ancient monumental structures carefully, and beautifully, carved into the earth meet infrastructural needs and cultural indulgences for the people of India. Stepwells give access to ground water and store months of rainwater to serve the deserts of Gujarat and Rajasthan as large water tanks. They also provide a place of worship and ritualism, solace and relaxation, intensity and desire. Seen as landmarks of possession, conquerors have gone to war for their ownership over the centuries. Their history is kindred with the aqueducts of the Roman Empire and the cathedrals of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

This Moise H. + Lois G. Goldstein Travel Fellowship Lecture will discuss the architectural, cultural, and social value of the Stepwells of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi.