

## Alfred University professors call Aug. 21 eclipse 'sublime,' 'spectacular'

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Alfred University faculty, students, spouses, relatives and one alum in Missouri for the eclipse.

Alfred University stargazers returned Tuesday from a trip to Union, Mo., where they experienced “a spectacularly sublime event,” in the words of Physics Professor David DeGraff: the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse, which swept across the continental U.S. from Oregon to South Carolina.

DeGraff joined Physics professors Dave Toot and Georgina Bernstein-Kendall for the trip, plus Professor of Anthropology Robert Myers, Visiting Assistant Professor of Art Foundations Sara Ferguson, spouses and relatives, numerous AU students and AU alumnus Ben Placek &10. They returned to Alfred Tuesday after watching an event Toot described as “one of the most unusual, spectacular events in the natural world.”

“Sunsets are beautiful, but literally a daily event, so not that special,” DeGraff reflected. “You can spend as long as you like looking at the Grand Canyon ... (but) totality was over in just 2 minutes 39 seconds. I was so awe-struck I forgot to pay attention to the sounds around me, or to look for stars, or to grab the binoculars, or take any photos.”

“Finally seeing the Sun&s corona with my own eyes was a bucket list event for me,” added Toot. “It is amazingly different to see it that way than to see pictures of it either from other eclipses or from spacecraft.”

The Alfredians may get a chance to see another total solar eclipse in seven years — and they won&t have to travel so far. The solar eclipse of 2024 will swing over Erie, Pa., only a two hour drive from Alfred.