THEINA QUARTERLY
BRINGING HISTORY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE SCIENCE OF SHIPWRECKS

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
GEORGE F. BASS
1932-2021

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George Fletcher Bass was born in Columbia, South Carolina, on 9 December 1932. Bass studied English literature at the University of Exeter and earned a Master's degree in Near Eastern archaeology from Johns Hopkins University in 1955. As a student at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens from 1955–1957, he helped excavate the House of the Tiles at Lerna (Greece) under the direction of Jack Caskey, and worked at Gordion (Turkey) with Rodney Young. Bass served his country as a U.S. Army first lieutenant in South Korea from 1957 to 1959. In 1959, Bass was a graduate student studying classical archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania when his advisor Rodney Young urged him to partner with photojournalist Peter Throckmorton and explore a Late Bronze Age shipwreck at Cape Gelidonya (Turkey). After completing only six weeks of a ten-week diving course at the local YMCA, and having never dived in open water, newlyweds George and Ann Bass headed to Cape Gelidonya.

On behalf of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), I am writing to express my deepest condolences to the INA community on the loss of George Bass. He was a student at the American School from 1955–1957 and represented the Institute of Nautical Archaeology and Texas A&M University on the Managing Committee of the School. George built the modern field of maritime archaeology on the belief that if he could teach great archaeologists to be good divers, they could change our understanding of world history. INA projects now span the globe. George and his friends devised ways to record archaeological research underwater to mimic the accuracy of land excavations. Indeed, their methods of recording sometimes even exceed the quality of contemporary work on land. George deeply admired the American School, its structure, and its scholars. He never let anyone forget he was trained by Caskey and Young in the dirt archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age. He often quoted Rodney Young: “Just write 'The End’ one day and put down your pen” lest the goal of the perfect site report prevent the completion of any report. George was justifiably proud of his record of publication, but he was happy to admit that he learned from later criticism and correction. Just as Young pushed George to direct a new kind of archaeological project while still a graduate student, so too George never failed to give graduate students positions of responsibility setting them up as future leaders.

George helped define an entire field of archaeology, but he also helped to populate that field with kindred spirits: scholars devoted to protecting cultural heritage, to engaging with the general public, and to fostering collegial friendship.

MARK LAWALL, PH.D.
INA Affiliated Scholar, Professor, University of Manitoba, Managing Committee Chair, American School of Classical Studies at Athens

This page: George at Lerna, 1956. Opposite page: George and local Turkish workers examine a pithos at Gordion, May 1957.
I had received a letter from George just a few days ago — therefore, the news of his death came as a true shock. George and I were students together for two academic years at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece; then we were colleagues in archaeology, he at U. Penn. and I at Bryn Mawr College. Through the years our paths crossed many times, and our last encounters were in Philadelphia at meetings of the American Philosophical Society, as members. He was a highly decorated life member of the Archaeological Institute of America, a marvelous lecturer, an enthusiast, a pioneer in nautical archaeology which he founded as a truly rigorous discipline. He will be sorely missed.

BRUNILDE SISMONDO RIDGWAY, PH.D.
Professor Emerita, Bryn Mawr College

“Dear Folks, The other night, after sorting sherds in the gun-pit until quite late, I found myself completely alone on the site and the sun was far past setting. I knew that I was already late for dinner and I hadn’t even washed and changed my clothes yet, but I deliberately stayed on and in the almost black darkness, I walked slowly through the site, and walked down to my special house, with the great storage jars, six feet deep, looming beside me in the darkness. And then, for the first and only time, I had the feeling that this was a house, and people had lived here, and that 4000 years ago some illiterate person came in here with a torch to dip some oil out of the jars. And it was actually just as real as memory.”

George Bass Letter to his parents, from Lerna, 3 July 1956

This page, from top to bottom: George’s diary from Gordion, Penn Museum Gordion Archive: NB-67 (1957); George at Ascrothrinth, 1955. Opposite page: George sorting sherds in a WWII gun emplacment at Lerna.

George F. Bass

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In 1960, George Bass was a newlywed and graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania when he joined Peter Throckmorton to investigate the Late Bronze Age shipwreck at Cape Gelidonya, Turkey. Their small team demonstrated that, by applying many of the same principles and methodologies used on land, diving archaeologists could achieve the same standards of accuracy as terrestrial archaeologists. Between 1961 and 1964, Bass and his colleagues excavated to completion a seventh-century Byzantine ship at Yassıada, Turkey; several Yassıada team members provide their reflections below. Upon receiving his doctorate in 1964, Bass joined the classical archaeology faculty at Penn and was promoted to associate professor in 1968. The 1960s were a foundational time for nautical archaeology, largely because diving archaeologists spearheaded major innovations in underwater excavation and the publication of the first scientific reports.

When Peter Throckmorton first marched into Rodney Young’s office to tell him about the wreck at Cape Gelidonya, Young’s response was to summon George Bass, then a graduate student, and tell him: “Learn how to dive!” Young’s statement resonates with me because he had the same ecumenical attitude when I proposed measuring tree-rings at Gordion. George never looked back. When he excavated the 7th-century Byzantine ship at Yassıada, he farmed out the topics to several of us, so that a seminar term-paper I wrote on the fishing weights became a chapter in the book. This procedure was the opposite of Jack Caskey’s, another mentor, whom George brought to Penn and who advised us “Never publish anything before you are 40. You won’t know enough.” George’s other students form a Who’s Who of Nautical Archaeology, and they all got the same GFB head start.

One piece of advice George gave us in his seminars (and I had six of them) was to write our term papers as if they were for final publication. I used that advice over 30 years for all my graduate students at Cornell. The first paper I wrote for George was on the small sites of the Anatolian Neolithic (now it takes six books to sum them up). He gave me an A, but his one negative comment was that I had referred to Machteld Mellink as “Miss Mellink.” He thought I should have omitted the “Miss.” Every time I read a German text which refers to her as “Miβ Mellink,” I chuckle.

In 1972 George and Ann took a deep breath, and he resigned his Associate Professorship at Penn and moved to Cyprus to be a lot closer to the action. The trouble was that the action (Turkish/Greek fighting) was not quite what he had expected. They lost almost everything, including Ann’s piano. For a while the future looked grim, but then along came.
Texas A&M University, which offered to adopt the Basses to add a classy cachet to the A&M underwater research program. Younger members of INA may think it was always this way: a secure home in College Station, a splendid research facility in Bodrum, scholarships, endowed chairs, Voskos I and II, the submersible chairs, Virazon facility in Bodrum, and a pioneering trio was born. (The story of underwater archaeology around the globe.)

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1960s

GEORGE F. BASS

PETER IAN KUNIHOLM, PH.D.
Founder, Augusta Dendrochronology Project
Professor Emeritus, Cornell University

In the spring of 1964, when he was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, George Bass received a typewritten letter from an electrician in the tiny town of Denver, about 60 miles west of Philadelphia. The electrician said he built ship models in his basement at night, and he had read George’s article in National Geographic on the Yassıada shipwreck. He proposed building a model of the ship and suggested they meet to discuss it. George, inexplicably, agreed. At the time, George had only conducted two underwater digs, and he hadn’t given much thought to models of those ships. After all, neither had yielded much wood. This electrician, though, seemed to think he could take a few hull fragments from the Yassıada wreck and use them to extrapolate an accurate model. A few weeks later, the electrician showed up in George’s office with a four-foot model of an Egyptian ship that had taken him 12 years to build as he painstakingly attempted to recreate the original construction process in miniature (it’s now on display at INA headquarters).

Why, I asked George years later, did he agree to the meeting? The man, after all, was no scholar. He didn’t even have a bachelor’s degree.

“I didn’t know anything about Egyptian models or ships at that time,” George told me. “I was just starting out in this, too.”

The modeler, of course, was my father, Dick Steffy, and George not only invited him to build a model of the Yassıada wreck, but put him in touch with Fred van Doorninck, and a pioneering trio was born. (The...
Yassıada model took years to complete, but it's now on display in Bodrum.) George and my father shared a love of ideas, and they weren't afraid to think big. Their friendship and professional collaboration spanned 43 years, until my father's death in 2007. When George created INA, he was embarrassed to offer my dad a job because the pay was miniscule, and the benefits nonexistent. My dad took it anyway. By then, he knew George's drive would lead to bigger things. A few years later, the Basses found themselves in tiny Denver, too, and George and my father hunched over our dining room table, the room thick with cigarette smoke and stale but ever-present coffee as they hammered out plans to bring INA to Texas A&M. George was animated when he got excited. His voice would rise; he'd talk faster, he'd wave his arms. I didn't know exactly what was happening in that room, but the energy that emanated from it was palpable.

When the university balked at hiring my father because of his lack of degrees, George stood firm. If A&M wouldn't hire him, then INA would go somewhere else. A&M, of course, relented.

