

ALLEN P. McCARTNEY (1940–2004)

Northern studies lost one of its most esteemed practitioners on June 15, 2004, with the death of Allen P. McCartney, who had suffered from Parkinson's-related disease for several years. He was 63. For over four decades, Allen pursued an especially broad range of anthropological and archaeological research interests: he was perhaps the only recent scholar whose work spanned the North American Arctic, from the western Aleutian Islands in Alaska to the eastern Canadian Arctic.

Allen was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on August 8, 1940, and moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas, as a young child. After graduation from high school there, he returned to his hometown to enter the University of Arkansas in 1958. He graduated four years later with a B.A. and high honors in Sociology and Anthropology, and he was both a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a Woodrow Wilson Honorary Fellow. His first archaeological field experience came during his undergraduate years when he participated in fieldwork in Carroll, Hot Springs, Miller, and Crawford counties, Arkansas.

It was also while an undergraduate, when he studied the World War II internment of Aleuts in southeastern Alaska for a class paper, that Allen first became interested in the North. For assistance with his paper, Allen wrote to biological anthropologist William Laughlin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin and the foremost Aleutians scholar of the time. This led, ultimately, to Allen's entrance in 1962 to the graduate program in anthropology at Wisconsin, which, with Laughlin, archaeologist Chester Chard, and cultural anthropologist Catharine McClellan, was known for its strong northern emphasis.

In the summer before Allen's first semester at Wisconsin, Laughlin invited him to take part in the 1961–63 Aleut-Konyag Prehistory and Ecology Project. Laughlin, who had worked for Ales Hrdlicka in the Aleutians in 1938, had assembled a multidisciplinary research team that included a number of students. Like Allen, many of them (including Jean Aigner, Richard Nelson, Christy Turner, and William Workman) would continue with northern research of their own for years to come. Allen's part in Laughlin's project—which continued during the summer of 1963, when he served as excavation supervisor—centered on excavations in the Nikolski village area of southwestern Umnak Island, which included the important sites of Chaluka and Anangula.

Allen earned his M.A. in 1967 from Wisconsin, with a thesis entitled "An Analysis of the Bone Industry from Amaknak Island, Alaska." It was based on a study of archaeological collections from the Unalaska Island area (eastern Aleutians), which were housed at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In 1968, Allen took part in the Northwest Hudson Bay Thule Project,



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which focused on the Kamarvik, Silumiut, and Igluligardjuk sites. In the following year, he served as the principal investigator for excavations at the Silumiut site, under contract to the National Museum of Man. His 1971 doctoral dissertation, "Thule Eskimo Prehistory Along Northwestern Hudson Bay," was based on this fieldwork.

Over the span of his graduate student years, Allen held instructor and lecturer positions at various campuses of the University of Wisconsin Center System. In 1970, he joined the faculty at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville as an assistant professor of anthropology. He was promoted to associate professor in 1974 and to professor in 1979. He remained at Arkansas for his entire professional career, retiring because of illness in the spring of 2003. In addition to his service as chair of the anthropology department for six years, Allen was instrumental in establishing the Ph.D. program in Environmental Dynamics, an interdisciplinary specialty emphasizing the study of complex human and environmental interactions and change. He served as its first director from 1998 to 2002.

In the early 1970s, Allen returned to the Aleut region for excavations and surveys. His excavation work at Izembek Lagoon on the Alaska Peninsula in 1971 led him to important considerations concerning the nature of prehistoric cultural boundaries in southwestern Alaska. In 1972 and 1973, he accompanied U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel on boat voyages in the Aleutian Islands, survey-

ing the coastline and significantly adding to the inventory of archaeological sites throughout the archipelago.

The research in Canada that Allen pursued for his doctoral degree continued into the 1980s. From 1975 to 1976, he served as the principal investigator and project director for the Thule Archaeology Conservation Project in coastal areas of the Northwest Territories, and in 1978 he conducted studies of bowhead whale bones at Thule period archaeological sites on Somerset Island, in the same region. In 1988 and 1990, Allen collaborated with James Savelle of McGill University on similar field investigations at Thule culture sites with whale bones and sites where bowheads were naturally beached throughout the central Canadian Arctic.

Allen's leadership role in the multidisciplinary Thule Archaeology Conservation Project, which was sponsored through the Archaeological Survey of Canada and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, involved coordination and planning not only of excavations and analyses, but also of important public-relations and educational facets. Notably, the latter included a four-week Inuit training program at the University of Arkansas.

Allen's interest in maritime adaptations in the Aleutian Islands did not wane during his years in the Canadian North. From 1984 to 1986, he joined Douglas Veltre, of the University of Alaska Anchorage, and Jean Aigner, of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, in archaeological surveys and testing of sites in the Unalaska Bay region and elsewhere on Unalaska Island, in the eastern Aleutians. This work led these researchers—joined by ethnohistorian Lydia Black, of the University of Alaska Fairbanks—to investigate Aleut culture change in the late prehistoric and early Russian periods in a large-scale project at the Reese Bay site on northern Unalaska Island from 1988 to 1990.

Following this Aleutian field work, Allen collaborated in 1995 with Roger Harritt, of the University of Alaska Anchorage's Environment and Natural Resources Institute, and Barbara Bodenhorn, of Cambridge University, in an examination of prehistoric-to-historic period sites in the vicinity of Barrow, Alaska. He also continued investigations of northwestern Alaskan whale biometrics with Savelle—in the field in 1996 and 1998, and in museum collections in 1997.

During the early stages of his northern research, Allen had developed an ancillary interest in the use and source areas of various metals appearing in Thule sites. This interest led him to develop innovative approaches to interpreting prehistoric trade networks throughout the North American Arctic in the 1980s and 1990s, and these in turn served as a basis for several far-reaching analyses by Allen and others of Thule social relations in the context of material culture exchange networks.

Allen's final field project, begun in 1994 and continued in 2000 and 2001, was surveys and excavations with Veltre at late 18th-century Russian and Aleut sites on St. Paul Island, in the Pribilof Islands, Alaska.

With such an active research career and varied interests, Allen's academic output was prodigious, ranging from short notes to full, single-authored monographs. However, one of Allen's most notable strengths was his ability—and indeed great enthusiasm—for bringing together archaeologists of various theoretical and analytical approaches. This resulted in some lively conferences and, more importantly, some exceedingly notable and valuable edited volumes on northern archaeology, for most of which Allen shouldered the time-consuming burdens of funding and editing. The last volume that he edited was *Indigenous Ways to the Present: Native Whaling in the Western Arctic*, published in 2003 by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press.

As equally impressive as his writings was another, sometimes unrecognized contribution that Allen made that was crucial to the development of northern anthropology as a healthy, active social science. This came in the form of his editorship of the journal *Arctic Anthropology* in 1981–89 and 1996–2000 and his role as Associate Editor in 1989–95 and in 2001. Additionally, Allen served on the Board of Governors of the Arctic Institute of North America in 1977–79 and as Associate Editor of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* in 2001.

This brief commentary can only touch upon Allen's many other contributions to Arctic anthropology. For example, his efforts in promoting northern research, mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, and encouraging indigenous participation at all levels of northern research are without parallel. Indeed, Allen McCartney was instrumental in the training and development of an entire generation of northern archaeologists and anthropologists. As noted in a festschrift soon to appear as a special volume of *Arctic Anthropology*, “the northern scientific community is mourning the loss of a true gentleman, scholar, colleague and friend.” Allen was all this and more, and his influence and sense of purpose will surely live on for many generations to come.

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