



Rodney Dean Anderson PhD

June 11, 1938 - April 6, 2022

Rodney Dean Anderson, who was a history professor at Florida State University from 1966 to 2007, died on April 6, 2022, at the age of 83. He was born and raised in Houlton, Maine, graduating from Houlton High School in 1956. He was proud of his parents, Ellery and Marion Bither Anderson, and fondly wrote, “Beginning in 1941 or so, Dad worked as a mechanic, and later foreman, at Cates Motor Mart on Mechanic Street, and then took over the garage in the mid-1950s...My mother worked as a cashier at the old IGA, and then kept the books for the garage.”

At Boston University, he continued, “I came to my life’s work through a chance encounter with Mexican history in an elective history course...After graduating from Boston University, I joined the Maine National Guard and put in six months active duty at Fort Dix, New Jersey (and five years in the U.S. Army Reserves) and began my graduate work at...American University in Washington, D.C. in 1961. At first, I studied for the Foreign Service, but soon changed to my first love – history. Mexico intrigued me, and I spent a year there in 1965-66, doing the research on my Ph.D. dissertation on labor history.”

When a job opened up at Florida State University, he began his teaching career in August 1966. In 1968 he was granted his Ph.D. by American University. His academic interests evolved from labor to urban history, and by the 1980s he specialized in the history of Guadalajara, Mexico’s largest western city. Beginning in 1995 he directed the Guadalajara Census Project

funded by the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities. This project developed into a database of two especially detailed censuses, 1821 and 1822, taken in Guadalajara during the early years of Mexican independence. The purpose he explained was “to digitize the population censuses of that city and make them available to scholars and the general public.” Rod was at the center of a subgroup of the history department at Florida State who taught in fields then considered new to the field of history: Women’s History, Latin American History, African History and Middle Eastern history. During the 1980s this group had offices on the third (rather than the fourth floor) of Bellamy building. They were happy denizens of “the swamp”.

Rod published two books, *Outcasts in Their Own Lands: Mexican Industrial Workers, 1906-1911* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), and *Guadalajara a la consumacion de la Independencia: Estudio de su poblacion segun los padrones de 1821-1822* (Unidad Editorial, 1983). In 1988 he received the James Alexander Robertson Memorial Prize for his article, "Race and Social Stratification: A Comparison of Working-Class Spaniards, Indians, and Castas in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1821", *Hispanic American Historical Review* (May 1988). Rod did pioneering work in Mexican history, focusing on the view of working class Mexicans, and developing digitized census information for use by students, teachers and the public.

Publishing was important to Rod, and teaching was at the core of his identity. He taught not only Mexican history, but also the history of other parts of Latin America, as well as World History, and the history of World War II while teaching at FSU’s campus in London. His enthusiasm and dedication impressed students and colleagues, who recognized him as an excellent teacher. Students, especially his Ph.D. students, and those who worked with him on the Guadalajara project, played a very large role in his life. However, as he wrote ten years ago, “Two things kept me in town, or at least kept me from thinking of leaving town. First, I met a woman with whom I happily spent the rest of my life...And not long afterwards, we both fell heads and heels in love with a community within this community – Gulf Winds Track Club!” In the

early 1980's Rod was a serious runner, a member of the GWTC, and a competitive runner in his age group. He especially loved the camaraderie and social activities of the GWTC.

One does not think of Rod without thinking of parties and ceremonies. For him "any time was an opportunity for celebration". He entered into them joyously, without reserve. He loved socializing and gathering friends to celebrate: Fridays, paella parties, going away parties, retirement parties, graduation parties, Bocce tournaments, crabbing and many other occasions. He and Marti especially loved hosting one and all at his home near Tallahassee and in the family-built camp on the South Shore at Drew's Lake in Maine. As his close friend Darrell Levi commented, "His was a rare spirit which combined pioneering work in Mexican history, stalwart friendship, and a joyous approach to life."