The gratitude that my father, indeed, my whole family, felt for that support, as well as all the other opportunities that George created for us, are beyond measure. I think about my unborn grandson (due in November!), my children and their spouses, my wife, all their accomplishments as well as my own. None of it would have happened without George Bass agreeing to meet with an unknown ship modeler. Others can expound on George's legacy you have the audacity and tenacity to do such a thing, you are drawn to others who are willing to take the leap with you. George once told me that my dad’s decision to quit the electrical business and reconstruct ships full time inspired him to leave Penn and form INA. But the inspiration was circular. Without George’s inspiration, my father would never have made his move in the first place. That’s what happens when dreamers collide. Their dreams feed on each other. But unlike so many dreamers, George Bass knew how to make the dream reality. He didn’t just dream the dream, he lived it. And in doing so, helped countless others realize their own. LOREN STEFFY

Author of The Man Who Thought Like a Ship

"But why study the history of ships at all? Are waterlogged wooden hulls, usually fragmentary, worth the time, effort and money we devote to them? How do they compare to Greek temples, Roman amphitheaters, medieval castles and Mayan pyramids? To answer this, try to imagine the course of human history without ships.”

Civilization Under the Sea (1989)

We in nautical archaeology are so lucky to have had George Bass. He went to Cape Gelidonya in 1960 not because of an interest in Byzantine shipwreck archaeology was not to be taken seriously. George helped change this in a masterful way and so became known as the father of nautical archaeology. But there was the fact that many archaeologists and historians in those days thought that shipwreck archaeology was not to be taken seriously. George helped change this in a masterful way and so became known as the father of nautical archaeology. But there was a downside. More and more, he had to turn over the demands of scholarship to close colleagues and gifted students. Having to leave the life of a scholar was a real disappointment for him. I know this because he recently told me so. But he set for us all the highest standards of scholarship and devotion to our profession. He was an inspiration.

This page: George at Yassıada. Opposite page, top to bottom: George and Dick Steffy; George at Cape Gelidonya.

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1960s

GEORGE F. BASS

1967 and 1969, he excavated the neighboring Late Roman shipwreck in order to test a system of stereo-mapping from a submersible. At the end of the 1969 season, George declared that he had accomplished his goal and would probably return to the much simpler life of a land archaeologist.

In the meantime, George had earned his Ph.D. degree, published a final report on the Cape Gelidonya excavation, became a faculty member of the Classical and Pre-Classical Archaeology Program at the University of Pennsylvania, had among his students quite a number who were to go on to become great scholars, and began to publish articles marked by a high level of persuasive and literate scholarship. It was widely assumed that he would someday succeed the great Rodney S. Young as head of the Program, and I distinctly remember talk that he would eventually become Director of the University Museum. Yet, in 1973, he left his meteoric career at Penn, founded INA, and led family and some close colleagues off on some kind of communal existence in Cyprus and Turkey excavating shipwrecks. I personally think that perhaps the wonderful things that close colleagues had uncovered at Kyrenia and Porticello pushed him over the edge.

George would now face many challenges, but without doubt the greatest of these was the fact that many archaeologists and historians in those days thought that shipwreck archaeology was not to be taken seriously. George helped change this in a masterful way and so became known as the father of nautical archaeology. But there was a downside. More and more, he had to turn over the demands of scholarship to close colleagues and gifted students. Having to leave the life of a scholar was a real disappointment for him. I know this because he recently told me so. But he set for us all the highest standards of scholarship and devotion to our profession. He was an inspiration.

FRED VAN DOORNINCK, JR., PH.D.

Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University
In 1972, George Bass and a handful of close friends founded the American Institute of Nautical Archaeology (AINA). In 1973, Bass resigned from a tenured faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania, packed up the family, and headed to Cyprus. But the Cypriot coup of 1974 forced the Basses to return to the U.S. and in 1976, AINA found an academic home at Texas A&M University. As a direct result of the INA-Texas A&M affiliation, the Nautical Archaeology Program (NAP) was established as the first academic program in the U.S. to offer graduate courses in the archaeology of ships and history of seafaring. Before the end of the decade, INA archaeologists had surveyed deep water wrecks in Lipari (Italy) and directed excavations in the York River (Virginia) and at Şeytan Deresi and Serçe Limanı (Turkey). In 1979, the AINA name was shortened to the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) to more accurately reflect the international nature of the institute’s staff, board, and projects. In the same year, Bass was presented with the National Geographic Society’s LaGorce Gold Medal.

In 1975, while a graduate student of mechanical engineering at Bosporus University (formerly Robert College) in Istanbul, I chanced upon a short note on a bulletin board posted by Tuğan Turanlı, a fellow student. The poster mentioned wanting summer volunteers for an underwater excavation in Turkey to be directed by Professor George F. Bass! I reread the poster several times to fully grasp its content. Because of my passion for archaeology, I had read about George and his fantastic underwater archaeology projects in National Geographic magazine and his books. Without hesitation, I volunteered for the entire summer. After a brief interview with Donald Frey (INA President, 1982-1988), who at the time taught physics at Bosporus University, I was accepted as an engineer to operate, maintain, and repair diving compressors and other equipment during the excavation. Even so, this provided a unique opportunity for me to meet George Bass in person and to work and learn from him the art of shipwreck excavation!

Tuğan and I, along with several other students, spent the entire summer in Bodrum preparing for fieldwork while waiting for the excavation permit to be issued by the authorities in Ankara. I had assumed I would meet George in Bodrum but learned later that he would arrive only after the excavation permit arrived. In Bodrum, I imagined that I would be working in a Jacques Cousteau-style research center replete with state-of-the-art diving equipment, and perhaps even a large research vessel with a helicopter pad. Instead, Don Frey directed me to a dilapidated barn-like shed with a broken door and pointed to the pile of rusted machinery and diving equipment heaped in a corner, instructing me to whip them into shape for our upcoming excavation!

The machinery looked like second-hand items salvaged from a junk yard, and most of the air tanks and double-hose regulators were outdated models from

“Before there were farmers or shepherds, there were seafarers. Before people could make pottery or work metals, before they even lived in houses, they could cross expanses of open water...there can be no meaningful study of the past, therefore, without some knowledge of the history of the watercraft that helped shape our globe as we know it.”

Beneath the Seven Seas (2005)
"If only one ship had sunk in the Mediterranean each year since the earliest known voyages, there would be 10,000 wrecks to explore. But more than one ship has sunk each year. Many more. In single years hundreds of ships have gone down. Fishing boats, ferries, warships, merchantmen, pleasure boats - they must dot the world’s seabeds by the hundreds of thousands, or even millions."

Proposal for the Foundation of an American Institute of Nautical Archaeology (1972)

GEORGE F. BASS

1970s

The early 1960s! Together with the other students, I dived into the pile in earnest and began testing the refurbished equipment in the waterfront by the medieval Crusader castle that housed the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology. Our excavation permit was finally issued in September, and we eagerly awaited a mythical diver in Devil’s Creek, but the place was infested with swarmy yellow jackets and most of us were stung at least once. Each morning after breakfast, George held a briefing immediately before we rowed out to our wooden diving barge. Just a week into the excavation, noticing our two-person tents that we lived in for the next six weeks. There were no devils at Devil’s Creek, but the place was infested with swarmy yellow jackets and most of us were stung at least once. Each morning after breakfast, George held a briefing immediately before we rowed out to our wooden diving barge. Just a week into the excavation, noticing my great interest in our work, George asked if I had ever considered studying archaeology. I said I had but decided to follow my father’s profession. Afterwards, he asked point blank if I would study archaeology under him. I was astonished to receive such a kind and generous offer from this great underwater archaeologist. After receiving my graduate degree two years later and having served a mandatory 18-month stint with the Turkish Navy, I found myself in College Station in August of 1980 ready to start a new field under the greatest of nautical archaeologists! The fall of 1975 was the beginning of my life-long friendship with George, who became my teacher, mentor, and colleague. Working with George, I learned that a research-based scientific shipwreck excavation was not about fancy and expensive equipment, but rather in the approach to fully understanding and systematically answering all the questions associated with the site. I shall forever be grateful to you, George, for your sage advice in helping me safely navigate through stormy seas, and for always being there to direct me to safe shores when the sailing got rough.

