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IN MEMORIAM

Phillip Lee Walker

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Photo: Cynthia Brock

PHILLIP LEE WALKER, prominent physical anthropologist and Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, died on February 6, 2009, in Goleta, California where he lived with his wife Cynthia Brock and dog Trixie. He was born in Elkhart, Indiana on July 22, 1947, the youngest of three brothers born to Paul and Bernice Moore Walker. He graduated from Indiana University in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a minor in zoology, and went on to complete his Ph.D. dissertation, *Great Ape Feeding Behavior and Incisor Morphology*, at the University of Chicago in 1973 under Albert Dahlberg. Phil headed west in 1973 for a lecturer appointment at

the University of California at Davis, and joined the faculty of the Anthropology Department at UCSB the following year. He was a prolific and innovative scholar whose bioarchaeological research on human health and behavior reached across disciplines, continents, and time periods, and often challenged accepted wisdom. As President of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists from 2003–2005, Phil helped to shape the discipline of physical anthropology and bring it into the digital age. He was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2003 in recognition of his lifelong contributions to science.

Soon after his arrival at UCSB, Phil began to explore research opportunities in California. The rich archaeological record of the Santa Barbara Channel area attracted his attention and it wasn't long before he became fully immersed in the study of the Chumash and their ancestors. Over the years he would conduct numerous bioarchaeological studies of human skeletal remains from the Chumash region, often in collaboration with graduate students and colleagues (Gamble et al. 2001, 2002; Lambert and Walker 1991; Miller et al. 2003; Titus and Walker 2000; Walker 1978a, 1986, 1992b, 2006a; Walker and DeNiro 1986; Walker, Drayer and Siefkin 1996; Walker and Erlandson 1986; Walker and Hollimon 1989; Walker and Lambert 1989; Walker, Lambert and DeNiro 1989; Walker, Lambert, Schultz, and Erlandson 2005; Walker and Thornton 2002). He realized early on that this region could provide unique insights into the causes of changing patterns of health in North America because its people sustained high population densities in settled villages in the absence of agriculture and therefore could provide a counterpoint to health studies of the agricultural transition. He also conducted zooarchaeological research (Rick et al. 2008; Walker 1980, 1982; Walker and Craig 1979;

Walker et al. 1999) and participated in endeavors that helped to establish an environmental context for his work (Erlandson et al. 2001; Jones et al. 1999; Kennett et al. 1997). He collaborated with Michelle Buzon, Julia Costello and others of his graduate students on studies of Euro-American skeletal remains from California (Buzon et al. 2004; Costello and Walker 1987; Walker and Lambert 1991), and with John Johnson to document the infectious disease experience and mortality patterns of the Chumash in the mission system through the analysis of mission record data (Walker and Johnson 1992, 1994, 2003). With the late Travis Hudson he mined historic accounts and the copious field notes of John Peabody Harrington to compile a treatise on how the Chumash responded to illness before and after European contact (Walker and Hudson 1993).

Phil made many other important contributions to skeletal biology and paleopathology. His widely cited paper with John Johnson and Patricia Lambert (1988; see also Walker 1995) on age and sex biases in the preservation of human skeletal remains was the first of a number of papers he would publish on problems with establishing demographic data from skeletal remains. In the early 1990s he wrote the chapter on age and sex determination methods for the *Standards for the Collection of Data from Skeletal Remains* (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994a), continuing to research and enhance the efficacy of these methods in subsequent years (Walker 2005, 2008a). In 1985, Phil published the first of three pivotal articles on the aetiology of porotic hyperostosis, challenging accepted wisdom that maize consumption was key to the formation of this porous cranial lesion. He followed this up in 1986 with a widely cited study of porotic hyperostosis among the prehistoric fisher people of the Santa Barbara Channel area, which linked the lesion with water shortage and diarrheal disease (Walker 1986). In a collaborative effort in 2009 he revisited the question of aetiology, offering compelling and paradigm-shifting evidence for the role of vitamin B deficiencies as a cause of the lesion (Walker et al. 2009).

In 1989 Phil published his seminal article on cranial injuries in human skeletal remains from the Santa Barbara Channel area that became a standard for such studies in bioarchaeology. It was the first of a series of papers on human violence he would complete over the years (Walker 1990d, 1997b, 2001a, 2001b; Walker

et al. 1997; Andrushko et al. 2005; Andrushko et al. in press). Around this time he began to work with law enforcement agencies in California on suspected cases of child abuse, which led to a collaborative publication with Della Cook and Patricia Lambert in 1997 on the skeletal evidence for child abuse. Also in that year he published a comparative study of cranial trauma from several world regions (Walker 1997b), which he followed up in 2001 with broad survey of the bioarchaeological evidence of violence throughout human history (Walker 2001a). Most recently, he had worked with Valerie Andrushko on a study of a striking case of forearm trophy taking in Central California (Andrushko et al. 2005) that led to a collaborative survey with Andrushko and Al Schwitalla of the skeletal evidence for trophy-taking in Central California (Andrushko et al. in press).

