



The Bishop family in the Zaskar Range, Ladakh, India, 1986. Brent (left) and Barry Bishop (right) in the back; Tara (left) and Lila Bishop (right) in the front.

GEOGRAPHER, EXPLORER, FRIEND: THE WORLDS OF BARRY C. BISHOP, 1932–1994

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In the modern era, few even dream of matching the breadth of accomplishments of Barry Chapman Bishop. Geomorphologist, climatologist, cultural ecologist, and dilettante physiologist; author of the standard-setting work on Nepalese mountain peoples; mountain guide and climber of Mt. Everest plus myriad other peaks; Vice President for Research and Exploration at the National Geographic Society; master photographer; accomplished (if inefficient) carpenter; U.S. patriot; diplomat, advocate and voice for Geography and environmental education; father and husband; friend—and close friend at that—to so very many. Whom else can we find that has both a mountain and a mountaineering store named after him, who is the recipient of over a dozen national and international medals, awards, and honorary degrees (not to mention the Ph.D. he earned the standard way), who is remembered so fondly and whose advice is sorely missed by a variety of individuals ranging from Sherpas, students, field researchers, professional writers, photographers, to mountaineers and international ambassadors? When Barry Bishop died in an auto accident in September of 1994, the world of people who love mountains and their studies lost a great friend and ally, just as American Geography lost its longest standing and most important voice in the world outside the academy.

The following short biography outlines some of the key people, places, events, and institutions in Barry Bishop's life. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to paint a broad brush portrait of Barry, his world, and his accomplishments.

THE EARLY YEARS: ADVENTURE AND SCIENCE IN MOUNTAIN AND POLAR REGIONS

Barry Chapman Bishop was born on 13 January 1932 in Cincinnati, Ohio, the son of Robert Wilson and Helen Rebecca Bishop. Barry's mother had a degree in English from Pomona College and an elementary education certificate, which she put to use for several years prior to her marriage. Barry's father had a Ph.D. in sociology and eventually became Dean of Men and later Dean of Summer School at the University of Cincinnati in the 1940s. It was Robert's jobs prior to the deanships, however, that were to have the most profound effect on Barry's life.

During Barry's youth, his father worked in YMCA organizations around the country. Starting at the age of eight, Barry and his family would move to the YMCA camp at Estes Park, Colorado, during the summers. Robert had to travel, which left Becky Bishop with an overly energized boy who seemed willing to push every rule to the limit. Back in Cincinnati, she realized very early that Barry was a handful of a child and needed the

special attention a private school could offer. Thus, from the age of five, Barry attended a private school that had many special activities, including a shop where he learned to love carpentry. In Colorado, Becky Bishop looked for similar useful activities to give Barry's energies some direction. She enrolled him in the YMCA outdoor classes, which he immediately took to. By age nine or ten, he joined the Colorado Mountaineering Club, which at that time contained many members of the 10th Mountain Division. These individuals, famed for their mountaineering skills, took Barry under their collective wing and trained him in all their discipline and lore. By age 12, he was joining them in guiding summer mountaineering expeditions throughout the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and Wyoming.

Back in Cincinnati, Barry tested into a public college preparatory school in 8th grade. This school placed great emphasis on public speaking and writing and many of his basic skills came from that period. Barry played football in high school, but summer climbing remained his great passion.

Barry's love of mountains quickly drew him to geology as a field of study in college. He started his undergraduate training at Dartmouth, but soon switched to the University of Cincinnati, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Geology in 1954. During this period his enthusiasm for mountains led to his first research work when, during the summer of 1951, he assisted Dr. T. Melvin Griffiths from Denver University in studies of the Mt. McKinley area. As was so often to be the case, Barry managed to combine mountaineering with his science; during his summer research he took part in the fourth ascent of Mt. McKinley and the first ascent by the West Buttress route.

The first photos to be found in Barry's slide collection come from the Mt. McKinley expedition. Intriguingly, they show none of the quality of composition and drama Barry was known for in his later photos; rather, they look like the standard off-kilter snap shots typical of any amateur photographer. Clearly, Barry's later photographic accomplishments developed through years of tenacious work and a maturing sense of what the lens can reveal.

It was also during his undergraduate days, while waiting in a registration line, that he met Lila Mueller, a geography major at the University of Cincinnati. Lila notes that with his knickers and Norfolk tweed jacket, he "was distinctly very different than anyone else." He further proved this point when, on an early date, he launched his motorcycle up the steps and through the front doors to announce his arrival. His presence was duly noted. In the end, Barry's tenacity (or Lila's forbearance) won the day and they were married in 1955.