He is survived by his wife, Marti Trovillion; his sister, Connie MacKinnon; his son, Jim Anderson; his daughter, Sharon Anderson Fowler; seven grandchildren who he loved very much; and many students and friends who enjoyed and loved him.

The celebration of the Life Rodney Dean Anderson PhD, will be held Friday, May 27, 2022. A reception will be held from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Celebration of his life will be from 5:00 until 7:00 PM, both will be held in the Grand Ballroom Florida State University Alumni Center 1030 West Tennessee Street Tallahassee, FL 32304. Rodney Anderson was a beloved professor at FSU for 41 years. He took great joy in socializing and gathering friends to celebrate. We invite you to a special gathering to honor Rod's contributions to many people's lives. We'll be sharing our favorite stories about Rod and raising a glass to toast him. The Celebration of Life will be recorded and posted to a YouTube link for those who cannot attend in person. There will be a video recording made of the Celebration. If you want access to the recording, email terasa.uni@gmail.com. Please put "Celebration" in the subject line of your email. Todd Wahlquist with Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193, www.bevisfh.com).

com) is assisting the Anderson family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Reception

MAY 27. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

FSU Alumni Center Ballroom
1030 W. Tennessee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Celebration of Life

MAY 27. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

FSU Alumni Center Ballroom
1030 W. Tennessee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Tribute Wall

TS

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Tam Spike - April 19, 2022 at 08:02 AM

TS

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Tam Spike - April 19, 2022 at 07:59 AM

“Rod was our friend for more than fifty years. He and Marti were like family to us, with Mechele, my wife, meeting Marti in 1972 when both were in graduate school. Marti and Rod were “an item” then, later to be married. Rod gave Mechele his “approval” of me as a “suitable suitor” in 1976 before our marriage in 1977. Since that time we four shared outdoor adventures, meals out, houses at the coast, parties at the Anderson/Trovillion houses, and lately half a dozen summer visits to the Houlton, Maine, camp.

Rod and I both loved to cook, with Rod being even more capable of destroying a kitchen and using every pot in search of the happy, delicious meal, usually in the company of friends. We all enjoyed travel, and a great regret is that we didn't visit Rod and Marti together when Rod taught at the FSU summer programs in Europe.

Despite that regret, invitations to the Maine Camp were happily accepted, and we four made one trip “abroad” to Nova Scotia. We shared a common love of shore side visits and dining, especially Maine lobster and seafood of any sort, plus fishing out of the Maine Camp skiff or excursions in the oar powered “party boat”. I gleefully would needle him with reminders that the lake and stream fish we caught together were bait sized compared with the salt water monsters I bragged about.

Fairly often on late evenings we would have spirited to hot headed political discussions involving sensitive subjects that were dear to him, which usually ended with mutual hugs. Rod respected my opinions on scientific issues, but correctly asserted his knowledge and credentials as a historian and political science expert. Arguments in those areas I would nearly always lose.

Rod never stopped learning in his passion. He was the only semi-retired 80 year old academician that I knew still regularly using highlighter pens in difficult, hard cover books preparing for the “next class” he planned to teach. All the while in the background a beautiful Maine lake beckoned and loons called. The only thing that

would interrupt him was to marvel at the birds protecting each other from predatory eagles.

The last time I saw Rod I brought him a historical trinket for him to admire. I told him I had another ready for my next visit, which I never got to make. Even so, I look back with gratitude on the many years of his friendship and the happy hours we shared with him and Marti.

Thank you, Rod, and I pray we will meet again.

Your friends,

Ed and Mechele Conklin



Ed & Mechele Conklin - April 17, 2022 at 10:05 AM

JC

“ I am so sorry to hear of Rod's death, and send deep condolences to all his family on their loss. I met Rod back when Economics shared the fourth floor of Bellamy with History, and I found myself with more in common with a number of the historians than with many of my economics colleagues. He was an inspiration in many ways, and had a dedication to learning and teaching that I envied. In recent years, his OLLI classes were amazingly well prepared and taught, and never failed to remind me of the joys of country bocce. He was a wonderful human being and will be greatly and widely missed. He loved life and leaves deep holes. Jim Cobbe

Jim Cobbe - April 17, 2022 at 07:00 AM

S(

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Sharon Fowler (Anderson) - April 13, 2022 at 03:43 PM

TD

“ So sorry for your loss Marti. He was a good man and I know you will miss him with all your being. My heart goes out to you and your family.

