

ANTHROPOLOGY AT ALABAMA

Newsletter of the University of Alabama Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences

RETIREMENTS OF NORMAN SINGER AND ALLEN MAXWELL

When Norman Singer, Charles O. Stoke Professor of Law and Professor of Anthropology retired late this summer (2010) he had served the University's Law School and Anthropology Department for 39 years. Norman taught graduate courses in Law and Anthropology for the duration of his Alabama tenure and participated fully in the deliberations of both faculties as they faced multiple major modifications of course offerings and educational procedures. Singer had a gift for creating and implementing social and educational programs, a talent he applied to his work in Sudan, Morocco, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Zanzibar, and Rwanda, as well as the University of Alabama.

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Professor Allen R. Maxwell (Max to his friends and colleagues) retired in 2010 after 36 years of distinguished service to the University and department. Max is a New Englander born-and-bred; an ardent Celtics, Red Sox and Patriots fan who re-settled in the South when he joined the Anthropology faculty in the fall of 1974. He was born in Hanover, New Hampshire in 1939 and was raised in Massachusetts. He earned a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Michigan in 1969 and a year later completed an M.A. in Linguistics from the same institution. He was awarded a Ph.D. from Yale in 1980.

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CONTACT

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
P.O. Box 870210
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA 35487

PHONE: (205) 348-5947

FAX: (205) 348-7937

E-MAIL: ANTHRO@TENHOOR.AS.UA.EDU

WEB: [HTTP://ANTHROPOLOGY.UA.EDU](http://ANTHROPOLOGY.UA.EDU)

CO-EDITED BY: JASON A. DECARO
VERNON J. KNIGHT

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NORMAN SINGER RETIRES

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Norman was instrumental in the Anthropology Department's 1970s curriculum revisions and the implementation of an academically cogent program of faculty evaluation and hiring.

Norman graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School with a B.S. in economics in 1960. Then, after a year at the University of Stockholm, he enrolled in Boston University's School of Law, receiving his J.D. in 1964. From 1968 to 1970 he studied at Harvard University. Harvard awarded him a doctorate in 1975. Before joining the law faculty at Alabama he served as a research scholar at the Institute of Comparative Law in Belgrade.

At the University of Alabama Singer taught courses in both law and anthropology. His graduate seminars in social and applied anthropology required students to read 5 or 6 books a week before discussing them in detail. Yet they still attracted both Law School and anthropology students who described them as "both intellectually demanding and vibrant."

Singer's curriculum vitae lists variable competence in French, German, Amharic, Swedish, Arabic, Italian and Kai Swahili, languages he used in his teaching and field research. In addition to courses at Alabama, he taught at Addis Ababa University, the University of Freiburg (Switzerland), the University of Khartoum and the University of Montenegro. He conducted field research in Ethiopia, Zambia, Sudan, Yucatan (Mexico), Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Trinidad & Tobago.

Norman's experiential background, language facility and intellectual competence made him a desirable consultant for national and international foundations, agencies, governments, corporations and universities. He consulted for The U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Food and Agricultural Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Agency for International Development, Asian Development Bank, Sears Roebuck, J.C. Penney and Associates, the American Judicature Society, the Consiglio Nazionale della Ricerche (Rome), the Boston University Center for Criminal Justice, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the government of Trinidad & Tobago.

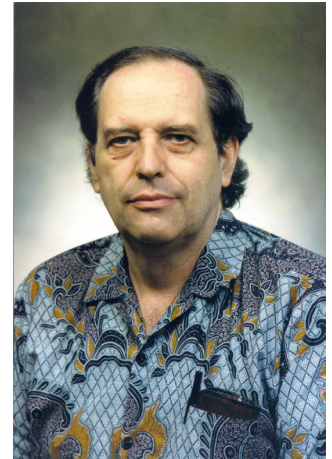
Singer was also an exceedingly productive scholar who authored 26 books or monographs, 7 book chapters, 21 journal articles, 26 book reviews and 5 published "Reports." In addition to his research and writing, he edited the Boston University Law Review, the Journal of Ethiopian Law and African Law Studies. In sum, Professor Singer was a program planning and implementation, teaching, editing and publishing "super-star." The department will miss his participation in teaching, research and service, and is delighted he will continue to serve in Emeritus status.

