

American Association of Biological Anthropologists
2026 Business Meeting
Past President's Report: Election, In Memoriam, and Resolutions
Chair of the Election Committee and Past-President, Leslea J. Hlusko
27 February 2026

1. Election Report

An election was held to fill the three officer positions scheduled to turn over after the 2026 Business Meeting: President Elect, Vice President, and Secretary.

Requests for nominations were announced in the September and October AABA Newsletters. The period for accepting nominations closed alongside the abstract submission deadline on October 15, 2025. Fifteen people were nominated for President Elect, twelve for Secretary, and six for Vice President. All nominations required a disclosure form signed by the nominator, indicating that they were unaware of any concerns about the nominee in regards to meeting AABA's Code of Conduct.

There are three steps in the process to identify the two candidates who stand for election:

- 1) All nominees are vetted through AABA's Harrassment Committee for Awareness, Response, and Equity to ensure that they have not been found in violation of AABA's Code of Conduct.
- 2) Nominees are contacted via email to ascertain their willingness to possibly stand for election, if nominted by the Election Committee (for this year, members of the Executive Committee).
- 3) Willing nominees are then presented to the Election Committee, and a vote is held to identify the top two candidate for each position. The top two candidates are then slated in the Regular Member election.

I reached out via email to all of the people nominated between October 18-22, 2025, notifying them of the nomination, providing information about the position to which they had been nominated, and asking if they were interested in possibly standing for election. Of the entire candidate pool, 23 identify as men and 9 as women. Eight men and four women accepted their nomination (an acceptance rate of 35% and 44%, accordingly). All candidates who accepted the nomination were asked to complete a conduct disclosure form.¹

These candidates were then presented to the Election Committee/Executive Committee on November 4, 2025. Voting by the Election Committee closed on November 7, 2025. On November 11, 2025, the top two candidates for each position were presented to the Executive Committee for approval as the final slate of candidates for the Regular Members' election. The final slate of candidates e was:

President:	Anthony Di Fiore and Ripan Malhi
Vice President:	Myra Laird and Chris Schmitt
Secretary:	Marin Pilloud and Michelle Singleton

¹ CERTIFICATION: The undersigned hereby affirms that they have read, understands, and agrees to comply with the the [AABA Professional Ethics Policy](#), including the [Statement on Sexual Harassment and Assault](#), and other policies and procedures established by AABA, as amended from time to time. By checking yes below and signing this document, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the above response and all information provided by me related to this Professional Conduct Disclosure Form are truthful, accurate, and complete, and I agree to notify the AABA promptly of any material changes required in my responses to the above question. I acknowledge that failure to comply with the AABA Professional Ethics Policy, including its Statement on Sexual Harassment and Assault, may result in my ineligibility to receive, or revocation of, any AABA award, honor, recognition, or governance position.

Voting by Regular Members opened on Thursday, January 8, 2026, announced with an email sent to all Regular Members via the XCD email system, as well as being referred to in the AABA Newsletter. Two reminder emails were sent through the XCD system to Regular Members who had not yet voted (on January 20th and 27th). Voting closed on Friday, January 30, 2026.

In total, 288 Regular Members voted in the election. The votes for both candidates in all three positions were close, indicating strong support for the candidate slate.

The final results of the election:

President: Anthony Di Fiore
Vice President: Michelle Singleton
Secretary: Chris Schmitt

AABA President Anne Stone contacted all six candidates to notify them of the results. I also emailed all six candidates on February 11th to thank them for their willingness to stand for election. On behalf of AABA, I express my deep gratitude to all of the people who submitted nominations and all of those nominees who considered standing in the election.

2. In Memoriam

In this section, AABA recognizes members of our scientific community who passed away over the last year, or who passed away in previous years but had not yet been included in AABA's In Memoriam.