Terry DeCerchio - April 11, 2022 at 09:56 PM

KE

“ I would like to start by offering my heartfelt condolences to Marti. While I never had a course with Rod, he had a tremendous impact on my life. He introduced me to the non-academic side of being a professor. Back in the mid '80s, Rod found out that I was interested in homebrewing, and invited me to the house to make some beer with him and Tim Brewton. These all day events included “testing” the previous beers from the archives, eating home made (usually Mexican) cooking, which was a big deal for a poor graduate student, and playing “country” Bocce in his front yard.

Rod and Marti were regulars at Will's famous football parties. There is nothing like a dozen Ph.D.'s screaming at the television over a football game. He almost always brought his latest Mexican culinary creation, which was invariably excellent. Later Carol and I were invited to participate in the Memorial Day Paella extravaganza at St. George Island. Rod orchestrated the prepping and cooking of Paella from his hand-written notes. The chaotic beauty of it was something to behold.

Despite not having a single class with Rod, I learned more about his research and the history of Guadalajara than a person has a right to. Rod, Carol and I will miss you.

Kyle & Carol Eidahl

Kyle Eidahl - April 11, 2022 at 12:15 PM

LE

“ Rodney was all the things that matter: a good friend, smart, funny; he loved Marty with all his heart, and he knew how to enjoy life - and he did.



lenny - April 10, 2022 at 05:39 PM

MF

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Mike Fagan - April 10, 2022 at 10:25 AM

DL

“Rod and I were fellow Latin American historians at FSU from 1994 to 2000. He enjoyed teasing me by proclaiming himself the department's "senior Latin Americanist." I teased him about the colors of his Houlton, Maine high school: black and white. Although we had different personalities and approaches to history, he was supportive of my efforts. We cooperated on several MA and PhD committees, and students benefited from our different approaches. What is most memorable about Rod, other than his contributions to Mexican historiography, was his love of life. He was a *compadre* to whom one could turn in time of crisis.

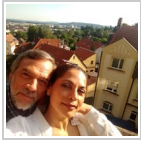
In the early 1980s we were serious runners, members of the Gulf Winds Track Club. When I ran my first marathon in 1982, Rod ran the first half with me, chatting to help relieve the stress. We ran races of from 5K to a 50K ultramarathon. Rod was a competitive runner in his age group.

We often partied together. At one "Latin party" at Rod's and Marti's home, Cuban grad students Felix Masud-Piloto and Juan Macho roasted a pig over an open fire, a process lasting into the early morning hours. There were bocce games on a court Rod had carved out of packed clay; it had many bumps, exposed roots, and other "home court" features that Rod was not shy about exploiting. On occasion we shared rentals at the beach. We enjoyed Friday happy hours with Jeannie Conner, Gerri Frost, Glanda Alice Rabby, and Jean Bryant, and parties at the homes of Joe Richardson and Jim Jones.

Rod liked fantasy literature such as Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. His romantic streak also came out in poems he dedicated to friends, such as the one he wrote for me when I retired in 2000. His was a rare spirit which combined pioneering work in Mexican history, stalwart friendship, and a joyous approach to life.

Darrell Levi

Darrell Levi - April 09, 2022 at 01:56 PM



“ *There are people who mark your life. Rodney changed mine, there was a before and after meeting him. It transformed not only my career path, but also had a huge impact on my entire family. As a teacher, he taught me how to become a historian. I admired, and I was always surprised, by his respect and dedication to the history of Mexico. As friends, we shared so many great moments (of course not enough) that I will treasure forever. Martí, you know we love you both. He will always be a part of our lives.*



Claudia Rivas - April 09, 2022 at 10:07 AM

TB

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Tim Brewton - April 09, 2022 at 09:27 AM

AV

“ Words can't express how much DR meant to so many of us. I truly would not be where I am today without the opportunities he afforded me through the GCP. He was such a special light in this world who put great passion and excitement into everything that he did and shared with everyone he met. He will be sorely missed. My thoughts and prayers go out to you Marti. May his memory be eternal.



