

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS KENNETH A. BENNETT

Professor Emeritus Kenneth Alan Bennett passed away in Madison, WI on February 6, 2014. He was a biological anthropologist and an authority in forensic anthropology. His teaching inspired generations of students, and his work with the state crime lab over a quarter of a century exemplified the Wisconsin Idea.

Born in Butler, Oklahoma in 1935, Ken developed an interest in archaeology during his early years of roaming the hills in west Texas. He received his A.S. degree from Odessa College in 1956 before being drafted for two years of service in the U.S. Army. He then earned his B.A from the University of Texas-Austin in 1961, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Arizona-Tucson in 1966 and 1967, respectively. He held an NIH Fellowship from 1964-1967. He was Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oregon from 1967-1970 prior to joining the Department of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he was Associate Professor from 1970-1975 and Full Professor from 1975 until his retirement in 1997.

During his 28 years at UW-Madison, Ken's teaching and scholarship were closely intertwined. As the primary instructor for one of the department's large lecture courses, Ken introduced thousands of undergraduates to the basics of human biology and the broader field of biological anthropology. He also provided hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on laboratory experience in his popular courses on Forensic Anthropology and The Human Skeleton, famously known as the Bones Lab. He produced nine Ph.Ds, all of whom have continued to work in the field.

Ken authored more than 60 original articles, book reviews, and commentaries, as well as numerous technical autopsy reports and two major volumes. *Fundamentals of Biological Anthropology*, published in 1979, was a leading textbook in the discipline for many years. It was widely considered to be one of the most sophisticated introductory volumes on the evolution and biology of *Homo sapiens*, in part because Ken's approach to biological anthropology was to treat it as a rigorous natural science while also making it accessible and interesting to beginning students. At the other extreme, his reference manual, *A Field Guide for Human Skeletal Identification*, first published in 1987 with a second edition in 1993, was explicitly intended as a practical resource for professional forensic anthropologists with extensive diagnostic expertise.

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Ken's reputation as a brilliant editor and reviewer extended beyond the appreciation of students and colleagues to include many of the major journals in the field. He was the Editor of the flagship journal, *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* from 1976-1981, a Contributing Editor of *Social Biology* from 1981-1987, and on the Editorial Board of the *Annual Reviews in Anthropology* from 1987-1991. Ken's eclectic interests also led to his participation in diverse professional societies including the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, where he held a position on the Executive Committee from 1976-1981, the Human Biology Council, the American Society of Naturalists, and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

As a forensic anthropology consultant to law enforcement agencies, Ken was instrumental in helping to solve some major criminal cases in Wisconsin. In making his scientific expertise available, Ken demonstrated the contributions to society that exceptional faculty at a world-class university can play.

The same unwavering integrity that made Ken such an invaluable resource to forensic investigations also characterized his interactions with students and colleagues. He was known for maintaining high standards and for being fair, and for his willingness to speak up on behalf of both people and causes when they needed him. He was a trusted confidant to many students and colleagues alike.

Ken had a far-ranging intellectual curiosity that led him to read deeply across a wide range of subjects, especially in the sciences, economics, and politics. His quest for knowledge of all kinds persisted throughout his retirement. He loved riding his motorcycle, and took justifiable pride in the chili peppers and tomatoes he grew in his backyard garden. Gardening was a hobby that Ken shared with his life-long partner and beloved wife, Helen, who he married in 1959. Ken is survived by Helen, their two daughters, Letitia and Cheri, their two grandchildren, Krista and Jack, and his sister, Judy, as well as by other relatives and friends.

Ken was a private man who genuinely cared about his students, along with his family and friends. He also cared about the University of Wisconsin, the future of Biological Anthropology, and the importance of using one's knowledge to make a difference in the world. We were fortunate to have had him as a colleague.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Karen B. Strier