CEMAL PULAK, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 1987; Ph.D., 1990), INA Vice President (1994 – present), Professor, Texas A&M University

...and most friendly person. After completing our preparations, we headed off to the Gulf of Keramos to a place known as Sıyrat Deresi (Devil’s Creek) to excavate a Middle or Late Bronze Age shipwreck George had located during a survey in 1973. We pitched our two-person tents that we lived in for the next six weeks. There were no devils at Devil’s Creek, but the place was infested with swarmy yellow jackets and most of us were stung at least once. Each morning after breakfast, George held a briefing immediately before we rowed out to our wooden diving barge. Just a week into the excavation, noticing my great interest in our work, George asked if I had ever considered studying archaeology. I said I had but decided to follow my father’s profession. Afterwards, he asked point blank if I would study archaeology under him. I was astonished to receive such a kind and generous offer from this great underwater archaeologist. After receiving my graduate degree two years later and having served a mandatory 18-month stint with the Turkish Navy, I found myself in College Station in August of 1980 ready to start a new field under the greatest of nautical archaeologists! The fall of 1975 was the beginning of my life-long friendship with George, who became my teacher, mentor, and colleague. Working with George, I learned that a research-based scientific shipwreck excavation was not about fancy and expensive equipment, but rather in the approach to fully understanding and systematically answering all the questions associated with the site. I shall forever be grateful to you, George, for your sage advice in helping me safely navigate through stormy seas, and for always being there to direct me to safe shores when the sailing got rough.

This page: George and Ann at Sıyrat Dereesi.

It is a difficult task to convey the enormous influence that George had on the lives of many, many people. His keen intellect and perseverance have produced an unprecedented body of research in his field. For me, it was his National Geographic articles that captured my attention and fostered initial enthusiasm for the field. This interest has carried through to this day. I was at The Submarine Base in Connecticut in 1974 when my Commanding Officer mentioned a letter he had received from a George Bass seeking a physician to join the excavation at Yassada, Turkey. After approval from the U.S. Navy, I contacted him at their residence on Cyprus where he, Ann, and their two young sons lived at that time. When I met George in Bodrum, the excavation permit was not yet in hand. I drove with him to Ankara and observed the dept manner in which he interacted with government officials, thus obtaining the permit. The drive up and back initiated a friendship, an experience many have had. I discussed with him air saturation diving, living in habitats on deeper excursions that we had been conducting in the Navy. I described that this research had the potential to increase the efficiency of underwater archaeology. It won’t surprise anyone that he had considered this approach. It seemed to me as an outside observer that there wasn’t much that escaped his attention if it had the potential to improve techniques related to underwater archaeology.

In 2001, two colleagues at the University of Iowa (one he knew from the College of Law and one from Anthropology) and I invited George to campus for five days to serve as the Ida Beam Lecturer, a prestigious award. He gave many scholarly presentations to students and to the public. He had a marked ability to engage the audience. His enthusiasm was infectious. When he was in Iowa City, he researched a family member who formerly taught at the University and included some of this material in a family history of great depth and breadth. He was an expert scavenger of information and always remained engaged in world affairs and many scholarly disciplines. For me personally, as I know is true for many across the country - and the world - the fondest times I associate with INA were the visits to Ann and George in College Station. Ann warmly welcomed me. Her background in music and her wide-ranging interests made for good conversation with the two of them. I will miss that and the times George and I retreated to their guest room to listen to an opera from his large collection he thought I would enjoy. INA has lost a towering figure.

ROGER WILLIAMSON, M.D.
INA Associate Director (2007 – 2012), INA Director (2012 – present)

Many people have already composed eloquent eulogies to George Bass. Instead of restating his many accomplishments, I want to describe my half-century relationship with George as just one example of how he established the field of underwater archaeology while launching many people on successful careers. Simply put, had it not been for George it is unlikely that I would have become an underwater archaeologist.

I first met George in 1972 at Fort Fisher, North Carolina, where he gave the keynote address at a maritime heritage conference organized by our small avocational archaeology group. At that time, having no formal archaeological education, I was excited to have the opportunity to seek advice from the Father of Underwater Archaeology. George was very gracious and generous with his time, offering advice and encouragement. That weekend I took George on his first statewide dive, to the rocky site of the Civil War blockade runner, Ella. He told us afterwards that he’d gained a new appreciation for the difficulties of “blackwater” archaeology.

George had recently resigned from the University of Pennsylvania to create the American Institute of Nautical Archaeology (AINA). We briefly discussed his plans and dreams for the new Institute. When he left, I thought it unlikely that I’d see him again soon, but the following summer George invited me to serve as sonar operator on AINA’s first expedition: a survey of the southern Turkish coast. That extremely successful survey changed my life and cemented my desire to become a maritime archaeologist. George explained the importance of adhering to strict rules of ethics, professionalism, and publication. I began taking night classes and George continued to encourage and guide me.

In early 1976, George accepted Virginia’s invitation for AINA to conduct its first field school on a British shipwreck in the York River that I had helped to locate. George invited me to participate in...
that 1976 field school. He also helped Virginia prepare a grant application for a second site survey in 1978 for which I became the field director. That one-year grant began my decade-long direction of research in the York River that culminated in the complete excavation of the British transport Betsy from within a steel cofferdam, an enhancement of George's prototype from the first field school.

Through George's continued support, Texas A&M conducted a second York River field school in 1980, resulting in the positive identification of another site as HMS Charon, the largest warship in the British fleet. Several Nautical Archaeology Program graduates also served on the Yorktown staff.

As George continued to mentor me, we developed a close friendship. I spent many pleasant hours with George and his wife, Ann, and every trip to INA headquarters was an inspiration. On any given visit, I was likely to encounter archaeologists working in remote sites around the world, and to see both old traditions and new technologies being applied to analyses of material culture and hull reconstruction.

George's vision had become a reality. I miss George terribly, but my memories will always keep him alive for me as will my continuing association with the "INA family" that he created.

George was a brilliant communicator. He once said that when he writes, he puts everything else aside, and sits down with a blank sheet to compose. He was an intuitive master of words. He bridged the river of knowledge by simplifying complex content and using compelling language and photographs. George engaged drama and felicity, capturing interest, respect, and imagination from his audiences. He shared generously with those who appreciated his ability, purpose, and style; he was forthright with everyone in his editorial observations, criticism, and guidance.

The discipline of Nautical Archaeology is fortunate that George Bass pioneered the way, for here he directed his vision, talents, wisdom, and words, and in so doing, launched the scholarship, imaginations, and careers of generations of aspiring minds around the world.

I am indebted to George for inspiring and teaching me. I feel like a family member of INA, having participated in Old and New World projects (Cayman, Jamaica, Spain, Yucatan, Mexico, Turkey, USA), and having been an INA Research Associate since 1990.

One sunny, breezy day in 1977, George arrived at the Texas Historical Commission in Austin, where we first met. He smiled and spoke graciously until whisked inside for a meeting with the State Marine Archaeologist. As a young archaeologist and new scuba diver, freshly returned from my first summer field project off South Padre Island, I was fascinated to learn of his pioneering practice of archaeology beneath the sea and to discover that he was teaching right here in Texas — having founded a new Master's degree program in Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University.

George said yes when I asked to commute weekly to study with Richard Steffy in the methods of shipwrights and the building of watercraft. At the time, I was studying for an M.A. in Latin American Studies at the University of Texas, with a thesis on Mexica-Aztec watercraft. Years later I was over the moon when George invited me to write the

A Plea for Historical Particularism in Nautical Archaeology (1983)

George suited up for a dive at Serçe Limanı.

George, John Broadwater, and Frank Bailey at Fort Fisher, NC.
"I know that Shakespeare used only a quill pen, but just think what he could have done if he’d had a PC!"

first chapter on the earliest watercraft, for Ships and Shipwrecks of the Americas (1988). I stepped up to the challenge and delighted in conversations during editorial reviews in his living room. Ever since, we exchanged Christmas greetings and occasional notes.

In 1988, I entered the Ph.D. Program at Texas A&M, and George chaired my dissertation committee on Cayman’s 1794 Wreck of the Ten Sail, in cooperation with Kevin Grimian. He included my chapter on the disaster in Beneath the Seven Seas (2005) and in 2019 wrote a review for Beneath the Seven Seas on the disaster in Texas A&M’s Wreck of the Ten Sail. Despite our excitement, George subsequently confirmed that Texas A&M University made him an offer too good to ignore. Years later, I joined an INA expedition to Jamaica. While exploring the Spanish shipwrecks on Pedro Bank and off Port Royal, I pondered resigning my State position. The opportunity to set up East Carolina University’s Maritime History and Underwater Archaeology program with Professor Bill Still was well in the works. After consulting with George, I resigned and took the ECU position. One recommendation George made that I disregarded was the most important. He suggested setting up a non-profit before joining the university so independent sound counsel George offered. I later followed his sage advice and established the Institute for International Maritime Research. IIMR provided the means to work with INA in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, and Panama. When Max Guerout requested INA assistance to investigate the Confederate commerce raider CSS Alabama sunk off Cherbourg (France), George recommended an alliance with Bill Still and me, resulting in 18 seasons investigating the wreck site. Concurrently, I was involved in shipwreck research in Bermuda. In 2014, the National Museum of Bermuda published a book on the island’s maritime history and underwater archaeology combining those topics with early treasure hunting. After sharing Shipwrecked with George, I received the most complimentary letter of my career from the person I respected most: George F. Bass. A mentor, colleague, and very dear friend, George will remain with me forever.

