

Memorial to Craig Call Black 1932–1998

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The many contributions of Craig Black to the geological sciences include his active field investigations in Cenozoic vertebrate paleontology and stratigraphy, his numerous important studies on the history and evolutionary biology of a variety of fossil mammals, and his commitment and contributions to formal and informal science education, whether in a university or a museum setting. Craig was also that rare individual who combined his scientific abilities and profession with a career commitment to enlightened museum administration, with all of its complexities and challenges.

Craig was born in 1932 in Peking, China, only child of Arthur P. Black, M.D., and Mary Nichols Black. In 1954 he received his Bachelor's degree from Amherst College, where he came under the spell of Albert E. Wood, a vertebrate paleontologist noted for his research into the complex world of fossil rodents. Craig returned to Amherst for graduate work as a Kellogg Fellow, and he earned his Master of Arts degree, working with Wood, in 1957. This was followed by study at Harvard University, where he held a National Institutes of Health predoctoral fellowship and earned his Ph.D. in 1962. His graduate advisers, Professor Bryan Patterson and Dr. Wood, supervised his investigations of the paleobiology of Tertiary members of the Sciuridae (squirrels), a family that was relatively poorly understood until his study.

Upon completion of his graduate studies, Craig accepted a curatorial position in vertebrate paleontology at Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh. The early Tertiary collections of mammalian fossils there were a strong complement to his research interests. He undertook long-term field investigations of later Eocene mammalian faunas from continental deposits in Wyoming, Montana, and Utah, a project in which he was joined by Dave Love, Mary Dawson, Peter Robinson, and other colleagues. This field work led to a series of landmark publications on the vertebrate faunas and stratigraphy of the Badwater Creek area, central Wyoming, as well as on related Eocene faunas in the central Rocky Mountain region, which proved critical to reconstructing early Tertiary biostratigraphy, geochronology, and tectonic history of the Rocky Mountain interior.

Craig worked also in Mexico, France, Tunisia, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, and Greece, following up on his research interests in Tertiary mammals. This work acquainted him with a wide suite of foreign colleagues. Using an outstanding program at Carnegie Museum for foreign visiting scholars, Craig was able to introduce North American fossil localities and paleofaunas to Hans deBruijn, Volker Fahlbusch, Burkart Engesser, Daniel Oppliger, Li Chuankuei, and many other colleagues, as they joined him in paleontological work here. His other international



commitments included serving as a consultant for the Indian government on the National Museum of Natural History, Delhi, and on science and natural history museums in Bombay and Calcutta, and chairing a review of the National Museums of Kenya.

In 1970 Craig left his curatorial position at Carnegie Museum to undertake teaching, research, and museum duties in the Department of Systematics and Ecology and the Museum of Natural History at the University of Kansas. He was a natural, inspiring teacher. In 1972, he was recruited by Texas Tech University to be director of its museum and professor of geosciences. There Craig was able to continue teaching, as well as to enter deeply into the world of museum administration. His teaching, at both Kansas and Texas Tech, led to the paleontological careers of several graduate students, including Leonard Krishtalka, Larry Martin, Don Rasmussen, Takeshi Setoguchi, John Sutton, Stephen Dart, and Don Womochel. While at Texas Tech, Craig began a new research venture in Pliocene-Pleistocene deposits in the East Turkana area of Kenya as part of Richard Leakey's investigations into the evolution and environments of early hominids.

The challenges of administrative work appealed to the builder in Craig, who at the same time retained his appetite for paleontological field work and study. In 1975, his next career advance took him back to Carnegie Museum of Natural History, this time as director. At Carnegie he fostered a dynamic expansion of the museum's collections, research, educational, and exhibition programs. The next administrative call came from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, where he became director in 1982. His many accomplishments there include collection expansion into new areas and increased outreach into the communities of the Los Angeles region. He remained at LACM until his retirement in 1994, when he and his wife, anthropologist Dr. Mary Elizabeth King, settled in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Throughout his career, Craig was an active member of professional associations including the Association of Science Museum Directors, the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, the American Association of Museums, and the Paleontological Society. He served as president of each of these organizations. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society of America and the Linnean Society of London. Other service to the professional community included his tenure on the National Museum Services Board, to which he was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1982. This was followed by service on the National Science Board, also a Reagan appointment, where he chaired committees on international science programs, global environment and change, and biodiversity. From 1987 to 1989, Craig chaired a major study for the National Science Board, "Loss of Biodiversity: A Global Crisis Requiring International Solutions."

These experiences led to Craig's new overriding concern for and deep involvement in global environmental issues and especially the role of the geosciences, the biosciences, and natural history museums in the search for solutions. Craig proceeded to serve on the board of Environment for the Americas, to which he was appointed by President George Bush, and on the boards of the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property and the African Wildlife Foundation. His other service included active board membership in the Explorers Club, the Science Center, and Children's Museum of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the U.S.-Mexico Foundation on Science and Technology.

Vertebrate paleontologist, teacher, museum administrator, visionary leader, and committed biodiversity advocate, Craig left many legacies to his students, associates, friends, and family.

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