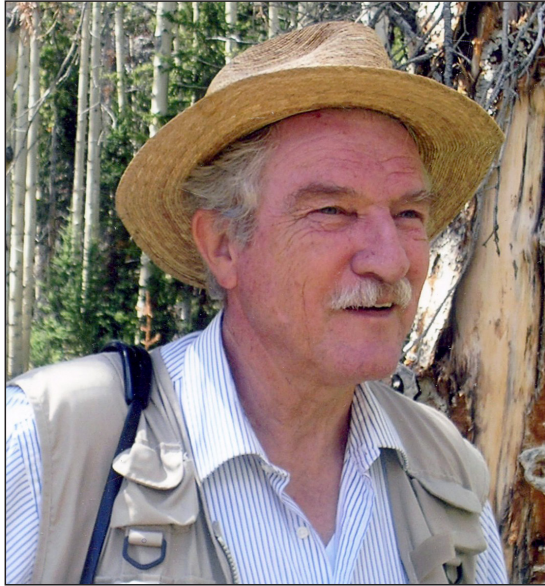


Memorial



James Edward (Jim) Ayres 1936–2015

James Edward (Jim) Ayres died at his Tucson home on 10 March 2015 after a brave battle against leukemia. He was born on 30 September 1936, in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to Wayne and Alice (Gutow) Ayres, and in 1944 the family moved to Colorado. Jim graduated from high school in Evanston, Wyoming, in 1955; served in the U.S. Air Force for four years, where he worked in the areas of security and intelligence; and received a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Fresno State College in 1963 and a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Arizona in 1970. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Marianne F. (Kay) Ayres, and three brothers—Larry, Bill (also an archaeologist), and Jon.

Jim is only the second person to be honored by the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) with both the J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology (2008) and the Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award (2014); the other was Jim's close friend Roderick Sprague. Essays in *Historical Archaeology* detail Jim's deep and lasting contributions to the historical archaeology of the American West, for which he was awarded the Harrington Medal (Cleland and Majewski 2008), and his sustained and truly outstanding record of service to the SHA, for which he received the Ruppé Award (Noble 2014). While these publications will certainly serve as a permanent record of Jim's accomplishments, I hope to focus the lens on Jim's life in a slightly different direction in this memorial. According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2008:774), the noun "memorial" is "something that keeps remembrance alive." In this memorial, I hope to capture some of what I believe Jim might wish us to remember about his life and his career, and what to keep alive during our own professional and personal journeys, based not only on his curriculum vitae, but also on personal impressions and the moving obituary prepared by his wife Marianne and his close friend Marlesa (Marcy) Gray (Gray and M. Ayres 2015).

Jim was tireless in promoting the value of historical archaeology within the anthropological and archaeological establishment, and to the public. He did this through the jobs he held, his teaching and work with students, his research and publications, his volunteer service to SHA and other organizations, and his civic engagements. As noted in his obituary:

Jim was a pioneer in [the] historical archaeology of the West and remained active in the field until shortly before his death. He was one of the first archaeologists in Arizona to recognize the importance of historical-period sites and research to fleshing out the entire continuum of human existence in the American Southwest. (Gray and M. Ayres 2015)

Until relatively recently, historical archaeology in Arizona has been viewed as almost entirely secondary to the state's admittedly rich and varied prehistoric archaeological record. When Chuck Cleland and I wrote the essay about Jim as Harrington Medalist in 2008, we primarily focused on his historical archaeological accomplishments, which was appropriate, as the award was given by SHA. Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say that he promoted the value of all the components that somehow make up an holistic research approach to historical archaeology, i.e., field archaeology, material culture studies, documentary research, oral history, ethnography, and the built environment. The numerous projects in which he was involved afforded him insight into an enormous range of functional site types and material classes. His resume includes over 120 publications, including peer-reviewed articles, cultural resource management (CRM) reports, editorials, historic contexts, synthetic overviews, and a research guide to conducting historical archaeology in Arizona, for which he served as lead compiler. As of 2013, it was in its sixth, revised edition. Jim's work on railroad-related sites, the Chinese in Arizona, and Native American archaeology is especially significant.

