

RESOLUTION IN MEMORIAM

William E. Mitchell, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus of Anthropology
University of Vermont College of Arts and Sciences
1927-2022

Presented by

Dr. Luis Vivanco

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Dr. William E. Mitchell, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology in the College of Arts and Sciences, died in his Wolcott home on February 18, 2022, surrounded by his daughter Elizabeth, stepdaughter Linda, and sterling friend Subasic.

A World War II veteran from the Wichita, Kansas area, Bill moved to New York City to pursue post-graduate studies in philosophy at Columbia in the early fifties but switched to anthropology after meeting Margaret Mead. Bill was one of Mead's last protégés. They remained lifelong friends and in later years, Margaret would frequently spend summers near his Vermont home. Bill believed, like Mead, in making anthropology accessible to the general public.

Bill came to the Department of Psychiatry at the University in Vermont in 1965 and on completing his Columbia Ph.D in 1967 was appointed Assistant Professor and promoted two years later to Associate Professor before transferring in 1973 to the newly established Department of Anthropology. He quickly advanced to full professor and served as chair from 1978 to 1982. He remained with the department until his retirement in 1996. As a teacher he insisted on theoretical rigor and several of his students went on to achieve prominence in anthropology. His scholarly output covers a diverse array of topics such as gambling, clowning, warfare, witchcraft, inequality and domestic violence, testimony to the high quality of his field-notes. His magnum opus, a 500 page tome, *A Witches Hand: Curing, Killing, Kinship and Colonialism among the Lujere of New Guinea's Upper Sepik River Basin* remains a testament to the quality of his research and his highly readable writing style.

Bill was known for his warmth, infectious *joie de vivre*, and love of the outdoors. Right up until the last five years he was a dedicated skier and a hiker of Vermont's many "hills." He is survived by his former wife, Joyce, two children, Elizabeth, late of New Zealand, and Dr Edward S. Mitchell, a linguistics professor in Macao, three grandchildren, a great grandson, three stepchildren and his many friends who were deeply touched and enriched by his presence.