

# Introduction

John C. Dixon, Douglas W. Veltre, and James M. Savelle

This volume honors the long and distinguished career of Allen P. McCartney, who focused his teaching, research, and professional service on the anthropology and archaeology of northern regions, and whose professional and personal influence touched the lives of innumerable colleagues, students, and friends. It is an outgrowth of a workshop held in November, 2002, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

“Four Decades of Advances in Arctic Anthropology: A Workshop in Recognition of Allen McCartney’s Contributions to Arctic Anthropology,” was organized by John Dixon, with assistance from James Savelle and Douglas Veltre, and was funded by the National Science Foundation’s Office of Polar Programs and by the Environmental Dynamics Program of the University of Arkansas. Fifteen colleagues, some of them former and current students, gathered in Fayetteville and gave presentations honoring Allen and his forty-year career. This festschrift contains many of the papers presented at the workshop as well as some additional works. Unfortunately, Allen did not live to see this volume published. On June 15, 2004, at age 63, Allen lost his several-year battle with Parkinson’s disease.

Allen started to pursue northern fieldwork in 1962, when he began graduate studies in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin. In that year, he journeyed to the Aleutian Islands as part of the Aleut-Konyag Prehistory Project under the direction of William Laughlin, Professor of Anthropology at Wisconsin and an Aleutians specialist. While Aleut studies remained a major component of Allen’s professional career, he also made substantial contributions in other areas in which he had long-term research interests, including maritime adaptations, circumpolar whale bone analyses, prehistoric metal use in the Arctic, and Thule archaeology. In addition, he was an early and strong advocate of incorporating indigenous peoples into various archaeological and cultural anthropological projects, including training them to be crew members and working with them on projects focused on understanding traditional ecological knowledge.

Allen’s perspective on northern research was a truly integrative, multidisciplinary one in which

he was interested in the ways in which archeological, anthropological, and environmental studies together contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of northern societies. This perspective is most apparent in the research projects that he coordinated over the past decade dealing with the development of whaling-based societies in the western Arctic.

In 1970, Allen began his teaching career at the University of Arkansas, the same institution from which he had earned his undergraduate degree in 1962. He remained there until his retirement as Emeritus Professor of Anthropology in 2003. From 1998 to 1995, Allen was also director of the Environmental Dynamics Ph.D. program, which he was instrumental in establishing. Throughout his teaching and research endeavors, Allen was uniformly respected not only for his scholarly achievements but also for the warmth, generosity, and good humor he brought to those with whom he worked. As teacher, mentor, field leader, colleague, or collaborator, Allen was always a gentleman, unselfishly sharing his time and talent to assist others. In the field, he worked side by side with students and colleagues, creating an enjoyable and rewarding learning environment through his own hard work and kind demeanor.

Beyond his research contributions, certainly one of Allen’s most significant impacts on northern studies was his thirteen-year tenure as the editor of *Arctic Anthropology*. Current editor Susan A. Kaplan recently (2001:1) praised his leadership by stating that “Allen created a climate that encouraged established scholars and young researchers to submit manuscripts.” She further observed that “the current health of our discipline is, in no small measure, a result of his high standards, approachability, and even-handedness.” The Alaska Anthropological Association spoke for countless students, colleagues, and friends when it awarded Allen the Professional Achievement Award for 2003.

Allen’s professional writings, enumerated in the bibliography in this volume, included a wealth of conference papers, formal publications, and unpublished research reports. It is worth noting that in addition to more highly focused works, Allen’s publications included important and

widely cited syntheses (such as that in the 1984 Arctic volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians*) as well as the results of topical symposia (on maritime adaptations and on whaling, for example), several of which he took the lead in organizing and seeing through to publication. Allen remained an active writer until shortly before his death.

The diversity of topics and the geographic range represented in the papers in this volume reflect the broad scholarly interests that Allen pursued in his professional career. It is our hope that this festschrift not only will serve as a tribute to an accomplished scholar, engaging colleague and teacher, and wonderful friend, but also will help

inspire future generations to pursue anthropological work in the North.

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