It was critically important to him that longitudinal studies be carried out whenever possible, and that all research meet the absolute highest standards. Two examples of his personal research stand out as examples of his tenacity. From the 1960s onward, he spent many summers recording and re-recording historical period logging sites in the Uinta Mountains of Utah, documenting the changes that occurred in the conditions of the sites over half a century. Over the course of 15 years, Jim indexed all Tucson's English-language newspapers published during the period from 1870 to 1911; the index will be published posthumously and will be an invaluable research tool for historians and archaeologists. The day before he died, the Arizona Historical Society (AHS) wrote to Jim, honoring him for his monumental work and said that the room where he conducted his research at the AHS would, upon publication of the index, be publicly renamed in his honor. Sadly, Jim died unaware of this singular honor.

Downtown Tucson, Arizona, was one of many cities where significant portions of the architecturally and archaeologically rich historic core was virtually obliterated by urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s. From 1967 to 1979, during his time at the Arizona State Museum (ASM), Jim directed the Tucson Urban Renewal Archaeological Project, working tirelessly with others in a salvage setting to record and recover as much as possible given limited time and resources. Several important publications resulted from the project, particularly Jim and others' work on the Chinese in Tucson. However, it personally saddened Jim that more research has not been conducted on the extensive collections from the project curated at ASM.

I suspect that his experiences on the Tucson Urban Renewal Project and in various positions at ASM spurred his serious concerns about and involvement with historic preservation at the state and local levels. From 1979 to 1981, he served as Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and, from 1981 to shortly before his death, worked either as an independent consultant or as an employee for many Arizona firms, as well as for the National Park Service, on projects in Arizona, California, Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico. The bibliography included with this memorial provides glimpses into his work history. For example, after his time as Arizona SHPO, from ca. 1982 to 1985 he worked on many projects with Lyle M. Stone as an employee of Lyle's company, Archaeological Research Services, Inc.

Jim frequently taught classes on historical archaeology and material culture, mostly in adjunct, *ad honorem* positions, at both Arizona State University (ASU) (1981–1998) and the University

of Arizona (UA) (1963–1965, 1972–1979, 1999–2013). Jim’s teaching filled a void for students at these institutions. One of his students at ASU, Carol Griffith, went on to become deputy state historic preservation officer in the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, and in that position she led many important initiatives to improve the practice of historical archaeology in the state. At UA, where I have an adjunct position, I was fortunate to team teach with Jim and serve on graduate student committees with him on a number of occasions, and it was always a very positive experience. Constantly thinking of ways to help students, the summer before his death he donated most of his library of materials on historical archaeology to the Department of Anthropology at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

Sometimes Jim’s dedication to his profession came at the price of his personal life. In an anecdote shared by Marianne Ayres with Marlesa Gray (2015, pers. comm.), during part of his tenure as instructor at ASU and while he was also working simultaneously in CRM, he maintained an apartment in Tempe where he would stay from Sunday through Thursday of each week. At that time, Marianne was head of nursing in the emergency room at University Medical Center, Tucson, so she could not join him in Tempe. Jim made friends with a florist in Tempe and often brought bouquets of flowers to Marianne when he would return home on Thursday evenings.

Jim believed that professionalizing our field and mentoring students and recent graduates was the way to encourage them to pursue lives of scholarship and service, regardless of where they would ultimately work (academia, government, private sector, or a museum). He was involved with the Society of Professional Archeologists (SOPA) from its inception in 1976 and served as SHA representative to SOPA from 1988 to 1993. When SOPA became the Register of Professional Archaeologists in 1998, he continued as a member until his death. He served two terms on the SHA Board of Directors: 1972–1975 and 1992–1995, and was president of the society in 1977. He was a regional editor for the *SHA Newsletter* for 28 years (1971–1999), an associate editor for *Historical Archaeology* (1988–1993), and served as a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC) and its subsequent morphs from 1978 until his death. Originally, the SHA Dissertation Prize (renamed by the SHA board in 2011 as the Kathleen Kirk Gilmore Dissertation Award) competition was run as a subcommittee of the EAC (Dissertation Prize Subcommittee), of which Jim was a member from 2001 to 2011 and chair from 2003 to 2011. He also served as an advisory editor for *North American Archaeologist* and for *Abstracts in Anthropology*. He took his editorial work very seriously and believed that research must follow technical and substantive standards, and that this should be reflected in both technical and synthetic writing. He was as exacting when he reviewed others’ work as he was when evaluating his own.

