

Rare meteorite fragment donated to UC Davis geologist

May 31 2012



UC Davis geologist Qing-Zhu Yin examines the donated meteorite. Credit: Gregory Urquiaga/UC Davis photo

UC Davis alumnus Gregory Jorgensen '90, Ph.D. '95, presented UC Davis geologist Qing-Zhu Yin with a donation today, May 30, of a meteorite piece that fell beside his driveway in Coloma, Calif.

The [meteorite](#), a rare carbonaceous chondrite, contains the dust and grains that helped form the Earth and other planets more than four and a half billion years ago.

Yin calls it “invaluable” to science and has asked others to come forth with donations. His lab is one of the few in the nation with the equipment needed to analyze and date the meteorite.

Jorgensen is a chemistry professor at American River College in Sacramento. His donation is one of two meteorite pieces he stumbled upon. The first was found while taking a casual walk with his wife, Alice, and 7-month-old daughter, Abriela at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park near his home.

He hadn't heard the fireball that indicated the meteorite's fall on April 22, and his wife was in Los Angeles at the time. When they saw people at the park looking for something on the ground, they thought they were mushroom hunters. Then they learned of the meteorite.

"When we got back to the car, I looked down and saw a rock that looked a little different," said Jorgensen. "I put it in my pocket. Over the course of the days, I figured out it was a meteorite."

Today's donation ceremony at the Earth and Plant Sciences building at UC Davis was also attended by Winston Ko, dean of the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and department chair Howard Spero.

Provided by UC Davis

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