William A. Longacre, a Remembrance

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As an undergraduate at UCLA, I learned about William A. Longacre's pioneering work at Carter Ranch pueblo, which helped to launch processual archaeology. And so, as an aspiring processualist, I hoped to meet him some time. That time came in the summer of 1968, when I was a student at Paul S. Martin's research station in Vernon, Arizona. Longacre was then director of the University of Arizona's archaeological field school at Grasshopper. It was the custom for Vernon and Grasshopper to exchange summer visits and compete on the volleyball court for the "Mogollon bowl," an old mano. I was surprised that Longacre was, in youthful appearance, indistinguishable from his students. He seemed too young to be so well known in the profession. But it was also inspiring; maybe I could follow in his footsteps.

As a graduate student at Arizona, I took my first archaeology class from him, on North American prehistory. Longacre encouraged us to be creative in our semester projects, to ask new questions and analyze data in new ways. After the semester ended, I revised the theoretical section of my term paper and asked him—by then we called him "Uncle Willie"—if he would give me some feedback. The draft was harshly critical of both traditional and processual archaeologists for their inadequate treatment of formation processes, and the strident critique concerned him. Meeting with me in his office, he pointed out several typos and noted that the word "data" is plural. Then he gently advised me that "you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." He did see promise in the paper and urged me to submit it to a journal. I toned down the criticism somewhat and, after many revisions and insightful advice from John M.

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Fritz, that paper became "Archaeological context and systemic context" (Schiffer 1972). Had I followed Longacre's advice consistently throughout my career, perhaps I would have cultivated fewer enemies!

In the fall of 1970, before anyone else in my entering class of graduate students, I took the dreaded four-field comprehensive exams. I was also the first to fail. Discouraged and thinking about leaving Arizona, I sought Uncle Willie's wise counsel. He told me to stay at Arizona and pass the exam in the following spring; and I did. This was one of many times that, in his kindly and dispassionate way, he steered me in the right direction.

The history of archaeology was one of Uncle Willie's longstanding interests. In spring 1972, I took his seminar on the history of southwestern archaeology. He enthusiasm for historical research was contagious. I had never done historical research before, but found it exciting. And, as some of you know, I caught the history bug during that semester and it continues to bite me.

In 1973, when Uncle Willie was at Stanford, I sent him a draft of my dissertation on formation processes at the Joint Site, but he provided no comments. Apparently he hadn't read it. After defending my dissertation, I took a job with the Arkansas Archeological Survey, helped along by Raymond Thompson who had gone to graduate school at Harvard with Charles McGimsey, the Survey's director. (There really was an old boy network decades ago, and I benefitted greatly from it.) One day while immersed in the prehistory of Arkansas' Cache River basin, I got a call from an editor at Academic Press. Uncle Willie had suggested to him that my dissertation would make a good book for their archaeology series. I guess he had read it! After revisions, the dissertation became the book, *Behavioral Archeology* (Schiffer 1976), which helped establish my reputation—for better and for worse. I should also mention that my return to Arizona as a faculty member was aided by Uncle Willie's strong support. I'm not sure why he was so impressed with me in those early years, but I was honored to be in his good graces.

In my studies of formation processes, I had reluctantly concluded that the innovative ceramic analyses done by Uncle Willie (Longacre 1970) and James N. Hill (1970) were

faulty because they ignored patterns of cultural deposition. I demonstrated these defects after reanalyzing Hill's ceramic data from Broken K Pueblo (Schiffer 1989). When I told Uncle Willie about this work, he asked me why I hadn't used his site, Carter Ranch Pueblo. I was floored by the question and mumbled something about already having Hill's data in a convenient form. But, clearly, I hadn't wanted to show, with Uncle Willie's own data, that his classic work was flawed. I shouldn't have worried. Uncle Willie did not have a large ego; he embraced honest criticism and learned from it, rather than reacting to it emotionally—as some of us did. From that point on, Uncle Willie was a strong advocate for the study of formation processes and a proponent of behavioral archaeology. In later years, he supported the cross-fertilization of ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology. The result was James M. Skibo's masterful dissertation on pottery function, which as a book is now in its second edition (Skibo 2013).

During his decades of ethnoarchaeology among the Kalinga, Uncle Willie and I served together on his students' dissertation committees. We both enjoyed these stimulating collaborations, and I felt privileged to be an honorary participant in the project that was taking ethnoarchaeology in so many important directions. Its wide-ranging research questions, some pursued over three decades, elevated ethnoarchaeology from drive-by observations, such as those reported by Ian Hodder, into a real behavioral science. Along the way, he nurtured the careers of several generations of students. Even after retirement, Uncle Willie continued to work with graduate students, some of whom analyzed Kalinga data for journal articles.

Uncle Willie was born on December 16, which was also Beethoven's birthday. For many years he hosted at his home an annual "Beethoven's birthday party," inviting friends, colleagues, and students. One year he decided not to hold the party, and instead went to dinner with friends who had prepared an after dinner surprise. When the dinner party returned to his home and opened the door, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony began blasting from the speakers while all of us emerged from the shadows and shouted "surprise." A sloshed Uncle Willie looked like a deer

caught in headlights. He always claimed that it was, in fact, a complete surprise.

Uncle Willie was a terrific colleague in every respect. So much so that he reluctantly agree to be drafted as department head. However, he was not ideally suited to this role. In crossing to the Dark Side (administration), honorable scholars too often become facile liars, shed their academic values, and feather their own nests. Not so Uncle Willie. He retained his honesty, upheld high academic values, and fiercely championed the interests of colleagues and the department above all else. Perhaps predictably, the dean and Uncle Willie did not enjoy the most fruitful relationship. He was delighted to step down from the headship when the department, by unanimous vote, offered him the Fred A. Riecker chair (at that time, one couldn't be both Department head and Riecker Distinguished Professor.)

I can't help but mention two of Uncle Willie's most distinctive personal traits. First, was his unflagging optimism. Surely, he must have seen the world through rose-colored contact lenses. Second, he could dispense bad puns, without warning, in any social context. It takes a special talent to cause everyone else in a room to groan loudly.

Uncle Willie did not supervise my fieldwork or serve on my dissertation committee. Even so, he was a mentor, a promoter of my work, an esteemed colleague, and above all a dear friend. He was also a kind, generous, and modest man—a gentle man, and a gentleman. And a true mensch. The School of Anthropology has lost one of the people who established its stellar reputation in modern archaeology. I hope that future generations of graduate students and new faculty members will remember William A. Longacre's enormous contributions to archaeology at Arizona and to the discipline.

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