Alemu Ademassu (1955 – 2025)

Alemu Ademassu was a long-time employee of the Center for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (CRCCH), now Ethiopian Heritage Authority (EHA), at the Ethiopian National Museum in Addis Ababa. Having trained in casting at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the University of California Berkeley, he started and led the National Museum's casting program since the 1980's. Widely recognized as one of the best casting technicians in the world, Alemu created scientific replicas of many of the most important fossils discovered in the country. His skills and care were essential in the Ethiopian government's management and security of the country's fossils, including his work serving as the governmental representative responsible for the first international exhibit of the *Australopithecus afarensis* skeleton "Lucy". Alemu was a long-time member of the Middle Awash Research Project, participating in fieldwork for decades. In addition to his contributions to paleoanthropology, Alemu was deeply interested in history and Amharic literature, and was a passionate collector of old books.

A. David Beynon (1939-2025)

David Beynon qualified as a dental surgeon from Newcastle University School of Dental Sciences, UK in 1963. His first job after internships combined his love of sailing with his clinical interests. As ships' doctor/dentist he sailed to Antarctica where he spent 6 months as the resident dentist with the British Antarctic Survey. On returning to Newcastle, David was appointed lecturer in oral biology and worked on the immunohistochemistry of enamel maturation and on quantitative microradiography of bone and enamel. While examining dental students at The University of Nairobi in the early 1980s, he visited the National Museums of Kenya and became fascinated with hominin evolution. He went on to conduct quantitative research on cuspal enamel thickness, and then enamel microstructure. David was the first to describe the disposition of striae of Retzius in early hominins and the first to quantify differences in Hunter Schreger Band distribution and orientation between hominin taxa. Beynon was also instrumental in developing a method to replicate tooth surfaces for SEM using epoxy replicas, enabling the first identification of daily varicosities and constrictions on fractured surfaces of fossil hominin enamel. Building on this early research work, Beynon went on to collaborate in numerous projects reconstructing

the chronology of enamel formation in living great apes, *Proconsul (Ekembo)*, and in several early hominin specimens. He retired from academia in 1996 and returned to his passion for sailing.

Jaroslav Brůžek (1949-2025)

A Czech-born scientist who moved to France to be with his wife early in his career, he found that his doctoral degree wasn't recognized. And so, he earned a second Ph.D. at the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle. Eventually joining the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), he settled for a while at the University of Bordeaux and pursued research in paleoanthropology and fieldwork in France, Mongolia, and in the Pacific. In 2008, he returned to Charles University in Prague to be a member of the 3D Imaging and Analytical Methods Laboratory. Describing his own career path in July of 2025, he wrote, "I'm... a broadly focused anthropologist who often ventured where no path was yet laid. Most paths are narrow trails and dead ends that go undocumented. All the more rewarding when something succeeds. Like the "Man from Menton," who turned out to be a woman... Or the sex estimation of the triple burial of mammoth hunters from Dolní Věstonice, previously interpreted as a failed childbirth, where my analysis showed that all three individuals were male—later confirmed by genetics. I'm also proud that our team proved the true significance of the overlooked skull of the woman from Zlatý kůň, previously misdated due to sample contamination. It is now recognized as a 45,000-year-old find—one of the oldest known modern human remains in Europe... Looking back—on a journey that led through Bavorov, Prague, Paris, Bordeaux, and back again—it was worth it" (Brůžek, 2025).

Jane Goodall (1934-2025)

After a couple of years studying primate behaviour and anatomy in London, but with no undergraduate degree, Jane Goodall traveled to Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania to begin a field research program studying chimpanzee behavior that continues to this day (she went on to earn a PhD in 1966 from Cambridge University). Her outside-the-box, non-traditional research approach fundamentally overturned assumptions about non-human primates, discovering evidence of their tool use and demonstrating that chimpanzees hunt and engage in violence. In addition to her remarkable scientific contributions, Goodall was a tireless advocate for environmental conservation and animal rights, writing 32 books, including 15 for children, and serving in numerous leadership positions, such as her 2002 appointment as a United Nations Messenger of Peace. In 1977 she established the Jane Goodall Institute and in 1991 the Roots and Shoots program. She established and supported numerous other initiatives for the protection of chimpanzees, other wildlife, and to improve the lives of the people who live near them. For the last twenty years of her life, Goodall traveled 300 days a year giving lectures and inspiring others to take action to mitigate the effects of climate change, protect nature, and advocate for animal rights. Goodall received more awards and recognitions than we could possibly list here. One of her most profound effects on our discipline is perhaps her perpetual and hopeful reminder that "Everything is connected—everyone can make a difference" (janegoodall.org).