PEGGY LESHIKAR-DENTON, PH.D.
Institute of Nautical Archaeology (AINA)
Director, Cayman Islands National Museum

During five decades of working in underwater archaeology, I collaborated with numerous individuals who impacted my career. None more so than George Bass. In May 1962, a National Geographic magazine appeared in my high school library. Authored by Peter Throckmorton, it documented investigation of the “Oldest Known Shipwreck” and its Bronze Age cargo carried before sinking off Cape Gelidonya, Turkey. For the first time in my lackluster public education, an imagination fueled by Jules Verne and Mike Nelson seemed to coalesce into an exciting real life. Whoever archaeologist George F. Bass was, his exploration of that shipwreck off the Turkish coast hit home. My revelation smoldered for years while pondering resigning my State position. I followed George Bass’ Mediterranean endurance with Carl Clausen and Mike Nelson seemed to coalesce into an exciting real life. Whoever archaeologist George F. Bass was, his exploration of that shipwreck off the Turkish coast hit home. My revelation smoldered for years while pondering resigning my State position. I followed George Bass’ Mediterranean endurance with Carl Clausen and professors like Dr. George Bass who knew what sound counsel George offered. I later followed his sage advice and established the Institute for International Maritime Research. IIMR provided the means to work with INA in the Dominican Republic, Bermuda, and Tunisia. I received the most complimentary letter of my career from the person I respected most: George F. Bass. A mentor, colleague, and very dear friend, George will remain with me forever.

GORDON P. WATTS, JR., PH.D.
INA Affiliated Scholar
Tidewater Atlantic Research

"underwater archaeology” was debated by historians and archaeologists. In 1972, during his visit to North Carolina to dive on the blockade runner Ella, I met George. After suffering a myriad of questions about my career path, he suggested a backdoor entrance to the field through the Florida Division of Archives History. Thanks to George, my underwater experience with Carl Clausen in Florida’s prehistoric and shipwreck archaeology proved the way for a position as North Carolina’s first “underwater archaeologist.”

During my tenure, George and Dick Steffy visited North Carolina to consider locating the recently formed American Institute of Nautical Archaeology (AINA) at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. Despite our excitement, George subsequently confirmed that Texas A&M University made him an offer too good to ignore. Years later, I joined an INA expedition to Jamaica. While exploring the Spanish shipwrecks on Pedro Bank and off Port Royal, I pondered resigning my State position. The opportunity to set up East Carolina University’s Maritime History and Underwater Archaeology program with Professor Bill Still was well in the works. After consulting with George, I resigned and took the ECU position. One recommendation George made that I disregarded was the most important. He suggested setting up a non-profit before joining the university so independent research could be carried out. It became clear what sound counsel George offered. I later followed his sage advice and established the Institute for International Maritime Research. IIMR provided the means to work with INA in the Dominican Republic, Turkey, and Tunisia. I received the most complimentary letter of my career from the person I respected most: George F. Bass. A mentor, colleague, and very dear friend, George will remain with me forever.

No other mentor, colleague, and friend inspired me as much as George F. Bass. A mentor, colleague, and very dear friend, George will remain with me forever.

This page: George at Yassada. Opposite page: George at Şeytan Dereki.
George was a force of nature. He certainly was a major influence on my life. I first heard of George in 1970, during my first year as an undergraduate in archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. One of my professors, knowing of my budding interest in underwater archaeology, brought to my attention George's 1967 final excavation report on the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck. This was a revelation to me. One could do good archaeology underwater on a shipwreck? Who knew?

George had me at hello. He had created the discipline of nautical archaeology: the study of shipwrecks, their contents, and their contribution to human patrimony. It is impossible to conceive of history without watercraft and yet, to a large degree, that was the situation before Cape Gelidonya. Prior to that watershed excavation, which marked the first time diving archaeologists worked on a shipwreck underwater, any interest in them could be best defined as salvage or treasure hunting. The world owes a debt of gratitude to George for demonstrating the potential inherent in shipwrecks.

While it seems unimaginable today, George faced considerable headwinds during the early years...from other archaeologists. Some scorned George's efforts, describing him and his colleagues as "jock divers." George's view won out, of course: today watercraft are studied around the globe by nautical archaeologists.

One reason for this animosity was that George upended the prevalent theories of European maritime dominance in the eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age. In doing so, George based his conclusions on hard evidence from his careful study of the personal items found at Gelidonya and a reevaluation of numerous scenes of foreign tribute portrayed on wall paintings in the tombs of nobles at Thebes in Egypt.

George came into my life again in 1984. For my Ph.D., I was determined to write a dissertation dealing with ships and seafaring in the eastern Mediterranean during biblical times. While my Chair was willing to entertain that topic, she conditioned it on my finding someone who could advise on the nautical aspects. That same year, Bass spearheaded the purchase in Bodrum (ancient Halicarnassus), Turkey, of a four-acre hilltop which is now home to INA's Bodrum Research Center, a complex of offices, conservation laboratories, dormitory, and research library.

The 1980s brought INA's excavation (1984-1994) of the extraordinary Late Bronze Age shipwreck at Uluburun, Turkey. The Uluburun wreck (ca. 1320 B.C.) provided proof that the complete and scientific excavation of a single shipwreck could define or redefine what is known about a given period of history. For Bass personally, the Uluburun shipwreck proved the thesis that he had laid was 30 years earlier regarding the central role of Syro-Canaanite merchants in Bronze Age trade. Excitement generated by the Uluburun shipwreck helped Bass secure private donations that were matched by Texas A&M University to establish ten endowments supporting NAP faculty and graduate students. In 1986 Bass received the Archaeological Institute of America's Gold Medal for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement and the National Geographic Society's Centennial Award in 1988. That same year, Bass spearheaded the purchase in Bodrum (ancient Halicarnassus), Turkey, of a four-acre hilltop which is now home to INA's Bodrum Research Center, a complex of offices, conservation laboratories, dormitory, and research library.
“I would hate to see wrecks excavated by those ignorant of the languages, histories, and cultures of the people who built and financed and sailed the ships.”

A Plea for Historical Particularism in Nautical Archaeology (1983)

For me, George and the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M that he created have always been the role model and paradigm of what a great scholar and a great graduate program should be. I really owe him my entire professional career, and whatever positive effect I've had on my own students is only a reflection and an echo of the positive effect he had on me, and on all the other student who came to study with him. George was an inspiration and a great mentor who became a friend; although I did not have the opportunity to see him and be in touch as often as I would have liked. I visited him and Ann at their home in College Station two years ago, it was great to reminisce and catch up. I was looking forward to doing so again, the next time I traveled to Texas. I am really heartbroken to know I won't have that chance. I send my heartfelt condolences to Ann and the rest of George’s family.

STEVE VINSON, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 1987)
Professor, Indiana University

I met George in Fall 1987, in his office at the Annex where INA was headquartered. His face was splotchy and red, dotted with nickel-sized blisters from the topical cream his doctor applied to detect sun damage. Both the encounter and his appearance were intimidating. After all, this was George Bass, the legendary archaeologist whom my former professor, Peter Throckmorton, praised endlessly. Peter encouraged me to study underwater archaeology and sent me to Texas with the mandate, “Tell George you want to join his excavation of the Bronze Age shipwreck.” This I did, most enthusiastically. When I finished, George sat staring. Some of you know that stare, the one that simultaneously disarms and unnerves you. Then, after a long and discomforting silence, he leaned across his desk. “You know, Jerome, most first-year students wouldn't presume to ask me directly to join the team. They'd suggest it to Cemal or demonstrate through their coursework that they'd make a good team member.” Classes hadn't yet begun and already my career in underwater archaeology was over. Or so I thought.

But, of course it wasn’t. It just beginning. “Hello, I’m George Bass. Welcome to the Program. Look around you. Changes are the person next to you won't be at graduation. The cream rises to the top. Any questions?” Mine wasn’t the
only class to hear that short but assertive greeting, the one that inclined us to sit quietly in stunned silence, pondering whether this new undertaking was really worth it. However terse his salutation, it was the perfect introduction. Though wracked with momentary uncertainty, we had unknowingly glimpsed into how George thought and wrote. We would soon learn that is how he wanted us to think and write: precisely, factually, declaratively.

What glorious learning-filled years those were: “A word without the proper diacritical mark is simply misspelled,” he would instruct. And, more personally, “Jerome, surround yourself with people who know more about what you’re doing than you do,” and “If you’re not willing to do this with nothing more than a rowboat and a teaspoon, you’re not ready.”

I have only fond memories of George. That isn’t to say we never disagreed. We did. Often. But he listened thoughtfully, reasoned carefully, and decided resolutely and always respectfully. Sometimes, INA Directors would ask what it was like to work with George and whether we got along. “Challenging and wonderful,” was my reply to the first question, and “Yes. Always,” to the second.