Profile of Professor Singer courtesy Dr. Richard Krause, Professor Emeritus.

ALLEN MAXWELL RETIRES

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At Yale University Max studied kinship semantics and anthropological linguistics with Floyd Lounsbury and ethnoscience, cultural anthropology and ethnographic theory and field methods with his dissertation director Hal Conklin. He conducted 39 months of ethnographic research with the Kadayn of the Lumbu Valley in Brunei and produced a 2 volume monograph detailing this work for his dissertation.



Max joined the faculty of the Anthropology Department in the late summer of 1974 and together with Norman Singer, Kenneth Turner, John Walthall, C. Earle Smith and Margaret Searcy revised the undergraduate and master's degree curriculum to reflect an agreed upon four-field approach. Implementing the new curriculum required most department members to teach three and some to teach four courses a semester and was accompanied by an agreed-upon commitment to make future decisions by consensus—a commitment that placed an additional drain on the time available for faculty research and service. In the 1970s and 80s faculty additions were made by virtue of curriculum needs and as the faculty grew teaching loads were eased a bit but decision making by consensus, a commitment that persists to the present, continued to require considerable amounts of faculty time and effort. By the 1990s enrollment-driven decisions by the University's central administration and the requirements of a new university-wide "Core Curriculum" stimulated an intense inter-departmental competition for student enrollments that required a revision of the department's course offerings. As Max rather forcefully put it at the time, "We must adapt or die." The proposed modifications were reluctantly adopted and decision making by consensus was preserved.

Over the years Max's Linguistic and Cultural Anthropology courses became legendary. "Demanding but informative," "interesting and challenging," "life transforming," and "detailed and comprehensive" are comments elicited from his former students. It was rumored that he could fill all the chalk boards in a classroom and then write between lines during a lecture. Un-erased chalk boards were a frequent testimony to the veracity of this claim. Max arrived at the university with half a semi-load of belongings, ninety percent of them books. Some but by no means the majority of these books were shelved in the floor to ceiling bookcases that lined every wall of his office. Yet others were stacked from floor to ceiling between the book cases and his desk with some between his doorway and desk. He always welcomed students to his office but some, less adventurous than others, were not able to see him from the doorway and left. One of the latter, an undergraduate home economics major, left muttering "I presume he does his own interior decorating."

During his tenure at the University Max became a prolific scholar. His curriculum vitae lists 2 published monographs, 52 published articles or book chapters, 30 published abstracts, 4 published interviews and 68 major conference presentations. His list of works in progress includes 42 items, among them six (32-339 page) collated translations of Epic Brunei Malay Texts, each annotated, and various manuscripts detailing aspects of life in Brunei. Although granted the status of Professor Emeritus, Max continues to teach a course each semester. Yet with his retirement the department has lost the full participation of the last "Old Timer," one who has been in the Department since its overhaul in 1974. One of his former students, a recent Ph.D. recipient, sums up Maxwell's retirement as follows: "Dr. Maxwell is an exceptional scholar and teacher. Drawing upon his extensive fieldwork in Borneo, Dr. Maxwell's classes brought to the forefront concepts of cultural anthropology and linguistics while highlighting the rigors of anthropological field studies. The department undoubtedly faces a daunting task in finding his replacement."

Profile of Professor Maxwell courtesy Dr. Richard Krause, Professor Emeritus.

ELIZABETH COOPER JOINS FACULTY



Dr. Cooper in the field

We are delighted to welcome Elizabeth Elliott Cooper as our newest faculty member, joining the department in August 2010.

Dr. Cooper is an applied cultural anthropologist with a specialization in Southeast Asia, particularly non-peninsular Malaysia. She will contribute to the Department's emphasis in biocultural medical anthropology and build on the work of emeritus faculty members Jim Bindon and Allen Maxwell in the areas of nutritional anthropology and Borneo studies. Her research interests include food security, dietary delocalization, hunger and household coping strategies, the anthropology of policy, and cognitive, visual, and

participatory methodologies. Elizabeth earned her PhD at the University of South Florida. Funded by the National Science Foundation, U.S. Fulbright Fellowship, and Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society, her doctoral research among coastal Malay fishermen assessed how common, local foods are perceived and categorized and the impact of these understandings on local nutritional programming and clinic-household relationships more generally. Elizabeth believes in critical pedagogy and has taught previously at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. As a Carolina native, she is happy to find herself back in the South – her hot, humid natural habitat.

