

RICHARD GUY CONDON (1952–1995)



Rick Condon in Moscow.

On 7 September 1995, Rick Condon disappeared and is presumed to have drowned while conducting fieldwork in Chukotka. He, three colleagues, and five Siberian Yup'ik Eskimos from Sireniki were lost while traveling by small skin boat along the Bering Strait coast, between Sireniki and Provideniya in the Russian Far East. He is survived by his wife and research partner, Pamela Stern, and by his two daughters, Kimberly (10) and Morgan (8), both of whom also frequently accompanied him in the field.

Rick was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, and received his bachelor's degree with honors in anthropology from Rutgers College (1974) and his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh (1981). It was during his graduate school days that Rick developed an interest for Inuit and the North. His first experience with Inuit was at Holman, Victoria Island, N.W.T.,

and, although he later worked in northern Alaska and on Baffin Island, it was the people of Holman who were always foremost in his thoughts. True to arctic tradition, he had broad interests in northern peoples. His principal focus was Inuit adolescent development under conditions of modernity, but he also contributed to our knowledge of Inuit economy and ethnohistory, the impact of television and the media on Canadian Inuit, and historic arctic photography. His research on Inuit adolescence resulted in over two dozen articles and two books, *Inuit Behaviour and Seasonal Change in the Canadian Arctic* (University Microfilms International Research Press, 1983) and *Inuit Youth: Growth and Change in the Canadian Arctic* (Rutgers University Press, 1987). A third book, *The Northern Copper Inuit: A History* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1996; distributed in Canada by the University of Toronto Press), had just gone to press at the time of his death.

Upon graduation from Pittsburgh, Rick took a post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard (1981–83), where he worked on a pioneering cross-cultural adolescence project under the direction of John and Beatrice Whiting. After serving as the curator of the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum of Bowdoin College in Maine from 1983 to 1986, he received an appointment at the North Slope Higher Education Center in Barrow, Alaska. He was also a research fellow at the Center for Northern Studies, Wolcott, Vermont (1986–89), through which he directed a major grant for social research at Holman.

In 1987, Rick accepted a position at the University of Arkansas, where he held the rank of Associate Professor at the time of his death. He became editor of *Arctic Anthropology* in 1989, and served in that position until his death. He was awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for translating Russian anthropology manuscripts into English for publication in the journal. Rick was an energetic faculty member at Arkansas who taught arctic ethnology, psychological anthropology, research methods and other courses, while at the same time actively pursuing his own extensive research program. He was a popular teacher and a major contributor to his department and college. Rick and Pam entertained a multitude of visiting scholars, faculty, and students in their home; many Russian ethnographers and archaeologists have held forth among thrones in their kitchen.

Rick developed an extensive network of Russian contacts and colleagues to assist in the journal's translation program. Further, Rick was seriously studying Russian language when he died; he had made several trips to western Russia for meetings and conferences; and he was planning a major shift in his own research to include fieldwork in Siberia. Rick travelled extensively to northern anthropology and social science meetings both to represent *Arctic Anthropology* and to present his own research papers.

He regularly attended the Inuit Studies Conferences and his last major travel, prior to the Siberian coast trip, was to Finland for the International Arctic Social Sciences

Association meeting in June 1995. Rick served on a number of national research committees and boards, including the review panel for the National Science Foundation Arctic Social Science program, the Arctic System Science executive committee, and the board of the Society for Psychological Anthropology. He was the recipient of five Canadian Embassy grants and three NSF grants for northern research projects. One of the latter was a joint project with George Wenzel that compared eastern and western Canadian Arctic communities. Rick introduced one of his graduate students, Peter Collings, to Holman, where Peter spent a year collecting information for his M.A. thesis under Rick's guidance.

We will remember Rick as a dedicated scholar-teacher and an excellent campmate, as adept with his banjo as he was with his laptop computer. Professional in every way, he was a major resource to colleagues and Inuit alike, a research referee who always encouraged new ideas and younger scholars, and a promoter of multidisciplinary northern sciences. At the time of his death, he was writing the first "real" northern mystery novel, a task to which he enjoyed devoting time while visiting Holman. Besides being an exceptional scholar, Rick was a humanist who was an active supporter of Amnesty International and a parent who saw to it that all his family enjoyed northern community ties. Rick worked closely with Pam in Holman on several projects of their mutual interest, and he also took both his daughters to Holman on several occasions, where they were easily adopted into the community. Rick and Pam were close collaborators, co-authoring professional meeting papers, articles, and chapters. One of the latter was entitled "A Good Spouse is Hard to Find" (1995). Nothing better describes the relationship that he and Pam realized.

One of Rick's last articles, co-authored with Wenzel and Collings, had as its main title "The Best Part of Life" (1995). Rick was himself a scholar in "the best part of life," who built his life and career on compassion, hard work, insight, and dedication. He loved Holman, the Arctic, and anthropology with great passion. All of us, colleagues, students, and Inuit, feel Rick's absence and extend our deepest feelings to Pamela, Kimberly and Morgan.

REFERENCES

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