Alas, you deserve to know how the story of our initial meeting (and the awkward “stare”) ended. It went like this: “You know, Jerome, most first-year students wouldn’t presume to ask me directly…but you’ve shown initiative, and I like initiative. Let’s see how it works out.”

Farewell, my teacher and friend. Thank you. To live in the hearts and minds of those we leave behind is not to die. Görüşmek üzere, George Bey.

JEROME HALL, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (Ph.D., 1996) INA President (2000-2002) and INA Affiliated Scholar, Associate Professor University of San Diego

I remember well his fondness for opera, as he would invite us over each month for Tosca, Otello, The Magic Flute, Carmen, all on the laser disk and sound system that only Cemal knew how to install. But the last aria has been sung, and the opera house is now dark and quiet. A most gracious host at home. A forbidding presence to those who were unprepared in his seminars, and even to those who were prepared. His was a rare combination of vision and relentless drive to succeed that only his passing could still.

My memories are of him laughing as I teased Robin Piercy in the pilot house of the Virazon with jokes about how awful English cars were. And another morning at Uluburun where he took pains to warn us not to grow complacent when diving on such a beautiful day. He had seen such days turn dark before and did not want anything to happen to us. I am a better scholar and person for having known him.

BRENDAN MCDERMOTT, M.A.

This page: George and Faith Hentschel examining an oil lamp from the Uluburun wreck. Opposite page: George using an airlift at Uluburun.
Bodrum, Turkey

A small fishing village becomes an international center of underwater archaeology

BUILDING THE BRC

“Today, as you walk inland through the town of Bodrum, leaving the Castle behind, passing the waterfront restaurants, you go along a narrow road, up an embankment and cross a busy highway. On the other side you turn up another narrow road and a broad, modern, stone building appears. Through the glassed-in foyer you see a figure standing perfectly still in the suit of a deep-sea diver like something out of the movies. This building is the Bodrum Research Center of INA – the house that George built.”

MARK LAWALL
Chair of Managing Committee, American School of Classical Studies at Athens

BUILDING THE MUSEUM

Many years have passed since July 1962, when you allowed me to join the Yassıada shipwreck excavation near Bodrum. Being with you as a young archaeology student at 22 taught me a lot. I remember well how you used to wake up at 6 am every morning and then wake us up by blowing through a pipe like a trumpet, smiling all the time. You meticulously prepared the daily dive plan and you never favored yourself in the scheduling. You used to say, “last diver, best diver” as an encouragement to the diver who came out of the water as the sun was setting.

You had hundreds or thousands of safe dives because you always followed the rules of diving. You were also friends with the fish who ate worms that came out of the sand during the excavation and swam with us as we approached the surface. Once when a new excavation team member didn’t know the rules, he shot a grouper. You and he had an unpleasant conversation about the fish and you told him, “scuba diving and shooting fish with a spear gun is like hunting lions in a zoo.”

In decades of working together I’ve seen you yell in anger only once. It was when a sailor tried to kill a seal with his rifle. Although he tried to defend himself by saying, “The seal is tearing up our fishing nets and eating our fish,” you saved a life and it made an impression on me. When I became Director of the Museum of Underwater Archaeology in the Bodrum Castle, I opened the castle gardens to birds and built nests for them. I turned the castle into a bird’s paradise. You were the reason. The world’s largest underwater archaeology museum in Bodrum came into being because of you. I saw you one day when I was telling some guests about the jars in the amphora exhibit. We greeted each other and I introduced you to them as “the father of underwater archaeology.” You said, “I’m its grandfather now.” Everyone applauded.

In the foreword to my book Underwater Archaeology in Turkey, published in 1975, I referred to you as “the one who raised me.” Not only did you raise me, but you gave me joy. Knowing you and working with you have given me strength. Thanks to you, I succeeded.

DR. T. OĞUZ ALPÖZEN
Director, Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology

THE BASS HOUSE

In 1990, George and Ann Bass built a house directly adjacent to INA’s nascent Bodrum Research Center (BRC). As the architect of their Turkish home the Basses chose Ahmet “Şans” İğidirligil, who had been a student member of the Serçe Limanı Glass Wreck excavation (1977–1979). After Serçe Limanı, Şans earned a Ph.D. from Vienna Technical University and returned to his native Bodrum, where he is today a well-known, respected, and active architect, having designed and built numerous stone houses in Bodrum and neighboring Yalıkavak.
For 20 years, the house in Bodrum was a summer retreat for the Bass family, and an occasional winter hide-away for George while on sabbatical. After 2010, trips to Turkey became more difficult and the Basses spent less and less time in Bodrum. In 2013, the Basses decided to sell their home to INA, and the Bass House became a permanent and welcome addition to INA’s BRC.

Today the Bass House serves as the primary residence of BRC Director Tuba Ekmekçi and her husband John Littlefield, INA’s Diving Safety Officer. Tuba and John are attentive and appreciative caretakers, having added various trees and plants over the years and created a memorial garden for Joe, the Basses’ family cat. In their words, “It was about, as I was excited, nervous, and anxious. At the end of the lecture, as he was in the hall talking to people, I went to him with a good friend of mine who spoke English very well (in case I needed help due to my anxiety). George asked some questions about who I was and what I was doing. He took the time to get to know a student who was very persistent (and probably annoying)! In that moment, I knew I had to work with him and his team, which today is the INA family for me. He opened a door for me by not rejecting my first approach and trusted me enough to direct his dream center, the BRC, for the last 13 years. I will miss him greatly! Thank you very, very much, George Bey.”

TUBA EKMEKÇİ LITTLEFIELD, M.A.
Director, Bodrum Research Center

GEORGE AND CLAUDE
For more than 20 years I have been part of INA and TINA (the Turkish Foundation for Underwater Archaeology) which actually was founded for complementing INA’s activities in Turkey while also supporting underwater archaeological activities in general. Having spent many years in the industrial sector and allocating significant time and energy to philanthropy, underwater archaeology has become one of my major passions.

George Bass met Claude Duthuit when they were both in their late 20s back in 1960, diving in the Bosphorus, Istanbul. Both were more or less the same age and exhibited great admiration and respect to one other. George being the pioneering archaeologist who played a critical role in the creation and evolution of underwater archaeology and Claude having been chosen for the Legion of Honor, which was founded by Napoleon, to recognize his meritorious service. Claude’s father (also a George) was an art historian and curator at the Louvre Museum. My first meeting with George Bey was in 1988 in the Izmir Turkish-American Association building where he was giving a lecture. This was the beginning of my begging George Bey and Cemal Pulak to join the INA team. Throughout the entire lecture, I was practicing how to greet him and how to convince him to take me to the Uluburun excavation. I don’t even remember what was his lecture was about, as I was excited, nervous, and anxious. At the end of the lecture, as he was in the hall talking to people, I went to him with a good friend of mine who spoke English very well (in case I needed help due to my anxiety). George asked some questions about who I was and what I was doing. He took the time to get to know a student who was very persistent (and probably annoying)! In that moment, I knew I had to work with him and his team, which today is the INA family for me. He opened a door for me by not rejecting my first approach and trusted me enough to direct his dream center, the BRC, for the last 13 years. I will miss him greatly! Thank you very, very much, George Bey.

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During the 1990s, INA continued to grow and forge partnerships with organizations including the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. In Turkey, construction of INA’s Bodrum Research Center (BRC) was finalized and the BRC was dedicated just as the Uluburun Late Bronze Age shipwreck excavation drew to a close. Following Uluburun, Bass continued to direct or co-direct INA shipwreck excavations in Turkey, including the Byzantine wreck at Bozburun (1995–1998) and the Classical Greek wreck at Tektaş Burnu (1999–2001). In each case he handed over the responsibilities of day-to-day decision making and publication to his former students. In Israel, an INA collaboration with Haifa University led to excavations in Tantura Lagoon (1994–1996) and in Egypt, INA archaeologists conducted shipwreck surveys in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, leading ultimately to the establishment of a conservation laboratory in Alexandria. In 1999, Bass was presented with the J.C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology, the most prestigious award granted by The Society for Historical Archaeology.

George was the reason I wanted to go into nautical archaeology. He taught me how to be a scholar and helped my career many times. He was always willing to write a letter of recommendation or put in a good word for me, and I wouldn’t be in the field today without his encouragement and support.

He embodied the best of scholarship: endless curiosity, detail-oriented research, the tenacity to study a problem for as long as it took to find a solution, and the willingness to change his mind if a better interpretation arose. You have only to look at his former students to see how well he passed that idea along.

In the classroom, he could fill students with terror. He did not suffer fools well. I remember George staring bored at the classroom ceiling while some poor grad student droned on and on through a tedious presentation. He would let them go for a while, then cut in with an incisive question that usually left them ready to get on Highway 6 and head out of town, never to return.

