

T. Dale Stewart: Remembrances of A Scholar and Colleague

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ABSTRACT: T. Dale Stewart's contributions had a considerable influence on the development and early evolution of the field of forensic anthropology. This composition provides a perception of Stewart from the viewpoint of an advanced graduate student and then a young colleague. It explains, in part, the quiet leadership and assistance that Stewart provided at various professional and familiar levels to one individual and is indicative of the broad effect that Stewart had on generations of students and professionals in anthropology, osteology and forensic anthropology.

KEYWORDS: forensic science, T. Dale Stewart, forensic anthropology, scholarship, leadership

As a preface, it is important to note, that my interaction with T. Dale Stewart was sadly limited—having met him in the Spring of 1971 as I participated in the Smithsonian Institution's Paleopathology Seminar under the direction and instruction of Don Ortner and Walter G. J. Putschar and others, and a year later (1972–1973) as a recipient of a Smithsonian Institution postdoctoral fellowship. I was not a student of Dale's, nor can I claim him as a mentor. The interaction we had came too early in my professional development for me to be considered a full colleague of his and I, like many others, can not claim to be a peer. Nevertheless, his writings, presentations and our work and more personal interactions were always positive and I always came away with a feeling of awe and often a new determination in the pursuit of science.

That T. Dale Stewart was a scholar lies on the border of an understatement! With at least 394 publications that I know of, his major interests in skeletal anatomy, evolution, and forensic anthropology are easily seen in his published works. I have more than 104 reprints of his journal materials, six books and monographs, and a host of published abstracts. I also find that I have heavily used these works in my research, citing his major articles numerous times over the last 30 years. Of specific interest are his works in osteology, especially age and race estimations at time of death.

Certainly one can not separate Dale from the Smithsonian Institution where he served as both a scientist and an administrator. It is here that scholars and researchers journey to work in skeletal biology, osteology, and related fields, due to the great breadth of collections which are available for study along with one of the best documented research collections, the Terry collection. As such, numerous professional visitors spent time working with the collec-

tions and were often available for discussions about their research. I was fortunate to be able to meet with many foreign visitors while on fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution.

For example, during the paleopathology seminar in 1971, Dale would invite the fellowship participants to his office to meet visiting scientists from both American as well as foreign institutions. I suspect that Mrs. Holland, the department secretary, may have orchestrated some of these meetings, as it was she who would let us know who was visiting and that there "may" be an opportunity to meet them. These meetings would be brief: the visitor would ask what were our current research interests and our home institution and then we would ask the visiting researcher what he or she was doing in Washington (usually checking out something in the collection, but often visiting a friend with no specific scientific interest). Don Ortner, Larry Angel, and Lucile St. Hoyme would do the same, but their offices or programs shared proximity with the laboratory space and seminar participants would interact with these researchers daily. Dale's office was out of the way and we did not see him on a daily basis. I believe the best known of these visitors was probably Raymond A. Dart.

During my stay at the Smithsonian Institution, I enjoyed a number of luncheon discussions in which Dale was involved. I would mostly sit quietly and listen (can you believe that?) as the oral history of the field, as well as science, was discussed. A few of the more memorable of these lunches with Dale was when other "old timers" were included: Marcus Goldstein, Henry Collins, John Ewers, and Waldo Wedel.

As a colleague, Dale was a person I could turn to for research needs in a broad array of materials. I remember a specific instance where my interests in non-metric analysis suggested a particular approach. I stopped by Dale's office to run a few of my ideas past him. This resulted in a short question and answer session; he asked the questions, I answered them. Once he understood just what I was trying to accomplish, he asked a number of pointed (directional) questions which I either answered or jotted down so I could later develop the answers. In large part, the answers to his questions generated a new, often simpler, approach to a specific problem or portion of my research. I appreciated the fact that my initial approach to various research problems changed significantly and ultimately offered a more logical technique to the research at hand (1).

Dale applied "illuminating criticism" in general research and specific case studies. In 1976 a symposium to honor the occasion of Dale's 75th birthday, was held at the 45th annual meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, St. Louis, Missouri. I had submitted a paper for presentation at the meeting and inclusion in the special issue of the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* (2). After that issue came out Dale called me with a number of questions about the article. If his questions had been

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asked before the paper went to print, it would have been a better paper!

Frances Schuller and I profited from Dale's comments in his *Essentials of Forensic Anthropology* (3) on the usefulness of the curvature of the anterior wall of the external auditory meatus as seen in *norma verticalis* X-rays. The curvature was not seen in 50 whites, but was seen in 47 of 50 blacks. Dale could not see any difference on macerate specimens, but his observations prompted us to query ENT physicians as to whether or not they had observed any curvature during ear examinations of their patients. The ENT physicians stated that they had not noticed any difference in anterior wall curvature in patients of different ancestry, but also suggested that they may simply have adapted to any real difference among their patients. Again, Dale's comments were very useful in our research (4).

During the 1977 annual meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences in San Diego, Dale was critical of nearly every presented paper. I particularly remember my presentation in which I had referred to skulls as cranium, and a single skull as crania. The terminology was correct in the typed paper, but in my oral presentation I reversed every one. He graciously pointed out the discrepancies. In another instance he was critical of a paper dealing with the accuracy of estimated age at death using the Gilbert and McKern method on a difficult sample of female pubic bones. The discussion he led following that presentation provided a better understanding of the presented research for those in attendance, particularly when the general data of a collateral study were presented.

On the lighter side, Dale had a quick, but subtle humor and often I would have to see the twinkle in his eye to be prepared for the "funny". I am not sure how reversible the humor was. On one occasion Dale, showing concern for my adjusting to Washington, D.C., asked how I was coping with the commuting (Dale had a 40 min commute from McLean, VA and Don Ortner and I had a 30 min commute from Bethesda, MD). I answered that it was not too difficult as I commuted at the University of Colorado. I went on to say I remembered one day when the homebound commute was very difficult, what with hitting all of the red lights, one stalled car and one motorist fixing a flat tire, that the whole commute had taken about 7 min. For an instant I did not know if Dale would hit me or not. Then he said something less serious and we went our separate ways.

Aside from the presentations, abstracts, and publications on

forensic anthropology directly, Dale originated or clarified a number of specific techniques with which to determine the attributes of skeletal remains. He was also a very proficient case worker. An example to demonstrate this point was a case which Larry Angel was handling. As was often the custom, Angel would assemble the remains in the laboratory, analyze them, and invite others to share their observations on the case. The three or four individuals who had looked at this case were in good agreement as to age, sex, stature, race, and cause of death, but were disparate on the time of death. Dale arrived after much of our discussion was finished, suggested similar demographic and cause of death results, and further suggested that this Asian Mongoloid was probably Korean with time of death possibly 10 years earlier. Angel then opened the manilla envelope containing military records and notes of the scene investigation. The record stated that these remains were found in association with the footings of a nine year-old building in an industrial area of Seoul, Korea.

Early in its existence, the Physical Anthropology section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences created a section award to honor those who had made significant contributions to Forensic Anthropology. Dale was an early recipient of this award and a few years later, the Physical Anthropology section named it the T. Dale Stewart Award in his honor. Recently, I received the T. Dale Stewart Award, and I am grateful to the forensic anthropologists who selected me to receive this award. To be so recognized by your peers is the ultimate honor. Receiving the T. Dale Stewart Award is even more meaningful to me for having known the man for whom it is named.

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