

IN MEMORIAM
Richard Lee Warren
1931–2020



(Image courtesy of the Warren family)



(Image courtesy of Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research)

It is with great sadness that we report the passing on 12 December 2020 of Richard (“Dick”) L. Warren, our esteemed colleague, advisor, teacher, and friend who for five decades anchored the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research’s (LTRR) archaeological dating program. Countless archaeologists, dendrochronologists, anthropologists, climatologists, geologists, historians, and students benefitted from his breadth of experience, unmatched skill, high professional standards, astounding productivity, patience, and good humor. He was always willing to expand his responsibilities in enlarging the scope of dendroarchaeological theory, method, and applications in both the laboratory and the field. Faculty, staff, students, and visitors were enlightened by his readiness to describe and demonstrate the activities encompassed by LTRR’s wide-ranging activities. It would be impossible to exaggerate his contributions to the education of students and scholars in the complexities of tree-ring analysis. His equal likely will not soon be seen again.

Richard was born on 04 November 1931 as the eldest son of Dr. Aubrey W. and Zetha M. (Hendrickson) Warren of Sutherland, Nebraska. After graduating from Sutherland High School, he attended Nebraska Wesleyan University, worked as a signal electrician for the railroad, and then

enlisted and spent several years in the Air Force, with assignments in Germany and the USA. He then returned to school, attending the University of Tennessee and graduating from the University of Arizona with a degree in Anthropology in 1962. He joined LTRR in 1964 and officially retired from the University in 2004. Not one to break completely with dendrochronology, he continued to work part time at LTRR until 2015.

Richard is survived by five siblings: Jean Ganzel of Seven Lakes North NC; Barbara Hendrix of Los Alamos NM; Margaret Gail Little (and husband, James) of Los Alamos NM; Bruce Warren of Los Alamos NM; and Michael Warren of New York NY. Richard had numerous nieces and nephews, each of whom enjoyed a special and unique relationship with their Uncle Dick.

In addition to his focus on dendrochronology, Dick was an avid fly fisherman who traversed the western US in search of the elusive trout. Almost as much as fishing, he appreciated the Mexican food of southern Arizona and maintained an active interest in University of Arizona athletics.

During his career at LTRR, Dick joined John W. Hannah, Dennie O. Bowden III, and James A. Parks to form a cadre of extraordinarily skilled dendrochronologists comprising the backbone of the

archaeological dating program for fifty years. During that time, Dick became the most experienced and accomplished dendrochronological technician in the world, maintaining unmatched high levels of analytical speed, accuracy, and reliability. He developed and honed his tree-ring skills as a principal analytical contributor to the Dendrochronology of Southwestern United States Project, an NSF-sponsored reanalysis of the LTRR's archaeological tree-ring sample holdings that extended from 1963 through 1975. Since that time, he was responsible for numerous archaeological assignments and has participated in many field collection operations including archaeological sampling with LTRR's Three-Mile Draw, Tsegi Canyon, Chetro Ketl, Walpi, and Acoma archaeological projects and live-tree coring for several phases of the Southwest Paleoclimate Project. Through the years, he served as a general tree-ring dating "troubleshooter" for the LTRR, providing chronological quality control for a wide range of research extending well beyond the scope of the archaeological program. In addition to archaeological dating, his experience included analyzing bristlecone pine samples, dating and measuring living-tree samples for dendroclimatic analysis, constructing long tree-ring chronologies for Alaska and the Southwest, tree-ring dating geological samples from the Colorado Plateau, preparing samples for nondendrochronological

logical applications such as radiocarbon and biochemical analysis, and checking other technicians' crossdating and chronology construction. He also assisted in teaching laboratory sections of the Introduction to Dendrochronology course, delivering lectures to visiting groups, and guiding tours of the Laboratory. Finally, he supervised the LTRR's shop, maintaining and repairing equipment, requisitioning supplies, training individuals in the use of shop machines, and ensuring a safe working environment for the users of this facility.

Dick's contributions to LTRR and to dendrochronology cannot be overstated. During his career he analyzed tens of thousands of archaeological and live-tree samples, participated in the collection, curation, and storage of such samples, assisted in the training of countless staff personnel, visiting scholars, and students, and personally checked the work of numerous dating projects. His devotion to the processes of tree-ring dating and steadfast insistence on the highest analytical standards used in the derivation of absolutely dated tree-ring samples leave a legacy that still permeates the archaeological dating program. He set an example that all who work with tree-rings should strive to emulate. He will be sorely missed.

—Contributed by Jeffrey S. Dean
and Ronald H. Towner