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### Warren G. Moon, 1945-1992

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# Warren G. Moon, 1945–1992

BRUNILDE S. RIDGWAY

Warren G. Moon, Professor of Classics and Art History, and Art History Department Chair at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, was born on 2 March 1945. He died suddenly, of an accidental fall, on 23 June 1992, at the shockingly young age of 47, bringing to an end a promising and vibrant career as a teacher, scholar, and editor.

Warren combined a strong Classical background with an art historical training that included special interests in connoisseurship and museology. His M.A. thesis (for Tufts University) concerned, in fact, the use of the digression in Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus, whereas his Ph.D. dissertation in Classical art and archaeology (for the University of Chicago, 1975) dealt with *Late Black-Figure Vase-Painting and Athens at the Turn of the Sixth Century*. These two fields of interest—Classics and art—provided the main themes of a symphonic life textured with many rhythms and sounds. An obituary in *The Wisconsin State Journal* called Warren Moon “a Renaissance man.”

An adopted child, Warren was at the same time an exuberant friend and a very private person. His first language—that of his adoptive parents—was French, and gave him an early start into the world of international culture. He was Ford Foundation Travel Fellow (1968), Ryerson Fellow at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (1969–1970), Summer Seminar Fellow of the American Numismatic Society in New York (1969), and NDEA Fellow of the University of Chicago (1967–1970). After his doctorate, he was Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities of the University of Wisconsin–Madison (1975–1976), NEA Fellow at the Art Institute of Chicago (1979–1980), and NEH Fellow at the Center for Judaic Studies at Brown University (1988–1989). He was Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan–University of Wisconsin Program in Florence, Italy, in 1985.

Warren Moon began teaching in 1970 as an Instructor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Promoted to Assistant Professor in 1973 and Associate Professor in 1975, he rose to the rank of full Professor of both Classics and Art History in 1980, and assumed the chairmanship of the Art History Department in 1990. A lively and inspiring teacher, his classes were known for their enthusiastic tone and their references ranging from art and music to languages, history, and

literature, as well as the sciences. He took a strong personal interest in his students, especially the graduate students whom he followed as friend and mentor through the years, and of whom he was touchingly proud.

Thoroughly involved in the ancient vase collection of the University of Wisconsin's Elvehjem Museum, Warren Moon was Research Curator of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1975 to 1980, a consultant for various art museums, and an expert witness for the IRS and the State of Wisconsin in several art fraud cases. His publications dealt not only with ancient, but also with modern art, especially of Wisconsin artists in a variety of media. He wrote on Attic and Corinthian vase painters, on Etruscan votive heads, on numismatics, iconography, illustrations of early tragedy in Athens, and Plotinus's art theory. His most recent research, on the iconography of the Synagogue frescoes at Dura Europos, illustrated another of the many directions taken by Warren's enthusiastic pursuit of knowledge.

All these accomplishments, however, to my mind take second place to one major activity in which Warren Moon excelled: as promoter of the diffusion of knowledge through the painstaking organization of excellent exhibitions and symposia, and through the production of outstanding publications, of which he was editor. The exhibition on vase painting held at Chicago resulted in a major catalogue, *Greek Vases in Midwestern Collections* (1980). The symposia on ancient iconography and on Polykleitos attracted carefully selected groups of international speakers who advanced original theories and took opposing positions in an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation unsurpassed at professional meetings. The book of essays from the first event, *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (1983), won a prize for its elegant format and its scholarly content. The publication of the Polykleitan symposium (1989) is in progress and was one of the projects to which Warren devoted most of his recent time. He was especially proud, however, of the series of *Wisconsin Studies in Classics*, which he founded in 1981 and of which he was Co-General Editor for the University of Wisconsin Press.

Warren Moon was a Corresponding Fellow of the Société Suisse de Numismatique and the Vereinigung der Freunde Antiker Kunst, as well as a member of

many professional associations connected with his various interests: Midwest Art History Society, American Numismatic Society, College Art Association, American Philological Association. As member of the Archaeological Institute of America, he served as President of the Madison Society from 1978 to 1990, and as Book Review Editor of the *AJA* from 1982 to 1986.

It is impossible to enumerate here all the other boards and university programs of which Warren was part, or his various activities on behalf of his Madison

community. The obituary cited above mentions his delight in leading alumni trips to the Greek islands, as well as in flipping burgers and selling beer at Madison's Art Fair on the Square. He was a beloved figure larger than life in many respects, and he will be greatly missed.

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