A's special issues. It is very sad to hear of his passing, before which he still looked rather energetic in the EIC meeting. It was also very sudden. Chris still actively sent us emails a few days before, making comments and sharing his thoughts on various plans. You are very devoted. Your dedication, gentleness, and legacy will be dearly missed.

ANDREAS KERREN (PROFESSOR AT LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY AND LINNAEUS UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN)

I first met Chris at a Dagstuhl Seminar on InfoVis in 2007 and was impressed by his impact on the community through the Improvise framework for building highly coordinated data visualizations and his deep understanding of our research field. He was not only a brilliant colleague, but also fair, helpful, open-minded, and a terrific speaker and teacher. I learned a lot from him in many ways. Over the years, we became friends and often met at conferences, both for engaging discussions and to enjoy a beer and dinner together. I will deeply miss the privilege of working and sharing these moments with him.

ALAN M. MACEACHREN (PROFESSOR EMERITUS AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

Chris joined the Penn State GeoVISTA Center in August 2005, as he was finishing up his Ph.D. He was a key part of our research team for three years. From the start, Chris played a critical leadership role in our

FIGURE 1. Chris Weaver (1969–2025), remembered for his visionary contributions to visualization and his unwavering dedication to community, mentorship, and collaborative scholarship.

conflicting opinions for the inaugural VAST symposium—showcased how powerful and versatile his Improvise system was. We also worked on grant proposals and a special issue on visual text analytics later on. Chris was an extraordinary researcher—insightful, generous, and inspiring. His contributions to visual analytics demonstrate a distinctive degree of elegance and grace.

CHRISTOPHER COLLINS (FORMER IEEE CG&A ASSOCIATE EDITOR)

Chris was an early mentor as I completed my Ph.D. His work on Improvise shaped my understanding of multiview coordination, and his later project on historic hotel records inspired my humanities-focused visualization research. In 2009, he hosted me at the University of Oklahoma, encouraging me at a pivotal moment as I launched my lab. Over nearly two decades, we met at IEEE VIS and collaborated on committees, the Visualization for Digital Humanities workshops, and a Dagstuhl Seminar on visual text

visual analytics research and development and its dissemination (particularly as we launched the NEVAC); he was a committed and successful mentor to our multidisciplinary group of grad students; and he was a lot of fun to engage in research debates and collaborate with. Chris had a lasting impact on the many grad students and faculty colleagues he worked with, both during his time at Penn State and well beyond.

MIKE POTEL (IEEE CG&A ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

What I'll remember most about Chris is his enthusiastic and positive energy about everything. Whether pursuing opportunities or putting out fires, he was always upbeat and looking forward. I never saw him discouraged or close to giving up. Handling IEEE CG&A special issues involves juggling a half dozen complex projects at all stages of progress and aggravation, and Chris remained buoyant throughout. A great guy gone from us before his time.

ANTHONY C. ROBINSON (PROFESSOR AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY)

Chris' time at the GeoVISTA Center at Penn State propelled many creative and impactful projects. Chris thrived on intriguing datasets and pushed the limits on what InfoVis could do. I have vivid memories of his demo with Improvise showing all the ways one could visually represent movie data; it was mind-blowing at the time. Together, we worked fast, set a high bar for creative solutions, and made prototypes and papers that fueled major career strides. I have fond memories of our late nights working on wacky VAST contest solutions, banal project reports, and everything in between.

MICHAEL SEDLMAIR (PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF STUTTGART, GERMANY)

I met Chris at BELIV 2010, when I was still a Ph.D. student and already admired his Improvise framework for coordinated views. Talking to him, I quickly realized he wasn't just super smart, but also incredibly kind, with a huge sense of humor. I still remember how impressed I was when he used Winnie the Pooh to explain his ideas at a VIS panel! In 2017, he joined us for a sabbatical in Vienna—many deep discussions followed, often while strolling the city. Among his many contributions, let me just highlight the recent *Progressive Data Analysis* book he coauthored. Chris, you'll be greatly missed!

THROUGH THE WORK, HE REMAINS

Chris Weaver's influence extended far beyond his research and professional accomplishments. He was a source of energy, creativity, and encouragement to those around him. His collaborative spirit, intellectual generosity, and unwavering dedication left a mark on colleagues, students, and the broader visualization community. We honor his legacy by carrying forward the curiosity, compassion, and excellence that defined his life and career.

PAK CHUNG WONG is currently with Rocketgraph, Seattle, WA, 98101, USA. He is the Interim Editor-in-Chief of IEEE CG&A and a senior member of IEEE. He is the corresponding author of this article. Contact him at pakchungwong@computer.org.

JUNE ABBAS is the director of and a professor with the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, 73019, USA. She is also the Editor-in-Chief of the *Library and Information Science Research* journal. Contact her at jmabbas@ou.edu.

CHAOMEI CHEN is a professor of information science at Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, 19104, USA. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of *Information Visualization* and the founding field chief editor of *Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics*. Contact him at chaomei.chen@drexel.edu.

CHRISTOPHER COLLINS is currently a professor of computer science at Ontario Tech University, Oshawa, ON, L1G 0C5, Canada. He is a former associate editor of IEEE CG&A. Contact him at christopher.collins@ontariotechu.ca.

DANYEL FISHER is an independent consultant in data visualization and user experience at Seattle, WA, 98104, USA. He previously led user data experience at Honeycomb, and was a researcher at Microsoft Research. Contact him at danyel@danyelfisher.info.

CHI-WING FU is currently with The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. He is the Associate Editor-in-

Chief of Feature Articles at IEEE CG&A. Contact him at cwfu@cse.cuhk.edu.hk.

SAMUEL J. HUSKEY is a professor of classics and letters and senior faculty fellow for digital humanities at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, 73019, USA. He is also the director of the Digital Latin Library. Contact him at huskey@ou.edu.

ANDREAS KERREN is the chair of information visualization at Linköping University, SE-602 33, Norrköping, Sweden, where he also holds an ELLIIT professorship. He also leads the ISOVIS research group at Linnaeus University. Contact him at andreas.kerren@liu.se.

ALAN M. MACEACHREN is currently professor emeritus of geography at Penn State University. University Park, PA 16802, USA. He is a senior member of IEEE. Contact him at maceachren@psu.edu.

MIKE POTEL is cofounder of Wildcrest Associates, a Silicon Valley technology consultancy based in Los Altos Hills, CA, 94022, USA. He is the Associate Editor-in-Chief of Departments for IEEE CG&A. He is a life senior member of IEEE. Contact him at potel@wildcrest.com.

ANTHONY C. ROBINSON is a professor of geography at Penn State, University Park, PA, 16802, USA. He holds leadership roles with the American Association of Geographers and the International Cartographic Association. Contact him at arobinson@psu.edu.

MICHAEL SEDLMAIR is currently a professor of computer science at the University of Stuttgart, 70569, Stuttgart, Germany. He is a member of IEEE. Contact him at Michael.Sedlmair@visus.uni-stuttgart.de.