



J. LAWRENCE ANGEL
1915–1986

On November 3, 1986, J. Lawrence Angel died at George Washington University Hospital at the age of 71 from complications resulting from hepatitis. Larry worked enthusiastically on research and teaching projects until the day he entered the hospital and even there confided to visitors that he fully expected to recover and continue his work. His attitude of enthusiastic dedication pervaded his entire career and remains an inspiration to all who worked with him.

J. Lawrence Angel was born on March 21, 1915, in London, England, the son of John Angel, a sculptor from Devonshire, England, and Elizabeth Day Seymour, an American classicist from Ohio, with family roots in Connecticut. Larry's early education was in England at Ovingdean School in Sussex. At the age of 13, Larry traveled to the United States and attended Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut. An active and brilliant student, Larry enrolled in Harvard College, where in 1936 he graduated with an A.B. degree, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa. Larry chose Harvard University for graduate training, working primarily under Earnest Hooton. Through diverse course work and archaeological fieldwork in New Mexico, Arizona, Georgia, Greece, and Turkey, Larry received broad training in anthropology, but developed an intense intellectual commitment to the interpretation of the human skeleton and the geographic area of Greece and the Near East. Larry mentioned to me once that those interests were developed early in his life through curiosity about a human skeleton used in his father's sculptor studio and his mother's interest in the classics. Those

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interests were developed highly in graduate school and ultimately became the focus of his professional career. Also at Harvard, Larry discovered his great skill as a teacher where he assisted in teaching anthropology from 1939 to 1941. He taught at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1941 to 1942 before receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1942 with a dissertation on biocultural associations in ancient Greece. During his senior year at Harvard, he became acquainted with Margaret Seymour Richardson through Harvard-Radcliffe singing groups and in 1937 they began their 49-year marriage.

Following a one-year teaching position at the University of Minnesota, Larry joined the faculty of the Daniel Baugh Institute of Anatomy of the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia where he taught anatomy and conducted research from 1943 to 1962. He returned to Greece in 1949, 1954, and 1957. During this period, Larry also worked as a civilian consultant in surgical anatomy to the United States Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, from 1957 to 1962, and began a career involvement with museums as a research associate at the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania from 1946 to 1962.

In 1962, Larry left Philadelphia for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Larry stated on occasion that he shifted to the Smithsonian mainly for increased research opportunity, an opportunity that he took full advantage of with seven career research trips to Greece and Turkey, and numerous trips to national and international meetings to present research papers. The latter was especially important to Larry, since in 1984 he noted he had presented papers at nearly all meetings of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists since joining the Association in 1940, most meetings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and Paleopathology Association, and many meetings of the American Anthropological Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, and the Archaeological Institute of America.

Larry's over 200 publications reflect his broad interests but focus primarily on the physical anthropology of the eastern Mediterranean, paleodemography, obesity, functional anatomy, and forensic anthropology. The Social Science and Science Citation Indexes register over four hundred citations of these publications. Larry's work in the eastern Mediterranean correlating physical characteristics and disease with such environmental variables as the presence of marshes and *Anopheles* mosquitos simply was brilliant. His crisp intellect and diligent research dramatically influenced techniques of paleodemography, sharpened our awareness of sampling limitations, and expanded our capabilities to extract information about the individual from the skeleton. Larry never abandoned the concept of typology, and religiously recorded the many measurements and observations taught to him by Hooton. Unlike many others, Larry used the typological approach in a broad biocultural context with an astute sense of variation and of the impact of sampling problems. His pioneer work in the Near East has opened the door to understanding the biological history of the area and has stimulated many other scholars to continue his work. In 1983 The Archaeological Institute of America awarded Larry the Pomerance Medal in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Near Eastern studies.

At the time of his death, Larry Angel probably was known best for his contributions to forensic anthropology. Dubbed "Sherlock Bones" by the press, Larry frequently was in the news and was the subject of feature articles by *Science Digest*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, and *People Magazine*. His interest in forensic work is not apparent in his record until he joined the Smithsonian staff in 1962 and assumed heavy casework for the FBI. However, from 1962 until his death in 1986, Angel reported on at least 565 forensic cases and testified as expert witness in 18 murder trials. Larry joined the American Academy of Forensic Sciences as a Provisional Member in 1975 and rapidly was promoted to Full Member in 1976 and to Fellow in 1978. He became a Board-Certified Diplomate in 1978 and went on to serve as President of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology from 1979 to 1984. In 1984, he received the Physical Anthropology Section award at the Annual Awards Banquet.

Angel's greatest contribution to forensic anthropology probably rests with his teaching. Informally, Larry constantly was teaching nearly everyone who happened by in all aspects of his research. This

attitude attracted a long list of research assistants, volunteers, and colleagues who eagerly reached out for the information he offered. At a more formal level, Larry regularly lectured on forensic topics, taught physical anthropology at George Washington University each spring, and each fall taught a course in forensic anthropology primarily for forensic pathologists. As far as I know, the forensic course never was advertised, but each year there was a long waiting list to attend. In 1984, Larry estimated that about 50 percent of medical examiners nationwide had taken his course. That is remarkable academic impact, considering his employment at the Smithsonian, a research institution normally not associated with teaching. I believe Larry would be delighted to know we continued that tradition in September of 1987 with a one-week intensive course in forensic anthropology. Once again we had more applicants than we could accommodate.

Larry Angel was a brilliant, productive anthropologist, but above all he was loved. We all loved the bow tie he always wore to meetings, the way he would continue a conversation even when you left the room, the big smile he would break out in the middle of an intellectual exchange, the way he would sing while collecting data on a skeleton, and the delight he took in placing the most odoriferous forensic case on the ledge outside the window in his laboratory with the window ajar just enough to arouse the curiosity of all who passed by. Larry was delightful, and we all miss him.

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DOUGLAS H. UBELAKER

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