BLITZ LEADS RESEARCH AT GRAVELINE SITE



The Graveline field crew. Pictured here are: (top, from left) Jeremy Davis, Daniel LaDu, Daniel Turner, Shawn Lambert, Dr. Blitz and (bottom, from left) Andrew Scruggs, Ashley Korpela, Erik Porth, and Lauren Downs. Crew members not pictured are Rachel Briggs, Paul Eubanks, Adam Phillips.

Earlier this year, Dr. John Blitz received a grant from the State of Mississippi Department of Archives and History to conduct archaeological research at the Graveline site, an earthen platform mound on the Mississippi Gulf Coast constructed A.D. 400-700. For 12 weeks this summer, University of Alabama archaeologists investigated the site. The field director was doctoral candidate Lauren Downs. Graduate student archaeologists were Rachel Briggs, Jeremy Davis, Paul Eubanks, Daniel LaDu, Eric Porth, Ashley Korpela, and Andrew Scruggs. Other crew members were Adam Phillips and Daniel Turner (both BA Anthropology 2010), Shawn Lambert (senior, anthropology major), and Elizabeth Davis (culinary specialist). Claire Thompson (doctoral candidate) and Teri Robinson (senior, anthropology major) organized the lab work. Remote sensing, auger and shovel tests, geomorphology, and deep vertical excavations were among the methods utilized to examine the mound and surrounding areas. Artifacts and other materials were recovered to address questions of mound and site chronology, seasonality, subsistence, and cultural activities. Lauren Downs is supervising the ongoing analysis.

LECOUNT LEADS EXCAVATION AT ANCIENT MAYA SITE



Dr. LeCount with the Actuncan field crew.

With National Science Foundation support, Dr. Lisa LeCount and a team of colleagues and graduate students conducted the first of three field seasons of archaeological research at the ancient Maya site of Actuncan, Belize. The project is designed to examine the rise of a Maya kingship and how processes that led to centralized authority affected households during the Late Preclassic and Early Classic periods (B.C. 400 to A.D. 550). This summer the project focused on remapping the site with a total station and excavating three large architectural groups: an elite estate, a commoner patio group, and a civic structure.

The civic structure turned out to be a *popol nah* (translated as “house of mats” in the Mayan language) that served as a council house for lineage head men after the fall of divine kingship in the Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic periods. Actuncan’s *popol nah* is a significant discovery since it is the only known structure of its kind in the upper Belize River valley, and therefore, it would have been the place where the remaining people of the valley gathered to create a new kind of society.

The crew of the project was a diverse set of graduate students, professors and Belizeans including Dr. John Blitz (UA), Dr. Angela Keller (UTA), Dr. Christian Wells (USF), David Mixter (Washington U), Kara Rothenberg (USF), Don Perez (Brandeis), Becky Mendelsohn (SUNY Albany), Caroline Antonelli (SUNY Albany), Ashanti Garcia (Galen University, Belize) and 17 Belizean men and women from the nearby town of Succotz. The field camp and lab was located at Clarissa Falls, an eco-lodge located across the Mopan River from the site. The gracious hosts at the eco-lodge were Azucena Galvez and her extended family who own a portion of the archaeological site. Dr. LeCount says she could not have picked a nicer place to live and work.

BINDON INDUCTED INTO HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF MERIT



Picture from the award banquet. Those pictured are (l to r): Karl Seyer-Ochi, a current teacher at GWHS (married to an anthropologist), John Rothman, President of the Alumni Association, Arthur Nonomura, a research scientist at Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and Jim

Professor Emeritus Jim Bindon was inducted into his high school Hall of Merit this May. He graduated from George Washington High School in San Francisco in 1965. His election to the Hall of Merit by the Board of Directors of the GWHS Alumni Association was for his career accomplishments in research and teaching while at the University of Alabama. While Jim was happy to receive this honor, he was even more elated to find out that he was the first member from the class of 1965 and that he was joining a distinguished group that includes the poet Maya Angelou, Marty Balin, the lead singer of Jefferson Airplane (now Jefferson Starship), the tennis player Rosie Casals, the actor Danny Glover, and numerous influential city and state politicians. After addressing the students in an assembly, the festivities continued with a dinner at the Cliff House in San Francisco.