Andrea Vicente - April 09, 2022 at 08:12 AM



“ Marti I am so sorry for your loss. Jen, Marlowe and I give our condolences. Rod was a friend, a mentor and I loved him like a dad. He did so much for me I could never express my gratitude. Rod “Gus” was truly the first among equals.
Love,
Jay

James Tapp - April 09, 2022 at 12:02 AM

FF

“ Uncle Rodney was a terrific role model growing up. As a child he taught me how to play chess and appreciate my Mexican heritage, he will be missed. My condolences Marti, with love, Fernando Franci

Fernando Franco - April 08, 2022 at 10:30 PM

SV

“ the years pass so quickly. I have such fond memories of Rod - he was so genuine and caring - I will always smile when I think of Rod and when I returned to Tallahassee after many years away he came to see me and gave me back a frying pan I had given him years before! Good times and gentleness are things I will remember about him

Skip Vichness

skip vichness - April 08, 2022 at 09:27 PM



“ I was saddened to learn earlier today of Dr. Anderson's passing. I never had a class with him, but I enjoyed many fine conversations with him during the years I had a teaching assistantship in the history department (2000-2002). My prayers are with Marti and his other loved ones.

Jason Jewell - April 08, 2022 at 09:09 PM

SF

“ Dear Marti, I am so sorry for your loss. He was an absolute joy. He gave me a job when I didn't have one. I'd have quit school without it. He created an environment that was filled with laughter and joy, and I know no one else outside our group who had that experience in grad school. I loved him. Still do. Love you, too. Sarah Franklin

Sarah Franklin - April 08, 2022 at 08:23 PM

LI

“ I count it one of the best blessings of my life to have been taken in by DR and the GCP family. He loved us all so well, and I will not forget. My heart grieves with and for you, Marti. Thank you for sharing him with all of us ❤️

Lindsey - April 08, 2022 at 08:21 PM

MR

“ Dear Marti, My heart is breaking with you and for you. Dr. Anderson changed my life as a scholar and a person. He showed me how to use sources in new ways, and even though I was not a Latin American historian, his methodology saved my dissertation when I felt like I had hit a dead end. As a person, his compassion set an example of how to be a mentor who values and builds up those under his charge. But, what I loved most about him was his joie de vivre. He found any occasion to have a celebration (going-away parties, baby showers, Fridays) and did we ever have fun! The visit from the "Columbian ambassador" will always be one of the greatest events of my life! Like Monica said below, because of of him, I had such a wonderful grad school experience with a ready-made family, and you and he at the center of it. I am so grateful for him and for you.

Love,
Mary K. Robinson



Mary Robinson - April 08, 2022 at 08:07 PM

MC

“ Rod was always the historian and professor I wanted to be: fun, smart, and a kid like curiosity and love of life that maybe just maybe a few beers would quench



Matt Childs - April 08, 2022 at 07:47 PM

MH

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Monica Hardin - April 08, 2022 at 07:42 PM

MH

“ Dear Marti, how I loved him. I am broken-hearted with you. He changed the trajectory of my life and will always be in my heart. He made graduate school be a family experience with the GCP and I can never put into words what that family has meant to me. I love you and pray for peace and comfort.

Monica Hardin - April 08, 2022 at 07:21 PM



“ Rod Anderson was a terrific professor who challenged me to think about and broaden my understanding of Latin American history. He was friendly and knowledgeable and I will remember him fondly. Thank you Professor Anderson for your teaching, service, and good citizenship. All best wishes to Marti and family.
David Proctor

David Proctor - April 08, 2022 at 07:16 PM