Jim’s record of service began when he was at Fresno State College studying for his undergraduate degree in the 1960s. There he became involved with the Fresno County (California) Historical Society and served on its board of directors and as curator of the Roedding Park Museum. Subsequently, in addition to his service for SHA and other professional organizations, he was a tireless member of state and local boards, commissions, and committees focused on preservation, and also served as an advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for Arizona and on the International Centre Committee for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Some of his more unusual involvements were as an archaeological consultant to the UA Office of Arid Lands Studies and as a member of the Arizona State Landmarks Committee, the Rangeland Resource Team for Southern Arizona for the Bureau of Land Management, the Governor’s Commission on Arizona Environment, and the Pima Association of Governments Transportation Enhancement Task Force. His expertise was even sought by a local Tucson federal credit union, where he served for six years as a member of the loan review committee.

He became involved anywhere he could increase the visibility of and educate people about historical archaeology and historic preservation. Raising the awareness of the public and public officials about the importance of historical archaeology was a personal mission for him, but his “pitch” was always holistically presented as part of the preservation whole. He had a way of luring others into lives of volunteer service. When his term on the Tucson–Pima County Historical Commission (T–PCHC) ended, he personally recruited me, and I am still serving there. He also

urged me to become involved with other things in the state, and we overlapped on the SHA board when he served his second term. He inspired me with his close attention to the society's budget and his support of initiatives that would benefit students and young professionals in the field.

Jim was obsessed with understanding material culture and the technologies behind it, and he spent countless hours researching all the major material classes we encounter as historical archaeologists, and compiled resources to aid in his own work, but also to share with others when he taught classes or workshops. Quite simply put, he loved learning and pursued it voraciously throughout his life. Although his favorite conference was undoubtedly the SHA's annual conference on historical and underwater archaeology, his travels around the world, accompanied by his beloved wife Marianne, always included visits to museums, historic sites, and points of cultural interest. I am sure both familial loyalty and curiosity took them to Easter Island, where his sibling Bill was working on an archaeological project, but the lure of seeing something new and exciting was the deciding factor when they attended the Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF) held in 2003 at Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, which is technically part of France (off the coast of Canada). VAF is dedicated to the appreciation and study of ordinary buildings and landscapes—just the kind of thing that would benefit a curious historical archaeologist trying to look at the field holistically.

His contributions were acknowledged publicly through the numerous awards he received, not just the Harrington Medal and the Ruppé Award from SHA, but state and local awards as well. It is a testament to his innate modesty about such things that the list of awards he received is on the last page of his 16-page 2013 resume. His SHA awards have already been mentioned. In May 1995, the T-PCHC honored him with the Alene Dunlap Smith Award (now the Alene Dunlap Smith and Paul Smith Award) for his high level of dedication and a long-term commitment toward supporting and promoting historic preservation in Tucson and Pima County. At the state level (Arizona), he received a Governor's Award for Historic Preservation in 1995, the Award in Public Archaeology in the Professional Archaeologist Category from the Governor's Archaeology Advisory Commission in June 2008, and a Governor's Centennial Award in Historic Preservation in March 2012. In 2015, Jim was posthumously honored by the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society, which he served as president from 2004 to 2007, with the Byron Cummings Award. The Cummings Award is given for outstanding contributions to knowledge in anthropology, history, or a related field of study pertaining to the southwestern United States or northwestern Mexico.

