

Nancy C. Wilkie, 1942–2021

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It is with a profound sense of loss that we mourn the passing of Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Honorary President Nancy C. Wilkie on 18 January 2021. We offer thanks for her life, richly and energetically lived in the service of archaeology. Nancy gave so much, through her leadership, her scholarship, her teaching, her support for cultural heritage, her administrative skills, and her generous friendship. She had a larger vision than most of the importance of studying the past, all of it—from our ancestors' remote Pleistocene beginnings down to recent times. She understood the importance of preserving the archaeological record of past human activities for present and future generations. To all of this she brought astounding energy, a love of adventure, and a desire to explore the world of the present day as well as that of the past across the globe.

Nancy's achievements fell into four domains, an unusually broad spread of interests for any leading scholar. First, she was an excellent field archaeologist who carried out important surveys and excavations, notably in Greece. Much of this work she saw through to publication. Second, Nancy was a devoted teacher, creating virtually single-handed the archaeology program at Carleton College. She was an admired mentor and renowned instructor. Third, Nancy demonstrated notable leadership and administrative ability, especially as president of the AIA. And, finally, she was a pioneer in championing the preservation of the archaeological heritage worldwide. Here, her work with the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield was of special importance.

Nancy possessed great moral strength combined with deep humanity. All of this was leavened with infectious warmth, good humor, and a lively sense of fun. She was the best of company and inspired so many through her teaching and example. She had a confident sense of who she was and what she stood for, combined with an intense loyalty to institutions, colleagues, students, and friends. No wonder, then, that so many held her in the highest regard and remember her with deep affection.

Nancy Clausen Wilkie was born on 27 December 1942 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was thus a citizen of the Midwest, and this remained her home throughout her life. Nancy's family was always supportive of her academic and professional achievements, a source of great strength to her throughout her life. Her firm grounding and strong sense of values no doubt owed much to her upbringing in the heartland. It was from this solid base that she went forth to undertake archaeological research and travel in Greece, the wider Mediterranean, Asia, and beyond. She possessed a great love of the outdoors, manifested in her enjoyment of skiing in the winter and sailing in the summer. An accomplished sailor, her chief source of relaxation was her sailboat on Lake Superior.

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For her undergraduate studies, Nancy traveled west to Stanford University in California, graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in classics in 1964. That year she came back to the Midwest to undertake a master's degree in Greek at the University of Minnesota. She remained there to complete a doctorate in Greek with a minor in history, graduating in 1975. During her doctoral training, she undertook fieldwork in Greece, joining the famed Minnesota Messenia Expedition from 1968 until 1975. In her doctoral dissertation, she investigated the tholos tomb at Nichoria and proceeded to publish extensively on the subject in the following years. Greece remained her first love for archaeological fieldwork throughout her life.

Before completing her doctorate, Nancy had begun to teach at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1974 as an adjunct instructor in classics. Thus began a career-long devotion to Carleton and its students. Nancy rose steadily through the academic ranks, becoming Professor of Classics and Anthropology in 1993. In recognition of her outstanding service to the college and its students, Carleton named her the William H. Laird Professor of Classics, Anthropology, and the Liberal Arts in 2001. Nancy's teaching embraced a wide range of topics: Greek language and literature, Greek archaeology and history, the archaeology of the Mediterranean, and human evolution and prehistory worldwide. Her inspiring teaching, and the supportive relationships she cultivated with her students, won her a devoted following. Many students and several of her faculty colleagues joined her in the field and in the various summer programs she led.

Carleton provided Nancy with the institutional support for a series of further archaeological explorations. Next came survey and excavations along a major complex of routes through Phokis and Doris, also in the Peloponnese. This, too, resulted in a series of significant publications. From there, Nancy transferred to Egypt with surveys and excavations at Naukratis from 1980 to 1984. Her final major project was at Grevena, this time in Greek Macedonia, from 1985 to 1991. This was essentially a survey project in an area hitherto little explored by archaeologists. To this list may be added fieldwork in Nepal in 1989 and 1991. And late in her career, she became involved in archaeological investigations in Sri Lanka. In all these endeavors, Nancy worked with colleagues, not only archaeologists but anthropologists, geologists, and others, using a truly interdisciplinary model. Each project was innovative



Nancy C. Wilkie (courtesy Sara Rubinstein / Carleton College).

in its approaches, scope, and themes, and resulted in numerous publications.

Nancy's involvement with the AIA was career-long, beginning while she was an undergraduate. She became an active member and officer of the Minnesota Society of the AIA during the 1970s and 1980s, serving twice as its president. By the mid 1980s, she was a member of several AIA committees at the national level. This culminated in her election to the AIA governing board as an academic trustee in 1989. She then was elected as first vice president and served as president from 1998 to 2002.

Nancy's presidency was a turning point for the organization. She took the position that the AIA should represent the best of current archaeological practice and also engage in outreach to a wider segment of the public. In other words, the AIA should look outward rather than inward. This became a theme of her time as president and a goal toward which she made much progress. Two examples of this thrust will help illuminate her achievements. The AIA had embarked on a major fundraising effort to endow the lecture program, hitherto largely supported from the annual budget. Nancy worked with Charles LaFollette to bring this effort to a successful conclusion. Many of the current

named lectureships in the program derive from this successful campaign. A second focus was Nancy's interest in AIA-sponsored archaeological tours. She saw this as an important exercise in outreach and also as a source of financial support. She worked very hard during her time as president and for many years afterward to expand AIA tours. This benefited the AIA greatly, not least as a recruiting ground for future trustees.

