



# The Archaeological Society of Southern Florida

## Chapter, The Florida Anthropological Society

Volume 14 Number 11  
President: Beth Read

November - 1989  
Editor: Pat Cervi

### November General Meeting

The November General Meeting will be held Friday, November 17th at 7:30 p.m. in Simpson Park which is located at 55 S.W. 17th Road, Miami. (The park is just off South Miami Avenue, close to I-95. (Call 856-6801 for directions.)

Lisa Shuey Richardson will lecture and show slides of her work on a underwater shipwreck site in the Mediterranean, offshore from Turkey. Excavation of this site was coordinated by George Bass of Texas A & M University and was featured in National Geographic magazine and the film presented at our October general meeting.

The site lies more than 150 feet below the surface and required the diver-researchers to operate at the outer limits of free diving technique and physical capacities.

Lisa Richardson has worked as a research diver since 1977 and has participated in underwater archaeological excavations in the Mediterranean, offshore from Turkey and Italy, in the Caribbean, offshore from Jamaica and the Bahamas, and offshore Kenya and the United States.

Ms. Richardson has a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of California at Berkley, an M.A. in Nautical Archaeology from Texas A & M University and a Ph.D. in Mediterranean History/Archaeology from the

Continued on page 4

### Items of Interest

Everything is proceeding on schedule for the Harvest Festival which will be held at the Youth Fairgrounds near F.I.U. on November 18-19, 1989. Volunteers can enter their names on the sign up sheet at our next general meeting

A thank you to **Batista Barrentino** and **John Ayer** who have contributed to the Society's slide projector fund.

The annual Southeastern Archaeological Conference will be held in Tampa, Florida from November 8-11, 1989. For more information call Nancy White, Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33601; phone 813/974-2209.

The Institute of Maya Studies will host a Miami Conference for Pre-Colombian Studies, Friday, December 1st and Saturday, December 2nd at the Museum of Science. The registration fee is \$40.00.

#### Board of Directors

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#### November Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, November 17, 1989  
1489 S. Miami Avenue  
6:00 p.m.

Our regular November Board of Directors Meeting will be held at **Beth Read's** office, immediately prior to the November General Meeting at Simpson Park.

All board members are urged to attend. Interested members at large are invited and welcomed.

# Quest for secrets of ancient cultures runs in his bones - Davis probes Indian remains

by Elinor J. Brecher  
Herald Staff Writer

Well, Rose Marie Davis, start a kid out in life with bedtime stories from National Geographic, and you shouldn't be surprised when he ends up poking around ancient graveyards.

Like last week, for instance. When road work in Davie unearthed the remains of three Tequesta Indians, there was **Joseph Harrison Davis, Jr.**, hunkered down in the excavation, paint brush in hand, whisking soil off a femur perhaps 2,000 years old.

As he probed carefully around the fragments of what probably was an intact skeleton before modern earth-moving equipment scrambled it, he noticed that unconsciously, he was carving the soil into human form around the remains.

"It looks like a chalk mark around a body," said Davis, invoking the classic symbol of the coroner's craft.

Just call Joe Jr. a chip off the old

bone. His father, Joseph Harrison Davis, Sr., is in his fourth decade as Dade County medical examiner.

"It's my parents' fault that I'm doing this," joked Davis, clad only in shorts and hiking boots, the mid-day sunshine glinting off a sandy, quarter-inch crew cut that's more illusion than hair. "They met on an Indian reservation in Washington where he was an Indian Service doctor and she was a nurse."

It is tempting to imagine life with the Davis family was a lot like *The Adams Family*: "Hey, kids," Dad says, "let's all go down to the morgue."

That's not exactly the case, but it's close enough. Davis, at 22 the youngest of seven and the only boy, said his father "always encouraged us to be interested in his work." Some of his sisters did have a "morbid curiosity" about it, and he recalls

"there was actually something in the fridge once, but I think it was animal rather than human remains."

Sister Barbara - now a 29-year-old Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana - used to practice medical illustration during autopsies.

Davis liked to hang around, too, but early on developed an affinity for the outdoors and archaeological photography that probably will keep him in the field rather than behind a desk.

"I've always looked this way and I always will," he said at the Tequesta grave site, "...with dirt on my face."

His father - who worked on the forensic teams investigating the assassinations of President Kennedy and The Rev. Martin Luther King - often took the young Joe Davis to crime scenes, into the woods in search of Indian mounds or the Everglades to look for orchids.