Phil relished the social dimensions and enhanced research potential of collaborative endeavors, and he was involved in several major research projects during the latter half of his career. In the late 1980s, Walker joined a team of researchers led by Richard Steckel and Jerome Rose that would forge new ground in the study of health and nutrition in the Western Hemisphere (Steckel et al. 2001, 2002; Walker and Thornton 2002). This project was the springboard for a second and more ambitious NSF-funded project, *A History of Health in Europe from the Late Paleolithic Era to the Present*, for which Phil would serve as a co-principal investigator with Clark Larsen, Paul Sciulli, and Richard Steckel. In 1995 he teamed up with Jesse Byock of UCLA on a project bridging bioarchaeology and the Icelandic Sagas in the Mosfell Valley of Iceland. Together with archaeologists Jon Erlandson and Mark Tsevkov, and an international team of researchers, they would go on in 2001–2005 to unearth a church and cemetery dating to the conversion period from Viking Age paganism to Medieval Christianity, a longhouse, and a Viking-era boat burial and cremation—the first ever discovered in Iceland (Byock et al. 2003, 2005, 2007; Walker et al. n.d.). With Clark Larsen and Richard Steckel, Phil had just begun to develop another international collaboration at the time of his death that would focus on craniofacial evidence for the peopling of the Pacific Rim.

Phil never shied away from the challenging ethical issues surrounding the study of human skeletal remains in North America (Larsen and Walker 2004; Walker 1992a,

1998, 2000a, 2004), bringing both his passionate belief in the value of science as well as his Potawatomi Indian ancestry to the table. Years before the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed, he produced the film, *Science or Sacrilege: The Study of Native American Remains*, which explored both sides of the growing debate between scientists and Native American spiritual leaders concerning the excavation, curation, and study of human skeletal remains (Walker 1983). He worked for the passage of balanced law on the treatment of indigenous human skeletal remains in the U.S. and went on to serve on the first Department of Interior NAGPRA Review Committee from 1992–1997. He chaired the Society for American Archaeology's Task Force on Repatriation from 1991–1992 and served in varying capacities on the Society's Committee on Repatriation from 1998 to his death in 2009. He also chaired the Task Force on Repatriation for the AAPA from 1997–2009, and was a member of the American Anthropological Association Ethics Committee from 1999–2002 and the Smithsonian Institution Native American Repatriation Review Committee from 2003–2009. On Phil's death, the Chumash of Santa Ynez, with whom he had worked on research and repatriation for many years, lit a sacred four-day fire to honor his life (<http://phil-walker.net/>).

Numerous students and colleagues found a home in Phil's lab during their time at UCSB. Gatherings at his house in Goleta were legendary and he was a fearless cook who loved to prepare succulent meals for his students, friends, and colleagues inspired by his travels abroad. One never knew where a conversation with Phil would go, but with his wit and a twinkle in his eye Phil could navigate any subject with the ease and aplomb of a diplomat. He was a talented artist who frequently penned illustrations for his publications, often aided by his wife Cynthia who contributed her professional skills as a graphic artist to many projects and read over just about everything he ever wrote. He also crafted and repaired beautiful string instruments that hung on a wall in his Goleta home, ready for a jam session with fellow musicians whenever the mood might strike. Phil was a proud and active supporter of Cynthia in her political career as a council member on Goleta's first city council and then as its mayor from 2004–2005. Together they worked to preserve Ellwood Mesa through their involvement with Friends of the Ellwood Coast and

enhance the quality of life in Goleta through their support of thoughtful development in this fledgling city. Hundreds of people from all walks of life attended Phil's memorial reception at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History on February 22, 2009. The stories they shared left those in attendance with a profound sense of wonder at the many facets they revealed of this talented and generous man, and a great appreciation for having known him and felt his influence in their lives. His contributions to anthropology are many, and he will be remembered as a brilliant scholar and exceptional mentor who set the standard for research in bioarchaeology and inspired a new generation of bioarchaeologists who trained in his lab and now carry on his legacy at academic institutions all over the country.

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