Mohammed Hamadin Haydara (d.2023)

Mohammed Hamadin Haydara was a long-serving representative for the Afar Regional Government who worked with many field paleoanthropological projects. He was incredibly generous in sharing his vast knowledge both of the region's natural history as well as the culture of the Afar people. In addition to his expertise in finding fossils, he was an invaluable liaison with the local people, enabling the research to proceed.

Charles Hildebolt (1944-2024)

Charles Hildebolt began his career as a dentist, volunteering to serve in the US Army Dental Corps in 1970 and ultimately receiving the National Defense Service Medal and being promoted to Major. In the

mid 1980s, Hildebolt decided to shift away from practicing dentistry to pursue his passion for research, earning his PhD from Washington University in St. Louis in 1987. As a Professor of Radiology at Washington University's Medical School, he pursued a wide range of research questions, from an investigation of the effects of vitamin D on periodontal disease to the study of ancient DNA from an Egyptian mummy to the neurobiology of *Homo floresiensis*. He is also widely recognized for his expertise in statistical analyses. After his retirement, he worked as a statistical consultant for Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine. As a particularly active member of the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, he will be remembered for building intellectual bridges across disciplines and for presenting research on *H. floresiensis* to delighted audiences.

Ralph Holloway (1935-2025)

Ralph Holloway began his academic career studying geology at the University of New Mexico. After a stint working in the oil fields of Texas, he began his PhD studies at the University of California Berkeley. Immediately after graduation, he was hired onto the Anthropology faculty at Columbia University where he worked until his retirement almost 50 years later. His research over this time was instrumental in shifting our discipline's focus away from the size of the primate brain to questions about structural variation within it. As fossil brains of primates are not preserved, he focused on the preservation of external brain anatomy preserved on the inside of the cranium—endocasts. One of his earliest investigations focused on the position of the lunate sulcus in the Taung specimen, ultimately providing additional support for Raymond Dart's conclusion that Taung represents a human ancestor. As he noted in 2008, "I believed then and remain convinced today that the earliest hominids, i.e., *Australopithecus africanus*, *A. afarensis*, and *A. garhi*, had brains that were definitely different from any ape's, despite their small size" (Nossiter, 2025).

Trefor Jenkins (1932-2025)

Trefor Jenkins studied medicine at King's College, University of London. Upon graduation in 1956, he took a position in the Royal Army Medical Corps, moving to Zimbabwe in 1960 as a medical officer. It was in Zimbabwe that he first came across sickle cell anemia, and his passion for hematology and genetics was born. He moved to South Africa soon thereafter to work at Durban Hospital and, later, with Philip Tobias at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School. In 1977, Jenkins formed The Human Ecogenetics Research Unit, establishing one of the first molecular genetics laboratories in South Africa. Research in this laboratory provided important insights about genetic variation within Africa and established genetic diagnostic services as part of patient care. At this same time, in 1977, Jenkins was one of six doctors who pushed against the South African medical establishment in protest of the ruling on the cause of death of Steve Bantu Biko, the anti-apartheid leader who died in detention after being held without trial for more than 500 days and brutally interrogated. Jenkins was later awarded the Benjamin Pogrand Medal for his efforts to advance non-racialism at the University of Witwatersrand. More recently, he helped to establish the Evolutionary Studies Institute at Witwatersrand and served as the interim director.