Nancy faced a number of challenges as president. She saw clearly that there was a need to strengthen the central administration of the organization, a task that she undertook most effectively. Although she lived and worked far away in Minnesota, she came to Boston monthly to work with the executive director and staff to make the administration of the AIA as smooth and efficient as possible. One of the most taxing issues was a severe shortfall in funds that occurred during her presidency, resulting in financial stress. She tackled this head-on by instituting budgetary rigor throughout the organization that successfully addressed the deficit. Because of her careful stewardship of the AIA's finances, the endowment reached a new high that was not surpassed until recently. In 2003, in recognition of her years of service to the AIA, friends and admirers of Nancy contributed funds to establish the Nancy C. Wilkie Lecture in Archaeological Heritage in her honor.

Unusually for a past and then honorary president, Nancy chose to continue to serve the AIA in leadership positions long after she stepped down from the presidency. She became a member of the Lecture Program and Conservation and Site Preservation Committees, serving as the latter's chair for several years. She also chaired the Tour Advisory Board for nearly a decade. She brought significant professional expertise and deep commitment to all these offices.

Nancy was a strong supporter of the AIA's role as a sponsoring organization of the Society of Professional Archaeologists, later the Register of Professional Archaeologists. This organization is dedicated to maintaining high professional and ethical standards of conduct by archaeologists. Nancy was a member of their executive board for two decades. Her service to other organizations included a multiyear commitment to the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. She served on its management committee and chaired its committee on excavations and surveys and also the committee on the Wiener Laboratory. Her deep en-

agement in the archaeology of Greece was of special value to the school.

Nancy took her educational responsibilities very seriously and used her talents to reach out to the widest possible audiences. It was this sense of mission that caused her to contribute to the AIA's national lecture program for more than 40 years. She herself was an outstanding lecturer. Combining her love of travel with her lecturing skills, she was an enthusiastic participant in as well as staunch supporter of the AIA's tour program. She was also a leader of Carleton's tour program for alumni. Many of her tours were in the Mediterranean and Europe, but she also led trips to western Asia, India, Africa, and in the United States. She had a loyal following among tour participants who would sign up for multiple tours under her leadership.

Threats to cultural heritage worldwide have become more intense in recent decades with increasing destruction of archaeological sites and looting of their contents, notably during armed conflict. Nancy regarded this destruction as an attack on our very humanity and worked tirelessly to combat it. She was invited to serve on the Cultural Property Advisory Committee of the U.S. Department of State by President George W. Bush, an appointment that was continued by President Barack Obama. This committee advises the federal administration on restrictions on the traffic in archaeological and ethnological artifacts. Nancy was its longest serving member, and her understanding of the state of heritage preservation globally was an invaluable asset to the committee in its work. Nancy strove vigorously to protect cultural heritage worldwide. To this end she cofounded the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, becoming its secretary in 2006 and its president from 2013 to 2020. The Blue Shield is an international organization that protects cultural heritage from destruction caused by conflict and environmental disasters. Nancy's contribution was so highly valued that she was elected to the board of Blue Shield International and served from 2014 to 2020. It was in recognition of her extraordinary efforts to protect archaeological sites and artifacts that the AIA honored Nancy with the Outstanding Public Service Award at its recent annual meeting in January 2021. This was a most fitting tribute to her tireless efforts in the archaeological heritage field and all that she had done to promote archaeology in the public domain.

Nancy's public achievements were accomplished through the organizations that she chose to serve, usually as a leader. They provided excellent vehicles through which she could advance her vision of the importance of understanding the human past in order to know ourselves. And she had a deep sense of the value for us in the present of the tangible remains created by our forebears. All of this came from Nancy's firm grounding in the basics of archaeology. She had a strong commitment to field archaeology as a discipline and believed in maintaining the highest standards in its practice. She understood that the results of archaeological investigations needed to see the light of day in formal publication. Beyond that, she also believed that it was up to archaeologists themselves to bring their work to the attention of a wider public, preferably in person. It was this that sustained her through all those lecture tours at home and overseas. She loved to travel and to experience the world through the eyes of people who lived in distant places and different

circumstances. These adventures allowed her to see firsthand just how fragile the archaeological heritage was across the world and how often it was subject to damage and destruction. She believed that as much as possible had to be preserved for the future if we were to learn all we could from ancient sites and artifacts. It was this understanding that sustained her efforts at cultural heritage protection, even as her final illness taxed her strength to the limit.

Colleagues, students, friends, and more distant admirers of Nancy Wilkie know that she touched their lives in special ways. All will retain a unique memory of her, the ready laugh, the clarity of her observations, her strong sense of ethics, and the depth of her humanity. She committed herself with energy and a clear sense of direction to archaeology and the preservation of our heritage inheritance. We miss her profoundly and will hold her always in our hearts. We extend our deepest sympathy to her beloved husband Craig Anderson and her family.

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