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HARRY W. LAWTON

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All of us associated with Malki mourn the passing—on November 20, 2005—of Harry W. Lawton, who was one of the founders not only of Malki Museum, but of Malki Museum Press and the *Journal of California Anthropology* as well. Lawton, who was born on December 3, 1927 in Long Beach, California, became a familiar figure on the Morongo Reservation in the 1950s, at a time when he was still a reporter and feature writer for the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*. In 1965, he began a long career at the University of California, Riverside, where he became in turn the editor and then the senior editor in the Department of Plant Sciences; in 1985 he became the Management Services Officer in the office of the Dean of the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, a role in which he served until his retirement.

While he was still working at the *Press-Enterprise*, Lawton began to hear accounts from Indians on the Morongo Reservation of what has been called the “last great manhunt” for a Native American fugitive who was wanted for murder nearly 100 years ago, and began writing his non-fiction novel, *Willie Boy: A Desert Manhunt* (1960), which was based on three years of research that included interviews with surviving posse members. The novel was eventually made into the movie, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here* (1969), for which Lawton served as technical and historical consultant. The novel was reprinted in 1976 by Malki Museum Press.

In 1960, the book received the James D. Phelan Award in Literature for the best nonfiction book of the year, as well as the Southwest Literature Award for a historical work. Although Lawton was accused in 1994 by James A. Sandos and Larry E. Burgess of being careless with the facts and of inadvertently expressing hatred for Indians in the Willie Boy story, they were forced to withdraw the accusations when Lawton successfully sued for libel.

Lawton was instrumental in founding the Malki Museum on the Morongo Indian Reservation in the mid-1960s, and served on its Board of Directors from

the beginning; he became Vice-Chairman of the Board in 1980. He was subsequently involved in the formation of Malki Museum Press, and became Managing Editor in 1974 (a position he held until his retirement for reasons of health in the 1990s). During that same year, in conjunction with Dave Fredrickson, Michael Kearney, and Philip J. Wilke, he founded the *Journal of California Anthropology* (later the *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*), which is published twice a year under the auspices of the Malki Museum Press editorial board, in cooperation with a succession of departments of anthropology at various California institutions.

Lawton served periodically between 1974 and 1990 as Ethnohistorical Consultant to the Archaeological Research Unit at the University of California, Riverside, working on various environmental impact studies in the Yuha Desert and Riverside areas. He also served as a consultant on history and ethnohistory for two environmental impact reports prepared by Worth Associates, San Diego, as well as for two cultural resource management studies conducted by Cultural Systems Research, Inc. of Menlo Park, California.

Lawton's interests were catholic and covered a wide variety of subjects, including Southwestern history and ethnohistory, the origins and dispersal of agriculture, the history of citrus and photography, Riverside's Chinatown, poetry, and some literary history and criticism, and he was the recipient of numerous awards and honors during his lifetime for his scholarly contributions in these areas. During the 1960s, Lawton began to work with Lowell J. Bean on two booklets for Malki Museum Press on the Cahuilla Indians; their collaboration eventually resulted in a seminal paper entitled “Some Explanations for the Rise of Cultural Complexity in Native California with Comments on Proto-Agriculture and Agriculture,” which had its origins in a graduate seminar paper that Lawton wrote for a 1968 class at U.C. Riverside that explored the possibility that the Indians of southern California had developed an agricultural complex

derived from the Colorado River area prior to contact. He continued to develop his ideas on early agriculture in articles co-authored with Lowell J. Bean and others; in 1976, for example, Lawton, Wilke, DeDecker, and Mason produced "Agriculture Among the Paiutes of Owens Valley," and in 1979 Lawton and Wilke collaborated on "Ancient Agricultural Systems in Dry Regions," which appeared in a volume that Lawton co-edited.

When Malki Museum Press acquired the rights to Carobeth Laird's *Encounter with an Angry God* in 1976, Lawton wrote the foreword to the book, which he edited, and pointed out the profound significance to California anthropology of the papers of ethnographer and linguist John Peabody Harrington. He also wrote the foreword to Laird's second book, *Mirror and Pattern: George Laird's World of Chemehuevi Mythology*, which was published posthumously by Malki Museum Press in 1984.

Lawton's colleagues on the Malki Museum Editorial Board have fond memories of working with him. He was always there to advise, encourage, and collaborate, and was known for pursuing complicated issues (such as those involving race, rank, or profession) in ways that helped others. He will be sorely missed by family and friends; the entire Malki community was indeed fortunate to have received so much of his thoughtful attention and advice over the years.

Lawton is survived by his wife Georgeann; his sons, George, Daniel, Jonathan, and Richard; his daughter, Deborah Golino; his sister, Jean Belle Hamner; and six grandchildren.

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