He knew the right way to motivate students. One time I wore a “Beavis & Butthead” t-shirt to class. Afterwards he remarked casually to me, “You know, Mr. Stewart, when I was a graduate student we wore a suit and tie every day.” I got the message, and while not affluent enough to afford suits, I didn’t show up in that t-shirt again.

My fondest memory of George is a simple one of chatting with him while walking to his Classical Archaeology class. By the time I arrived in College Station, Bass was already a senior scholar, yet he would always ask me for my opinion in areas where I had read more recent scholarship than he had. That lesson had a profound impact on me, and I try to follow his example.

DAVID STEWART, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 1997; Ph.D., 2004)
INA Affiliated Scholar
Associate Professor, East Carolina University

I have reels of memories of George from the classroom, opera nights, and excavations. There is one, however, that keeps coming back to me. It was in Albania in August 1994 in a rundown hotel in Tirana. George, Claude Durhaut, fellow graduate student Elizabeth Greene, and I had been in Albania for a week to investigate the possibilities of a coastal survey. After a meal at the best Italian restaurant in Tirana, we four retired to George’s room for a night cap and to recap the week before departing the next day. As we passed around a bottle of whisky, we talked excitedly of the future. But soon George and Claude were also talking of the past, of Turkey in the early 1960s and getting emotional as both were wont to do. As the night wore on, they reviewed their history together, from Cape Gelidonya to Uluburun, all but forgetting Liz and I were there, the two of them caught up in their decades of shared experiences, the good, the bad, and the ugly. To be audience to that retelling of their friendship’s ups and downs, to the expression of respect and adoration both clearly had for the other, and to hear how many times all their plans could so easily have gone off the rails, was a privileged
George F. Bass

1990s

“I hope to inspire some of these students to begin the often dull but essential task of beginning major catalogues of materials, on which some may spend large parts of their lives, so that in future years archaeologists will be able to identify ceramic containers or cannons within a matter of days instead of years or never.”

A Plea for Historical Particularism in Nautical Archaeology (1983)

Like many of us, I owe the fact that I have enjoyed an involvement in nautical archaeology for most of my life primarily to George Bass. I was a graduate student at Princeton, working on a Ph.D. in Classics in the early ’90s, and was in the habit of attending the guest lectures in Classics or Classical Archaeology that were a regular feature of life there. Professor Bass, as I thought of him then, long before he became George or George Bey to me, gave a presentation about the Uluburun shipwreck in one of the larger auditoriums, and I was mesmerized. I had only recently begun to participate in archaeological excavations of land sites and to understand the value of the information available in the material record to complement the study of the ancient texts in gaining insight into the ancient world. Professor Bass showed me the additional value of shipwrecks, how they were individual time capsules, the ships and all of their associated artifacts having been created before the fixed point in time at which each ship sank. I was super excited about the huge academic value I could see in nautical archaeology, but also a little chagrined that I had chosen Classics for my Ph.D., and I felt that I was too far along that path not to finish it. So, after the lecture, thinking I had nothing to lose, I stood in the line of students and faculty wanting to meet Professor Bass and thank him for his presentation. And when it was my turn, I told him how interested I was in getting some formal training in what he had pioneered, and asked him if it might be possible for me to apply to the Nautical Archaeology Program after finishing my Classics Ph.D. He was completely gracious and encouraged me to apply. I felt immediately his sincerity; it was clear he wasn’t just Humoring some overeager graduate student to get rid of me but was genuinely interested in what I had already done and what more I wanted to do academically. I resolved that night to apply, joined the NAP in 1997, and have been involved in nautical archaeology and INA ever since. Although I never chose to pursue an academic career, which I’m sure George with his exacting standards would have preferred, it has been a great joy to participate in so many nautical archaeological projects over the years in parallel to my “day job,” and I owe that joy in large part to George Bey.

I will forever be grateful to George Bass for inviting me to participate in the excavations at Tektaş Burnu. The experience was, quite frankly, one of the best of my professional career: working in a spirit of camaraderie with INA legends, building camp, diving to the limits of my abilities, processing finds, and living on a Turkish coastal cliff with a front row seat where I could watch a master do his work and train the colleagues and students who would continue his legacy. Not everyone gets such a chance. I did. And I owe the experience to George. Thank you from the depths of my soul, George Bey. Rest in peace, my friend.

William Murray, Ph.D.
Professor, University of South Florida

I cannot count the ways in which George Bey changed my life. Our relationship began in 1997 when I wrote a paper about the ancient Greek helmsman for his graduate seminar in Classical Seafaring. He liked the paper and invited me to assist him with the excavation of the Classical Greek shipwreck at Tektaş Burnu, Turkey. That excavation was the first of many opportunities that came my way because of his confidence in me, which sometimes exceeded my confidence in myself. He taught me about scholarship, collegiality, philanthropy, motivation, and teamwork. Most of all George Bey believed that archaeology and research should be fun. He knew that people are capable of amazing accomplishments when they are passionate and he never missed an opportunity to nurture passion among his students, his supporters, his colleagues, and especially the schoolchildren who wrote to him about archaeology. I know I am not alone in saying this, but George Bey was like a father to me and I am deeply grateful to have earned his trust.

Deborah Carlson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Texas A&M University
After two decades as a Distinguished Professor at Texas A&M University, George Bass retired from teaching in 2000. The following year, he was named a recipient of the National Medal of Science for lifetime achievement in scientific research, the highest award bestowed in the United States. It was at this time that the two-person submersible Carolyn and catamaran Millawanda joined the INA fleet in Turkey. Even in retirement, Bass directed INA excavations at Tektaş Burnu (1999-2001) and Pabuç Burnu (2002-2003), and led several shipwreck surveys using Carolyn. In 2003, Bass was invited to join NOAA’s Ocean Exploration team on a dive to the Titanic to assess its condition. As a Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Bass maintained his connection to Nautical Archaeology Program students by continuing the tradition of hosting, with wife Ann, monthly opera nights in their home. Bass delivered hundreds of public lectures about the past, present, and future of nautical archaeology, and in 2010, because of the generous support of INA donors, the Archaeological Institute of America established the George F. Bass Lectureship.

He was truly a giant of the field! I am deeply saddened by his passing, of course, but do celebrate his legacy – the field of nautical archaeology and the Institute of Nautical Archaeology. I had the privilege to be in the last two classes he taught at Texas A&M University and to dive with him at Tektaş Burnu. I shall always treasure this and be grateful for the opportunities I had been given. My deepest condolences to Mrs. Bass! At the end of that spring semester of ’99, at his house in Bodrum, Dr. Bass was returning papers and commenting on them. Finally, only my paper was left to be handed back. He smiled and said, “It is rare for me to be taught something I did not know by a student.” At this, my nose started pointing vertically to the sky until Dr. Bass continued with a twinkle in his eye, “I have, of course, heard of the Punic Wars. But thanks to Mr. Batchvarov, now I have also heard of the PAnic Wars...” That particular, unknown to history war had been caused by 72 sleepless hours, AutoCorrect and Kroum in joint action. I am thankful that I knew him and had the opportunity to take classes and go in the field with Dr. Bass. May he rest in Peace!

KROUM BATCHVAROV, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 2002; Ph.D., 2009)
INA Affiliated Scholar
Associate Professor, University of Connecticut

George’s unparalleled accomplishments and accolades in the field of Nautical Archaeology are well known and publicized. What I’ll remember most about George is that, despite his legendary status, he was never aloof or dismissive; he treated everyone with respect and was generous with his time and attention. He answered all the many inquiries he regularly received, most probably from strangers, taking the time to respond promptly, thoughtfully, and sincerely. When he engaged with you in person, he was always completely present to you and made you feel important to him. George respected his students and colleagues by demanding their best and pushing them to achieve it. George didn’t tolerate pretentiousness, especially from his fellow academics. His genius was being able to express the results of his meticulous research and even the most complex of
issues in clear and simple terms, while never talking down to people, whether they be a public audience at one of his lectures or academic readers of his scholarship.

But I cannot think of George without immediately thinking of Ann. George was a force of nature, a giant in the field, but would have been but a shadow of himself if not for Ann, his amazing wife and life partner. Ann was with George from the very beginning—at Gelidonya—until the very end, supporting him, assisting in his work, advising him, mollifying him, raising their family… George was at his very best with Ann at his side. Thank you, George, for all you did for me: for encouraging me to apply to NAPA; for opening so many doors; for inviting me to excavate the Pabuç Burnu; for supporting me to participate at Tektaş Burnu; for publishing at The Institute in Bodrum, relaxing in camp after a hard day’s work—was always a delight. I will miss you dearly and remember you fondly always. Rest in peace.

Ann, my heartfelt condolences to you, Alan, and Gordon. Hopefully, this outpouring of memories and celebrations of George’s life and the impact he had on so many will ease the pain of your loss in some small way.