Continued on page 3.

## Archaeological Society of Southern Florida - Membership Application/Renewal Form

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide a formal means by which individuals and institutions interested in archaeological and anthropological studies in South Florida and related areas may come together for mutual benefits.

### CODE OF ETHICS:

1. Members of the society agree to promote archaeological site preservation and conservation, to excavate only endangered sites as part of a qualified research group, to not excavate archaeological sites for the unscientific collecting of artifacts.
2. All artifacts and material recovered from society projects are the property of the society.

I hereby apply for membership in the Archaeological Society of Southern Florida:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ \$12.00 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 Family \_\_\_\_\_

Mail check or money order to: The Archaeological Society of Southern Florida, 1489 S. Miami Avenue, Miami, Florida 33131

Continued from page 2

"We never watched much TV in our house," he said, "We were always out doing something."

Like investigating corpses. Joe Jr. recalls his first, when he was about 10.

"We were living in northern Florida visiting relatives, and Dad got a call from a local police officer who asked if he'd like to take a look at this partially skeletonized (body of a) woman who was senile and was last seen wandering in the neighborhood. She was found by some hunters."

A spring graduate of Wheaton College in Illinois with a bachelor's degree in archaeology, Davis first became involved with Miami's Archaeological and Historical Conservancy while a high-school sophomore at Westminster Christian School. He started as a volunteer but began getting paid in his senior year.

For the Davie dig, he was hired by Broward County through the conservancy as a consulting archaeologist, despite his age and lack of advanced degrees.

**Bob Carr**, Dade County archaeologist and director of the Davie project, calls Davis, whom he has known about seven years, "an unusual person whatever his age. It was very obvious early on that he had the potential to make significant contributions to the field of archaeology and to the public. He's a major part of our team."

The upcoming edition of *Florida Anthropologist*, a scholarly journal that Carr says reaches "several thousand" people, will publish an article by Davis about stone axes in South Florida. Carr calls it "quite an accomplishment" for a 22-year-old...

Davis - who also raises orchids and spelunks - says he doesn't recall much about high school; he was much more interested in digging things up. And already college academics are a fading memory, "except how to speak Middle Egyptian. It was required." Davis, who's living in South Miami with his parents, plans to enter a



ANTONIO OLMOS / Miami Herald Staff

**DIGGING DEEP:** At 22, Joe Davis Jr. already is making his mark in archaeology circles, finding clues to the past in ditches and holes.

master's program at Florida State University next fall.

"My dad wants me to go into physical anthropology studying skeletal remains so I can follow in his footsteps," he said. "They never said, 'Be this or that.' They've always encouraged me to do what I enjoy, as long as I do it well..."

"If there's a ditch," said Davis, "I'll be looking down. Here, where all the rock is white limestone, if you see something shiny and black, you think it's an artifact."

The Miami Herald, Thursday, September 7,

## T-shirts - Hats T-shirts - Hats

A.S.S.F. T-shirts in red, light blue, silver and pink with a black logo, will be on sale for \$10.00 each at every meeting.

Light blue hats with a black logo are available for \$7.00 each.

Continued from page 1.

University of California at Santa Barbara. She has taught, lectured and published extensively in the field of nautical archaeology and is a member of the Institute of Nautical Archaeol-

ogy, the American Institute of Archaeology, and the Nautical Archaeology Society.

This program promises to be an interesting and exciting opportunity for our members and guests to

participate vicariously as researchers and excavators in a field of archaeology newly expanded by recent technological developments.

## Holiday Dinner Meeting

As is our custom, the December meeting consists of a dinner during which we can enjoy the company of friends, talk of future plans, re-hash the past year, and feed our faces. This year we were lucky to get the Coral Gables room on the 19th (count 'em) floor of the Doubletree Hotel (nee: Coconut Grove Hotel) at 2649 South Bayshore Drive in Coconut Grove. The view is terrific and the room is lovely.

DATE: December 15th - a Friday  
TIME: 7:30 p.m.  
COST: \$19.00 for a full London broil

dinner, salad, dessert, coffee, tax and tip included - Jackets please - tie optional

Parking is available at the hotel for a fee, or park on the street or at Merrill-Stevens just across Bayshore Drive.

Reservations are a MUST by December 10. Call Beth at her office 374-5699 or her home 361-2102.

We've had some fine dinners in the past. This one should be as good or better. Join us. We would love to have you!

Seth Lefkow



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Miami, Florida 33131



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