

it. The first listing was for Anthropology. I read the description of the introductory course and I didn't need the rest of the catalog.

From 1937 to 1945 I got involved in a war and let my AAA membership lapse. By the time I got out I had a family to support and took a job which lasted to 1971.

In 1963 I gave myself a birthday present of an AAA membership and rejoined the community. It was where I belonged. Eventually I got an MA and a job teaching anthropology in a community college. I attend SWAA meeting every year and AAA meeting when they come west. It is indeed my community even though I can't describe it any better than that, and even though it has some strange corners (linguistics for instance) to which I have no access.

**Clifton Armsbury**  
Richmond, CA

### Faculty Community

I want to second Susan M DiGiacomo's article (May 2000 AN, p 27) regarding "ethical obligations to our colleagues, at a time when exploitative hiring practices are bringing into being an academic underclass." It is disturbing to see graduate students assigned to the largest sections (without assistants) when they need to work on their dissertations, and to learn of part-time professionals paid a pittance for their efforts. Tenure track professors are also burdened by many deans with unrealistic expectations (at least two published books in six years!), apparently to ensure a rapid turnover at the lower ranks.

DiGiacomo also warns of the "trickle up effect" which will ultimately threaten tenure and other aspects of academic freedom. From personal experience I should warn prospective retirees that, no matter how active you remain in research, deans and chairs quickly lose interest in paying decently for courses in your specialty, in providing office space, or in allocating you travel funds. Solidarity begins at home, and if you have not supported others in their struggles, do not expect support from them. If there is an "anthropological community," it must include what DiGiacomo called "collective ethical responsibility."

**Philip K Bock**  
U New Mexico

### Corporate Responsibility

I read with dismay the headline of a report by Keith Kintigh in the May 2000 issue of AN: "Wal-Mart as a Model of Public Responsibility."

I do not question that the company acted well in the matter of an archaeologically sensitive area, but there are other aspects of socially responsible policy in which the Wal-Mart fails miserably. Company stores do not carry and will

not sell contraceptive devices in their pharmacies. My local newspaper, the Baltimore Sun, carried a story about a month ago to the effect that employees in the meat department of one of their company stores in Texas voted to join a union. Management then fired all of the workers and closed down the department.

Should a company that acts in this way be called a "model of social responsibility"?

**Abraham Makofsky**  
U of Maryland School of Social Work  
(retired)

### Old Brains and Modern Sentiments

The recent push to bury the preserved brain of Ishi, last of the California Yana Indians, has stirred odd emotions among anthropologists. In April 1999 AN, p 22, Jonathan Marks deplores the "indignities" that anthropology has inflicted on some people. He wonders how Kroeber, having initially argued against an autopsy, apparently accepted what had been done in his absence and sent the brain to the Smithsonian. Perhaps another brain story will add some cultural context.

In 1976 Ken Kennedy and I published an article in *Natural History* (85[9]:48-53) on the first gorilla to arrive in the US. We examined the papers of the man who dissected this gorilla in 1897, when it died of pneumonia. Burt Green Wilder was a Cornell U professor of anatomy. He wanted to dissect the animal because he thought the dissection would support evolutionary theory. Many 19th century anatomists believed that there were structural differences between the brains of apes and humans that might explain differences in intelligence. Wilder sided with Julian Huxley and other evolutionists in arguing that the same basic structures were present in both apes and humans, representing continuous evolutionary variables rather than distinctive types. Similarly, he argued that size and structural differences did not explain mental differences among modern humans.

We found Wilder to be a fascinating and sympathetic character. He was an abolitionist and proponent of civil rights who served in the Civil War as a surgeon with the 55th Massachusetts Infantry, a black regiment. He could not abide smoking or intercollegiate sports. After joining the Cornell faculty in 1867 he refused to attend services in the refurbished university chapel because he found its depictions of angels with both wings and arms an unbearable offense to rational anatomy. When his student, J H Comstock, contracted typhoid, Wilder cared for him personally. At his house he maintained a fountain and cup for thirsty pedestrians, and in the basement

of McGraw Hall, he kept a menagerie of doomed animals destined for anatomical study. He also developed a large collection of anatomical specimens, including what was once the world's largest collection of human brains (now mostly dispersed).

Wilder's devotion to science and his social eccentricity were both expressed in one of his collecting schemes. At public occasions, he would distribute copies of specially printed Brain Bequest Forms, and in his personal files are some responses. A grieving mother, who had lost her son in a carriage accident, wrote to express the solace she received from knowing that her son's brain would benefit science. Wilder himself was no hypocrite; his own brain eventually joined the gorilla, the accident victim, and all the others.

Should we regard Wilder as a cold and unethical exploiter, who objectified others in the name of science? I think not. His interests and actions show that he cared very much about living people, as well as for his scientific pursuits. Jon Marks wonders how Kroeber could have "objectified a friend in such a fashion" by allowing Ishi's brain to have been kept. Perhaps what is even more curious is the degree to which anatomical specimens have become taboo. Wilder would certainly have asked, "Once someone is dead, why should the living not benefit from studying the body?"

Certainly we should treat human remains with respect, because they are powerful symbols of humanity, mortality, and individuals we have loved. But whether they are bones, brains, or fingernails, they care no more what happens to them than a dead stick off a tree. There are many ways to respect the dead, and cultures vary greatly in their prescriptions for respectful treatment of their mortal remains. Studying and learning from them is one form of respect. Giving Ishi's brain to groups that seek "repatriation" may be the best thing to do, if it is good for them, and for anthropology's relationship to various publics. It matters not a whit to Ishi.

Kroeber and other scientists were not always fully sympathetic to the desires of living people, but they should not be condemned for recognizing the difference between living human beings and the non-sentient organic debris left when people die. Why are Marks and others so afraid of "objectification?" Anthropologists, and most humans for that matter, are quite capable of objectively studying people and situations, and yet retaining human sympathy, respect, and even love for those they work with.

**John Whittaker**  
Grinnell College

October  
2000  
p 4

vol 41 #7