Jane Lancaster (1935-2025)

Jane Lancaster received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College and PhD from the University of California Berkeley in 1967. After brief faculty stints at Berkeley, Rutgers University, University of New Orleans, and the University of Oklahoma, in 1985, Lancaster joined the faculty at the University of New Mexico, was named a Distinguished Professor in 2012, and remained until her retirement. Throughout her career, she pioneered research in primate social behavior, parenting, and the application of a biosocial approach to sexuality and socialization. In 1990, she founded the journal *Human Nature: An Interdisciplinary Biosocial Perspective*. In recognition of her contributions, she received the Lifetime

Career Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions from the Human Behavior and Evolution Society in 2012 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2021. In her 1991 Yearbook of Physical Anthropology article, "A Feminist and Evolutionary Biologist Looks at Women", she wrote, "Modern changes in the distribution of and access to resources necessary for reproduction is having profound impact on human mating and family formation strategies, the relations between the sexes, and parental investment patterns. Although these changes have drawn us far from the original environments of adaptation and may appear novel and even sometimes undesirable, they are, nevertheless, predictable using a perspective founded on evolutionary biology and human socioecology" (1991: 9), a point that still resonates today.

Bruce Latimer (1953-2025)

Bruce Latimer was a paleoanthropologist and functional anatomist. He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Arizona, master's degree at Case Western Reserve University, and doctoral degree at Kent State University. Bruce's detailed study of foot anatomy of early hominins and apes was foundational to our understanding of the biomechanics of bipedal locomotion and the origin of hominins. His durable contributions to the study of *Australopithecus afarensis* and *Ardipithecus ramidus* are most notable and continue to be cited widely. Beyond his studies of the lower limb, Bruce was a human biologist who studied the evolution and aging of the human vertebral column, with a focus on pathology attendant to bipedality. Outside of the lab, Bruce participated in paleoanthropological fieldwork in the Afar region of Ethiopia and at Manot Cave in Israel. Beyond his contributions in research, Bruce served as Executive Director of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and prior to that administrative role, he was Curator of the Department of Physical Anthropology. Bruce was also a Professor in the Medical and Dental Schools at Case Western Reserve University, where he was recognized as an engaging and memorable educator. In person and in public, Bruce was a wonderful story-teller and an enthusiastic musician, needing little motivation to break out his harmonica. Outside of his professional life, Bruce was dedicated to his wife and friend Cindy Cover and proud of his daughter Gracie.

Jeffrey Meldrum (1958-2025)

After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University, Jeff Meldrum received his PhD from SUNY Stony Brook. Starting in 1993, he served as an Idaho State University professor in the biological sciences. He was known within anthropology for his work on primate locomotion, but is most famous for his public-facing efforts arguing for the existence of Bigfoot. He is the author of a number of books on the topic, including *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science* first published in 2006, and was involved in many documentaries. In 2011, he wrote, "I have a sense of accomplishment that my attention to the evidence for the existence of Sasquatch has kept this matter before the gaze of the scientific community and engendered meaningful dialogue about it. To have these efforts recognized and encouraged by the likes of George Schaller, Jane Goodall, and Russell Mittermeier has been very gratifying" (Meldrum, 2011). Indeed, in 2012, Goodall is quoted as having said, "I'm fascinated and would actually love them to exist," adding, "Of course, it's strange that there has never been a single authentic hide or hair of the Bigfoot, but I've read all the accounts" (Moye, 2012). As a child, Meldrum was inspired to a career in science by tales of the existence of close human relatives coexisting with us today. There is no doubt that his research will similarly inspire others towards science for years to come.

Shuichiro Narasaki (1958-2019)

Shuichiro Narasaki was a paleoanthropologist and forensic anthropologist. Broadly trained, he earned two undergraduate degrees (Seijo University and the University of Oregon), a master's degree from

Oxford, and received his PhD program from the University of Bordeaux. His research in the 1980-2000's focused on paleoanthropology, predominantly on Holocene and terminal Pleistocene materials in Japan and as a member of the Japanese-Indonesian research team at Sangiran, Java. In parallel, in 1992, he began to be involved in repatriation efforts of victims of World War II, including Japanese soldiers, and in 2010, he started to work for the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW). In 2019, he took a full-time position at MHLW as the ministry's Specialist in Skeletal Remains Identification, and worked with the Japan Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties (JARRWC). Through this work, he helped to identify and bring dignity to over 700 war dead. He passed away in 2019 while working in the Mariana Islands. Narasaki described his dedication to repatriation, "We must not let the war dead die a second time by being ignored" (The Sankei Shimbun Internet News, 2019).