MARK POLZER, M.A.
INA Research Associate
Research Associate, Flanders University

Shelley’s Ode to the West Wind evokes George’s nature, his awakening of the ships with coral-crusted cargoes that glimmer beneath the sea, and his love for the wind that inspired his novel Meltem, a statement of his prowess as both archaeologist and storyteller. Those who did not wake from his summer dreams The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, La4 by the cool of his crystalline streams. Beside a punishe ile in Bala’s bays.

No sail of the ancient deep old palaces and towers Quivering within the wave’s intense day;
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers. So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! As we bid farewell to George, we know that his spirit, with the consistency of the Etruscan breezes and the fervor of a winter storm, will continue to drive us on.

ELIZABETH GREENE, PH.D.
NAP Graduate Student (1992 - 1995)
INA Affiliated Scholar
Associate Professor, Brock University

As we bid farewell to George, we know that his spirit, with the consistency of the Etruscan breezes and the fervor of a winter storm, will continue to drive us on.

JUSTIN LEIDWANGER, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 2000)
INA Affiliated Scholar
Associate Professor, Stanford University

It is heartbreaking to learn of Dr. Bass’ passing. I would like to extend my condolences to his wife Ann, his family, friends, and the professional community.

George was a force of nature who moved all of us fortunate enough to remember him. Famed as the father of underwater archaeology, considered by many to be a humanist at heart, he was a master of rhetoric, technology, and literacy. It is amazing to read all the tributes and the stories of how he affected people’s careers and lives over 60+ years. My experience is not much different. Dr. Bass was long retired when I studied in the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M University, but I was fortunate enough to dive with him at the Tektaş Burnu shipwreck excavation in 2001: he was my drive buddy for a few dives, and we excavated a grid together. It was my first experience in which I actually “excavated” under water (plenty of surveying before). He seemed so old back then (he was only 68), and he seems so young looking at photos from that season now. As an emeritus, he also taught the class “Old World, New World and Real World” with Felipe Castro in 2004. He told us some of the unwritten narratives of the beginnings of nautical archaeology and its formative beginnings (real world). I think most of us were glued to his lectures in that class—I sure was.

Then, the opera nights that he and Ann organized on Fridays — how amazing to think that they instilled in generations of underwater archaeologists a love for opera and provided a very welcome cultural and social event in a college town like College Station. Dr. Bass built an academic discipline and a vibrant community, which he continued to foster in retirement. It did not matter whether you were a professional or an aspiring student, he played a role in our experiences, and he was a great inspiration and mentor for so many of us. Me included. Rest in peace, Dr. Bass.
2010s

2010 marked the 50th anniversary of the seminal Cape Gelidonya expedition that set in motion many of the events described on the preceding pages. Appropriately, a Return to Cape Gelidonya expedition took place that reunited key members of the original team including George and Ann Bass, Claude Duthuit, and Waldemar “Vlady” Illing. In the years that followed, mobility issues forced Bass to curtail his international travel, but he remained involved with INA and a regular attendee of INA’s annual board meetings. It was not uncommon for colleagues in the Nautical Archaeology Program to help Bass celebrate his birthday each December. In 2011, Bass earned the AIA’s Bandelier Award for Public Service to Archaeology, and in 2012 he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2018, Bass was named one of TIME Magazine’s Great Scientists:

December. In 2011, Bass earned the AIA’s Bandelier Award for Public Service to Archaeology, and in 2012 he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2018, Bass was named one of TIME Magazine’s Great Scientists:

To me, first he was a Big Name. I was an undergraduate majoring in Bronze Age archaeology the year the Uluburun shipwreck was discovered. I learned that underwater archaeology was a thing, and that he was The Person. I went to College Station to study with The Name in hopes of getting to work on the wreck.

There I found him a Hard Master. He didn’t suffer fools lightly. He put me in my place. But he permitted me to work on the wreck, and that was what mattered. During those early Uluburun summers, he morphed into a Human Being, flawed like all of us. And yet he remained Big as he watched me and work his dreams into realities, and I rode the exhilarating wake in which he swept so many of us.

Over time I came to embrace the hard lessons he had taught. The one about form being equally as important as substance, the vital need to communicate our work to a wide audience. The necessity of publication and how generosity in sharing material, even especially with graduate students, furthers that end. I add layers of publication and how generosity in sharing material, even especially with graduate students, furthers that end. I add.

Generous to my thinking of him. In May 2010, I first realized the enormity of his accomplishment at The Beginning, half a century earlier. I sat with him in a small, motorized boat, tossed by waves, scouting the cliffs of the cape that ended at Gelidonya, looking for a place to set up camp for the anniversary season of exploration. The cliffs were really very tall, I felt very small, and we found no welcoming cliffs better than the sliver of his honeymoon beach. The audacity of the original undertaking struck me like a thunderbolt and George became a Giant.

I can honestly say that he has remained a Giant in my eyes ever since. A gentler, kinder Giant as time went on, though never losing his keen intelligence and ability to put his finger directly on the essential question that needed to be asked.

It has been my great pleasure and privilege to have jumped into the orbit of the Big Name, to have learned from the Hard Master, to have worked with the Human Being, to be part of re-examining The Name, to have been re-inspired to have learned from the Hard Master, to have worked with the Human Being, to be part of re-examining The Name, to have been re-inspired...

In 2010, Nicolle Hirschfeld and I were co-directing the Cape Gelidonya excavation project that was carried out as part of the “50th Anniversary of Underwater Archaeology in Turkey.” This was a special project because three generations of archaeologists in this field were together with the first-generation founder of underwater archaeology, George. During this excavation there were many problems of both a bureaucratic and technical nature: the weather was disruptive, the current was extremely strong, and our excavation was interrupted constantly. The days were stressful, and our minds were preoccupied with all of the difficulties.

One evening after drinking two raks, George told us the story about how he started the Cape Gelidonya Project. He told us how he came from to Turkey by ship, and how he stayed at a cheap hotel in Istanbul for one dollar. After several nerve-wracking days in Istanbul, they were finally able to get the excavation permit from Ankara. But the next morning there was a revolution in Turkey. This was in 1960. They were all ready to go, but suddenly there was a curfew. Despite this, they found a way to go to Gelidonya with all the equipment and start the excavation. The technical and risky part occurred when they got to the...

NICOLE HIRSCHFELD, PH.D
NAP Graduate (M.A., 1990)
INA Affiliated Scholar Professor, Trinity University

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The dream of an institute of nautical archaeology has become a reality far beyond my wildest expectations."

Beneath the Seven Seas (2005)

George E. Bass

The difficulties, George overcame the stress really were. In 1960, despite all how small our current worries and scientific shipwreck excavation. They anchored on the wreck with a simple sponge boat, using it as a diving platform, and excavated the wreck using newly developed SCUBA. During the conversation, I was very curious about the decompression table, and I asked George about the diving program. He explained that they were decompressing like 5 minutes in the morning and 12 minutes, and the decompression time between dives; the bottom time was 30 minutes in the afternoon. When we asked him why they were decompressing like that, he said nobody knew what they were doing, and we all laughed together. The best part about this story is that nobody knew what they were doing, and we all laughed together.

What George accomplished was a turning point in the world of science. He developed a love for this field in Turkey, turning point in the world of science. He has always defined INA as a family of archaeologists, neither of my parents knew much about the field (admittedly, most people don’t). My dad took it upon himself to learn more about this fascinating subject and went down to our basement to peruse the National Geographic magazine’s mom has been collecting since the ’80s. By the time I moved to Texas, my dad had learned all about George Bass and his pioneering work and was really excited to find out that George was still living in town and regularly inviting us (the grad students) over for opera nights. Two years later (2015), I was lucky enough to have my parents visit me in Vermont where I was helping coordinate and presenting at the INA annual board meeting. My parents were graciously invited to come aboard a boat tour with the INA group and as luck would have it, my dad managed to find himself sitting right next to George Bass. Though I suspect he may have been a little starstruck, my dad, being the personable guy he is, very quickly had George (the expert storyteller) recounting his tales of adventure and underwater archaeology in the Mediterranean. Their conversation lasted nearly the entire boat ride.

Since I found out that George Bass passed away, I’ve been thinking of all of my fond memories of him, especially of his advice to “have a sense of urgency” which I’ve thought about often throughout my career and continue to use as a motivational tool. Despite my own many wonderful interactions with George, this boat ride on Lake Champlain where he and my dad sat down and chatted like old pals easily tops the list of my favorite memories of this great man.