LYNN RECEIVES JACK SHAND RESEARCH AWARD

Dr. Christopher Lynn received a Jack Shand Research Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion to support a project entitled “Pentecostal Charismata and Congregational Stability in Alabama and Costa Rica: Implications of Costly Honest Religious Signaling.” The objective of this study is to investigate relationships among Pentecostal charismata, like speaking in tongues, and congregational stability and individual stress. This funding will be used to develop and refine methods and train students in the study of “costly honest signals of religious commitment” among Pentecostal congregations in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. These methods will later be implemented in a larger study of Pentecostal signaling and allostatic load in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica.

CURRENT AND FORMER STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Doctoral student **Becky Read** has been elected as Student Representative to the board of the Society for Medical Anthropology.

Graduating M.A. student **Dan Mullins** has been awarded a prestigious Clarendon Scholarship to pursue doctoral studies in the cognitive science of religion at Oxford.

Dr. **Toni Copeland** (PhD 2008), currently in her first year as an Assistant Professor at Mississippi State University, has received the College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Dissertation Award and the University of Alabama Graduate School Outstanding Dissertation Award.

Daniel LaDu received the 2010 Bob Work Award for his paper “An Exploration of the Age of Mound Construction at Mazique (22AD502), A Late Prehistoric Mound Center in Adams County, Mississippi.”

Katy Groves won the 2010 Richard A. Krause Award for outstanding graduate scholarship.

Anthropology major **Daniel Turner** won the 2010 C. Earle Smith, Jr. Award for undergraduate excellence, and **Carly James** has been awarded the McWane Research Scholarship from the Honors College.

Erin Phillips is the 2010 DeJarnette Scholarship winner, her second time receiving that award.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS



New graduate students entering Fall 2010 (MA students unless otherwise indicated), from left: Ashley Korpela, Denise Gonzalez, Sara Horrocks, Ana Maria Ochoa (doctoral student), Max Stein, Joseph Anderson, Hillary Burt, Molly McCall.

Not pictured: Scott Hudson, doctoral students Jenna James and LisaMarie Malischke.

Welcome to everyone!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

We humbly invite you to consider making a tax-free donation to one of the following initiatives:

The Anthropology Field School Gift Fund goes to the support of our undergraduate field schools in archaeology. Our field schools receive no budget from the University, and depend heavily on these gifts for supplies and operating expenses. Our most recent major purchase from this fund was a work truck that has proven invaluable to faculty and graduate student research. Our annual field schools for undergraduates date back to 1956. Traditionally they are among the most memorable experiences of our alumni.

The Anthropology Lectureship Fund goes to support distinguished guest speakers from outside the University. We try to have at least four guest speakers per year. These speakers greatly enrich our undergraduate and graduate programs by exposing our students to prominent ideas by the leading lights in our discipline.

The David and Elizabeth DeJarnette Endowed Scholarship in Anthropology is awarded to support graduate student research on Moundville or Moundville-related topics. Each spring, the award is made during the popular DeJarnette Barbecue, held at Moundville Archaeological Park during the Saturday of Honors Week. Since it was founded in 1993 by Sarah and James Caldwell, the endowment has steadily grown. In recent years our DeJarnette Scholars have received awards of as much as \$6,000.

The Richard A. Krause Award is given for academic excellence at the graduate level in anthropology. The recipient of this annual award is chosen by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department based on classroom performance and the promise of the student's proposed thesis or dissertation research project.

The C. Earle Smith Award is given for academic excellence at the undergraduate level in anthropology. The annual award goes to the graduating senior in anthropology having the highest overall grade point average. Names of former "Smitty" award winners are prominently displayed on a plaque in the Department.

The Bob Work Award is a graduate student paper competition with a monetary prize of \$100. Each January, archaeology graduate students submit papers for review by a faculty committee. The winner receives recognition during Honors Week.

Checks directed to any of these initiatives should be made out to the UA College of Arts and Sciences and mailed to the Department at Box 870210, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. If you would like to discuss a contribution, please contact Jim Knight, Director of Departmental Development.