A memorial to Jim would be incomplete without a few words about him as a friend and colleague. Jim could be gruff and exacting at times, and that is how some will remember him. He had the knack for conveying the gist of an issue, even if his delivery often ruffled feathers. It was very difficult for him to suffer fools. He had close friends that he had known for many more years than he knew me (which is going on 25 years), but we both lived in Tucson. Once he identified something in you that he approved of and connected with, you suddenly found yourself involved in things you had never dreamed of doing. I have participated in many of the same boards, committees, and commissions in which he had been involved, and, while I have certainly learned a great deal from these experiences, I hope I have given something back as well. (He would often remind me if I had not considered something, but we could disagree respectfully, and at times we did.) He was a dependable and honorable colleague. If he promised something to you, he got it to you without fail. Many of us have our own personal memories of Jim, and I am sure they vary widely. He loved to smoke a good cigar, enjoy excellent food and wine (as well as fine tequila), and travel. Jim enjoyed visiting with friends, telling stories, and knowledgeably discussing a wide range of subjects, especially at the SHA annual conference, when he and his buddies would get together and "hold court," usually in the hotel bar. A man of many interests and an independent spirit, Jim was a member of the Sigma Xi "companions in zealous research," as well as a fellow of the Explorers Club.

He was a thoughtful and generous friend. I shared many a meal with him, Marianne, Marcy Gray, and other friends. He would drive across town every few weeks from his office to mine to show me an artifact he was wondering about, bring a tidbit from his newspaper research that he thought would interest me, or just drop off copies of the latest investment newsletter he had

received, in the hopes that I might benefit from paying more attention to this type of thing. He was a very busy man, but always made time to listen to a concern or offer advice. On holidays and birthdays, I would always receive a special bottle of wine he and Marianne had selected for me or a unique gift brought back from their travels. One summer, Marcy Gray and I visited him in Wyoming and toured high-altitude logging camps with him and Marianne. I admired a walking stick he was using to great advantage during our strenuous hikes. That Christmas he presented me with my own, made from a local tree and perfectly proportioned for my height. It even has a bronze label affixed with the place and dates of our trip. Jim and I frequently attended meetings or presented workshops together in Arizona or neighboring states (laden with boxes of artifacts to use for teaching and reams of printouts), and I treasure the time I spent with him when we could have leisurely conversations on topics that ranged from our life stories to politics, to historical archaeology and historic preservation.

Looking at Jim's resume, you would notice the many overlapping date ranges for his work experiences. He always seemed to be juggling many obligations, but perhaps he saw them as necessary opportunities that could not be missed or delegated. By his own admission he was often overcommitted, but these conflicting projects were just one more piece in the puzzle that made up the historical archaeology of the American West. When we spoke by telephone in the fall of 2013, after he had learned from his doctors about the severity of his illness, he said he was not really angry about the prognosis. Instead, he regretted that there was so much left to be done that he would not have time to finish.

So, how do we keep remembrance alive? All of us have different ways of promoting historical archaeology to the discipline's many potential audiences. I think Jim's example emphasizes this and shows that, over a lifetime, we each have the potential to make a real difference, no matter how far we advance along the *cursum honorem*. His career and contributions show that one can and should work to achieve a balance between making choices that enhance one's own individual career (he did have over 120 publications) and choosing to "pay forward" through service and scholarship with a purpose. He volunteered for so many things because he believed he could make a difference, and he encouraged others to do the same.

Although I am deeply honored to have been asked to write this memorial for Jim, I struggled mightily with it. I knew I could get the details relatively correct, but would he approve of my commentary and choices of what to emphasize? I finally decided to insert a little of my own subjectivity and go beyond the details in an attempt to convey just how much he did to support and bolster the field of historical archaeology. His view of the field, as something broader than explicitly taught, is refreshing but challenging. Whether you were Jim's close friend or colleague, an acquaintance, or did not know him at all, I invite you to think about what Jim's life shows us about our possibilities and responsibilities.

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TERESITA MAJEWSKI