CAROLYN KENNEDY, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 2012; Ph.D., 2020)
Institutional Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University

I met George in 2007. He invited all the new students to “Opera Night” at his home, as had happened for many years prior and for several years after, where he and Ann graciously hosted a motley crew of students generally more interested in meeting and interacting with George than in opera, although many of us came to acquire the taste. George cultivated those relationships and through opera nights, we became friends. Three years, and many operas later, George invited me to be the DSO for the 50th Anniversary return trip to Cape Gelidonya, and even funded additional training for me. It was at Gelidonya in 2010 that George made his last dives, and although his diving at that time made me very nervous, at the same time I was very excited to have been a part of the project and his dives with two other original members of the 1960 Gelidonya team. Like many other people, he offered me experiences I may not have had otherwise, and I will always think of those nights on the sofa watching operas at the home of George and Ann every time I hear an aria or see an opera.

JOHN LITTLEFIELD, PH.D.
NAP Graduate (M.A., 2012; Ph.D., 2020)
INA Diving Safety Officer

George Bass

 начальная экспедиция была ошибкой научного поиска

An archaeological expedition is complicated under the best of circumstances. How can we know the depth of the ancient sea? To what extent can our knowledge of the ancient sea be accurate? These are all questions that George Bass asked himself, and he spent many years of his career trying to answer them. George was a true expert in underwater archaeology, and he spent many years of his career trying to answer them. George was a true expert in underwater archaeology, and he spent many years of his career trying to answer them. George was a true expert in underwater archaeology, and he spent many years of his career trying to answer them.

HARUN ÖZDAŞ, PH.D.
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Associate Professor, Dokuz Eylül University

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The INA Team

I first heard of Dr. Bass after visiting the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology. After reading his book, Archaeology Beneath the Sea, I learned of his many accomplishments. When I later met Dr. Bass and so many others that were written about in that book at an INA Board Meeting, I was impressed by how they were all such great friends after 50 plus years. On the way to the first Board Meeting as a Director, I greeted Dr. Bass in the stairwell. He turned and said to me abruptly, “When are you going to start calling me George?” So many of us are friends because of what George started. Let’s honor George by keeping these friendships alive and continuing what he started: nautical archaeology.

We first met George and Ann at a dinner meeting arranged by the Bockmans, friends of George and early supporters of INA. The Bockmans knew of our interest in scuba diving and then learned of our frequent trips to Central America for visits to Mayan sites and for archaeological support. “You must meet our friends the Basses!” And we did. And we became enthralled with the activities of INA. Ann, George, And Don. And Cemal. And all the others. As Raynette summarizes the INA organization: “I never met a group of people so interesting, so intelligent, so dedicated, and so underpaid.” Thank you, George and Ann! So many wonderful memories of shared excavations, shared pleasures, shared travels, shared meetings, and even shared problems. What a great legacy! May we all be privileged to continue our support and enjoy the combined effort.

My then-fiancée Dabney and I met then-junior faculty member George Bass at his office at the University of Pennsylvania to apply for slots on a field project he was planning. Like so many others experienced with George, he became a part of our lives from that first meeting. George accepted us to the project right away (who knows why), then showed us Yaounda drawings on which he was working. Then, within minutes George was confiding in us about how he knew that he needed to stop smoking if he was going to keep diving, how frustrated he was at the lack of support by some of his colleagues at Penn, whether he should give up nautical archaeology and work on land in order to fit in better at Penn, whether he should seriously consider going to Cyprus or try to negotiate a position at another U.S. university, and so on. We were fascinated and awed by him then and ever since. The field project was on land, of all things, and a disaster worthy of an Agatha Christie novel, through no fault of all things, and a disaster worthy of an Agatha Christie novel, through no fault of any of the others. As Raynette summarizes the INA organization: “I never met a group of people so interesting, so intelligent, so dedicated, and so underpaid.” Thank you, George and Ann! So many wonderful memories of shared excavations, shared pleasures, shared travels, shared meetings, and even shared problems. What a great legacy! May we all be privileged to continue our support and enjoy the combined effort.

Above all, he wanted me to know that, if we lost, he did not take care about money – he only wanted to protect Ann’s piano and his library. Somehow both survived.

When we overlapped at Uluburun or at Bodrum, we always ended up talking long into the night. George had some magnetic force about him. Over the past 20 years or so, I cannot count how many times I have been to meetings or presentations in Mediterranean countries about something concerning archaeology, the sea, or shipwrecks, and when at the slightest mention of INA or George or anything close to either subject, people have proudly pulled out a scrapbook or photo album to show me that they had had some letter, postcard, or email from George, or had posed for a picture with him. The first couple of times, I was amused by this, but then I realized it was
INA Board

GEORGE F. BASS

a testament to how influential George was. We will miss him.

JIM GOOLD
INA General Counsel (1992 – present)
INA Chairman of the Board (2004 – 2005)

I have been honored to be an Associate Director with INA and George since the 1990s. It had been a wonderful adventure, with trips to Turkey and an opportunity to dive on the Uluburun wreck site. To be with George was always great fun and very enlightening. He was a great leader and true scholar. He and Ann made a wonderful team. We will greatly miss him and wish the best for INA in the future.

ALLAN CAMPBELL, M.D.
Associate Director (1992 – present)

I first became aware of George Bass while reading Peter Throckmorton’s book, Shipwrecks and Archaeology, in 1972. I really wanted to meet George. I had a modest interest in underwater archaeology, having lived in Lucinto on the bay of Pozzuoli in 1952 where I explored the Roman ruins of Baia using US Navy rebreathing gear. At the time I was 13 years old.

An acquaintance who knew George said meeting him was unlikely as he was keenly of treasure hunters. Years later in the late 1980s I had an invitation from Don Frey, then in Bodrum, to visit. I did, and this was the beginning of a long and exciting relationship with INA. I experienced George’s wonderful traits as described by so many, including bringing a good friend to dinner in Bodrum with George and being bored to tears by their avid interest in opera. I participated in a number of INA’s annual shipwreck surveys, one of which was the highlight of my diving career.

INA had charted a Turkish boat with a captain and his wife. My son and I, together with Don Frey and then-Board member Marty Wilcox surveyed Yalıkavak Harbor searching for a reported shipwreck. Marty was an engineering genius and had cobbled together a side-scan sonar he built, with a GPS and an Apple computer, to provide real time bottom images with constant positioning. We in fact discovered a wonderful wreck and dived on it from Virathos late one afternoon. Seeing the wreck with an almost perfect mound of amphorae looming up on the bottom was a most thrilling experience. Returning to Virathos, Don Frey punctured my balloon with the observation that the amphorae were “only 2nd century BC Rhodian types, and they had enough of those.”

Despite the fact that I was certainly not, nor going to become a nautical archaeologist (I did acquire a master’s degree in historical archaeology in part thanks to a letter of recommendation from George), George was always cordial. We had many conversations, wide ranging over the years. As with so many other people with whom he interacted, George imparted a rich and exciting dimension to my life, for which I shall be always grateful.

CHARLES CONSOLVO
Associate Director (1991 – 2006)

I first met George and Ann in 1967 in Bodrum, the first of four summers in Turkey that included Yassuada, Savle Limani, and even a complimentary dive at Uluburun! As a recent specialist in diving medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, I was delighted to dive into an exciting adventure that would fast become the World of George, the new respected field of underwater archaeology. George was unwavering in his determination that archaeology underwater replicated the same high standards of land excavations. Little did I know that 1967 would be the beginning of many new friendships and a stunningly new field of scientific exploration.

This began many years of a close friendship with George, his family, and INA. From the beginning our relationship was family oriented including Ann and their boys. Thank you for your amazing contribution to human history and your treasured friendship. Our friendship was very special. He’s left a void. I look forward to keeping the relations strong with Ann, Gordon, and Alan for years to come.

JOHN CASSILS, M.D.
INA Director (2002 – present)

George was our founder and our inspiration, and he will be missed all over the nautical archaeological world. I first met him in 1989 at Uluburun and since then have been a sincere admirer and friend, visiting him and Ann often in Bodrum. I will always remember him and miss him. I know that a great part of INA history is gone, but it will live on with the enthusiasm and care that all of us will continue to devote to it in the future.

DANIELLE FEEENEY
INA Director (1980 – present)

As I sit in my library, George, you may no longer be here now but you are never far away. Your work, AINA’s and INA’s and the results of a lifetime of co-operative effort gaze down from the shelves around me. Hard won pieces of research and publication that give me the energy to continue moving forward, and I take great comfort and pleasure in the memories that they bring. They are the lasting results of over 50 years of our association on many projects, surveys and excavations which allowed us to live the dream and now lives on through INA and all the generations who have been inspired by its work.

ROBIN C. M. PIERCY
INA Archaeologist and Engineer (1975 – 2008)
Excavation Director, Mombasa, Kenya (1977-1980)

"It is not good archaeology to work site after site without the commitment to continue the project for as long as it takes... No true archaeologist would undertake the excavation of a site without being willing to commit as many years to it as necessary, even if it were that person’s entire life.”

After the Diving is Over (1990)