



Kenneth Adrian Raine Kennedy

June 26, 1930 – April 23, 2014

Kenneth Adrian Raine Kennedy, professor emeritus of physical anthropology in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology died on April 23, 2014 in Ithaca after fifty years on the Cornell faculty. Professor Kennedy was an internationally known figure in the paleoanthropology and prehistory of South Asia who also made significant contributions to skeletal biology, forensic anthropology and the history of evolution and biological anthropology.

Professor Kennedy was born in Oakland, California in 1930. He entered the University of California at Berkeley in 1949 where he received bachelor's (1953) and master's degrees in anthropology (1954). In 1958, after a hiatus to discharge his military service obligation, he returned to Berkeley for a Ph.D. which he received in 1962. During his time at Berkeley which he remembered as "the golden age of paleoanthropology," he was able to work with many

of the now legendary figures in twentieth century anthropology including Robert Lowie, John Heiser, Sherwood Washburn and others. It was at Berkeley as well that he established a life-long relationship with Theodore D. McCown, mentor, collaborator and friend with whom he co-edited *Climbing Man's Family Tree: A Collection of Major Writings on Human Phylogeny* (1972).

Professor Kennedy's Ph.D. dissertation research focused on fossil skeletal remains from Sri Lanka held by the British Museum. This work, undertaken in London, would seem at first glance to have been a somewhat solitary enterprise that might have foreshadowed an armchair career. It was actually the gateway to his energetic orchestration for decades to come of an ever widening set of collegial and mentoring relationships throughout the world and further to *in situ* field experiences in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan.

As his student Angela Lieveise (Ph.D. 2005) wrote in connection with a special *festschrift* symposium held in his honor at the meetings of the American Anthropological Association in 2008, "the scope of Kennedy's work has been nothing short of astonishing, ranging geographically from Sri Lanka in the southeast to Pakistan in the northwest and spanning extensive temporal periods from the Miocene (the anthropoid apes of the Siwalik hills) through the middle Holocene (Harappa, the Indus Valley Civilization)." A prolific publication record which included 200 articles and book chapters, 21 books and monographs and scores of books reviews cemented his place on the center stage of his field. He would become publicly remembered as "the father of human paleontology in South Asia" by his colleagues in India who held a special condolence meeting at Deccan College, Pune shortly after he died. Of his many works, he was best known for *God-Apes and Fossil Men: Paleoanthropology of South Asia* (2000) Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press. This work, which surveys the prehistoric cultures of the South Asian region from multiple disciplinary perspectives, won the 2002 W.W. Howells Prize from the Biological Anthropology Section of the American Anthropological Association.

As a medical forensic expert, certified as a Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropologists, Professor Kennedy contributed significantly to the study and identification of skeletal remains throughout New York State. Perhaps the most famous of his on-campus applications of forensic science was his study of the skeletal remains of an Egyptian mummy that had been donated to Cornell in the 1880s, unwrapped and then exhibited on campus for many years, and eventually defleshed in the 1960s leaving the disarticulated bones (still held in the Anthropology Collections). The inscription on the sarcophagus identified this individual as a court scribe named Penpi, from the Third Intermediate period (c. 828-665 BCE). The exercise identified possible disease issues from the skeletal

remains, and suggested a more Mediterranean genetic heritage on the basis of statistical assessment of measurements.

After completing his dissertation at Berkeley, Kenneth spent two years on a National Science Foundation fellowship at Deccan College, Pune with which he maintained a close association over the next fifty years. He was appointed as an assistant professor at Cornell in 1964. With brief interruptions for academic research leaves that took him to other institutions, especially to museum collections and to collaborative fieldwork sites in South Asia, he remained at Cornell for the rest of his professional career. His spring 2005 election to emeritus professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Anthropology, and Asian Studies was celebrated with tributes from students and colleagues who came from far and wide to attend a memorable reception at the Cornell Andrew Dickson White House.

Professor Kennedy's outstanding experience as a student at Berkeley may well have shaped the unique and generous teaching and mentoring style that he brought to Cornell. His close colleague, Professor Michael Little of Binghamton University has called him a "warm and generous mentor who was committed to teaching, education and maintaining high standards for student's work, work that he set by his own example." Over the years, he taught a range of general and specialized courses in biological anthropology at both the graduate and undergraduate levels to thousands of students. Students who enrolled in his graduate seminars often recall the hospitality extended to them by Kenneth and his wife Margaret. Many evening sessions were held at his house in Ellis Hollow where students would sit around his office fireplace sipping cider or sherry as they discussed the topic of the week. Then the evening would conclude with coffee and sweets – with cake baked specially by Mrs. Kennedy, as students were sent on their way.

Professor Kennedy supervised eleven doctoral dissertations in biological anthropology while at Cornell covering a wide range of topics, time periods and locales. These graduate students who eventually went on to establish careers of their own were given a sense of their place in the intellectual stream. They shared an ethos, imbued by Professor Kennedy, of a certain academic world view. It included a penchant for collaborative and multidisciplinary work, and an appreciation of the history of the

field and a respect for the work of those scholars who had preceded them.

A review of Professor Kennedy's professional life would not be complete without mention of his contributions to forensic anthropology which was often a subject of fascination to a general or popular audience. By examining a skeleton post-mortem, it was said that he could assess the physical stresses and perhaps even the occupation or habits of the person in life (in his case, violin playing) He served as an expert witness and analyst for law enforcement on forensic cases throughout the northeastern United States in the later stages of his career. In 1987, he was awarded the T. Dale Stewart Award by the American Academy of Forensic Scientists. This particular dimension of his work formed the basis of numerous, popular summer courses that he offered at Cornell's Adult University to audiences of non-specialists between 1982 and 2000.

Professor Kennedy was married for 44 years to his second wife Margaret Carrick Fairlie Kennedy. In addition to her reputation as a baker of cakes, she was an accomplished filmmaker as well as a composer who shared his life-long love of music and his research interests in South Asia. She predeceased him by five months.

Bonnie Graham MacDougall; Jere D. Haas; Frederic W. Gleach

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/kenneth-kennedy-father-of-human-palaeontology-in-south-asia-passes-away/article5983129.ece>