Charles Oxnard (1933-2025)

Charles Oxnard earned his bachelor's, master's, PhD, and DSc degrees from Birmingham University, UK, and then served on the faculties at the University of Chicago, the University of Southern California, and ultimately retired from the University of Western Australia. Charles began his scientific career noting features of the hominid postcranial skeleton that were more ape-like than human-like, often applying quantitative and statistical approaches that were novel to paleoanthropology in the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as canonical analyses and generalized distance. In the early to mid 1970s, he published a series of books and articles demonstrating that *Australopithecus* was a biped, but not quite like humans, and with hand and shoulder features more akin to arboreality. This conclusion has since been bolstered by a significant number of fossil discoveries and different analytical methods. In 2010, Matt Cartmill wrote, "Oxnard has given us some rich and valuable presents: his methodologies, his research findings, his prescient analyses, his example as a rigorous investigator, his service as a member of our discipline and our university communities. But he has given us nothing so rich and valuable as the example he has set us of a lasting, unshakable, disinterested joy in trying to figure out how the world works" (2010: 5).

G. Philip Rightmire (1942-2025)

Philip Rightmire began his career with a bachelor's degree from Harvard and a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1968. He was a founding member of the State University of New York at Binghamton's Department of Anthropology and ultimately appointed as a Distinguished Professor in 2002. After he retired, he returned to Harvard University as a research associate in the Department of Human Evolutionary Biology. Philip was involved in fieldwork in South Africa early in his career, and later at Dmanisi in the Republic of Georgia. He is widely regarded for his long-standing investigation of the origins and evolution of the genus *Homo*. After studying specimens from Olduvai Gorge in comparison with fossils from Europe and Asia, he concluded that Asian and African specimens represent just one species in the now-classic book *The Evolution of Homo erectus* (1990). His descriptions and analyses of Middle and Late Pleistocene hominin fossils from Florisbad, Border Cave, Ndutu, and Klasies River Mouth provided important evidence in support of the Out-of-Africa hypothesis of modern human origins. In the last decades of his career, Philip was deeply involved in the description and analysis of the hominin skulls recovered from Dmanisi. He will be remembered as "a modest and quiet giant in the field" (Quam, 2025: 3).

David Glenn Smith (1947-2025)

David Glenn Smith earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky, and then the Master's and PhD from the University of Colorado in Boulder. Over this time, his interest in archaeology focused on the biological remains of the people who made those artifacts. After his PhD, he trained in genetics at the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia and the University of Michigan Medical School, settling

into a tenure-track position at the University of California Davis where he stayed until retirement (1977-2015). David applied his expertise in population genetics to the study of primate phylogenetics and health, contributing to the colony management protocols at the Davis National Primate Research Center. He was also among the first biological anthropologists to apply ancient DNA methods to questions about the peopling of the Americas, and was ahead of his time in combining genetic evidence with knowledge from archaeology and linguistics. Throughout his career David embraced his Appalachian heritage with a love of bluegrass and roots music. He and his family endowed a first-generation scholarship for East Tennessee State University. After retirement, he dedicated himself to family, travel, and two acres of land with a large vegetable garden and animals.

3. Resolutions

As the Past President, it is my honor to offer the resolutions for the close of the 2026 AABA Business Meeting.

The Association expresses deep gratitude,

- To all members of the Executive Committee, especially Kristi Lewton and Amy Rector who come to the end of their terms as Vice President and Secretary, and Secretary and Vice President respectively and sequentially.
- To the Program Committee, session chairs, symposium and workshop organizers who created this excellent conference.
- To the Local Arrangements Committee for welcoming us all to Denver.
- To all participants in this annual meeting, as our Association is only as strong as the members who participate in it.
- To the Burk and Associates team who contributes so much to the successful functioning of the Association and the conference.

Be it resolved that members of AABA hold fast to the sense of community that this Association represents. We are a group of imperfect individuals, each of us discovering, learning, and evolving. As our discipline continues reconciliation with its history, and as we adjust and respond to the challenges facing biological anthropology today, may our work bring us closer together as a community rather than pull us apart.

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