Throughout his education, Barry continued to climb, visiting the Alps in 1952 and returning to the San Juans and Canadian Rockies in 1953. The opportunity to work in Greenland with Valter Schytt and Mel Griffiths, both geographers, led Barry in 1954 to move into the field of physical geography. In 1954 and 1955, Barry studied geography at Northwestern University, where he specialized in geomorphology under the supervision of William E. Powers. His summers in 1954 and 1955 were spent with one of the earliest American research teams on the Greenland Icecap, where he studied shear moraines. It was this research that resulted in his master's degree and first major publication, "Shear moraines in the Thule area, Northwest Greenland" (Bishop, 1957). This report was the first to systematically describe and provide a process explanation for the piles of loose debris that, until then, inexplicably formed on glacier surfaces near their termini.

Barry's experience with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' project in Greenland acquainted him with one of the grand polar explorers, Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd. Barry had dreamed from an early age of working with Byrd in Antarctica and he took advantage of his scientific experience in polar environments to reach his goal. In December of 1955, Barry joined the Air Force and in October of 1956 was assigned to work with the Antarctic Projects Office in Washington, D.C., where he served as Scientific Adviser to the Staff of Rear Admiral Byrd and Byrd's successor, Rear Admiral George Dufek. During this time, Barry monitored U.S. and foreign programs and activities in Antarctica, as well as establishing a literature exchange program with other nations working on polar research. His background in mountaineering and in Greenland eventually led to his assignment as Official United States Observer with the Argentine Antarctic Expedition in late 1956 and 1957.

Whenever possible, Barry included climbing in his life, acquiring a number of ascents throughout North America and Europe. He also dedicated himself to improving his photography of mountain environments, recognizing that he would have to effectively record his experiences in order to make a living from mountain travel and exploration. The first professional quality photos in his collection come from his 1957 climbs in the Bugaboos. After being honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1958, Barry made his living as a guest lecturer for six months, giving talks around the U.S. on Antarctica and the International Geophysical Year.

At the age of 27, Barry thus had committed his life to exploring and understanding alpine and polar landscapes. He had honed his mountaineering skills to a fine edge, begun to mold himself into a skilled photographer, acquired the academic skills necessary to conduct research on physical processes, and developed a network of contacts in the then small world of people conducting exploration and research in mountain and polar environments. All that was lacking was a stable platform to support Barry and his research and exploration in exotic environments. He was soon to find that platform in the form of the National Geographic Society.

THE EARLY YEARS AT THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, 1959–1964: FIELD RESEARCHER, MOUNTAINEER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND WRITER

In 1958 Barry and Lila were living with Rodger and Donna Ewy in a small cabin in the woods of Maryland. Desirous of excitement and world travel, they hatched a scheme called "Cycling Toward Understanding." In this plan, the Bishops and Ewys would purchase two motorcycles with side cars, travel to an exotic location for six months, write down their observations and take documentary photographs, then return to the United States lecture circuit, where they would raise funds to live on and to support the next trip to an even more exotic environment. Barry had lined up a large oil company to sponsor the first leg of this scheme, but a slump in oil business cost them the support. In his further rounds to raise funds, he visited the National Geographic Society.

Barry met Gilbert Grosvenor at this time while making his pitch for "Cycling Toward Understanding." While Grosvenor and the Society decided not to provide funding for that particular venture, Barry had better luck when he wandered down to the employment office with his photography portfolio in hand, where his photographs from Antarctica and the Bugaboos landed him a job as Picture Editor for *National Geographic* magazine. Starting in May of 1959, Barry rose quickly and he was appointed to the Photographic Staff of the magazine in January 1960. His first published photography in *National Geographic* came out in 1962 (Ingalls and Bishop, 1962). This work was quickly followed by increasingly comprehensive and complex photo-essays and articles on mountaineering and research life in alpine environments (Bishop, 1962, 1963a, 1963b). The captivating images brought back from the American Everest Expedition, as chronicled by Gordon Wiltsie in this volume, resulted in a National Press Photographers Association Special Award in 1963.

Far more than photography and journalism, however, propelled Barry up the National Geographic career ladder. Sir Edmund Hillary came across Barry's work on shear moraines (Bishop, 1957) while searching for glaciological and climatological expertise in alpine environments. As a result of Barry's science and mountaineering background, Hillary invited him to join the multifaceted and multinational Himalayan Scientific and Mountaineering Expedition, which was to take place during the winter of 1960–1961. Barry's reputation was not yet such that *National Geographic* magazine would sponsor him or even pay his salary while on such an expedition, although they did supply cameras and film and give him a leave of absence. Barry thus was left to drum up sponsorships, mostly from companies that provided supplies for the expedition in return for photos of their use in extreme conditions. In contrast to the magazine's relative lack of support and presaging events in years to come, the Committee for Research and Exploration at the National Geographic Society did provide money to cover portions of the study, carrying on in their tradition of funding young, relatively unproven investigators who show great promise.

As it turned out, the Himalayan Scientific and Mountaineering Expedition was to make Barry's reputation. His wintertime first ascent of Ama Dablam set the climbing world on its tail (Bishop *et al.*, 1962a). His climate research was the first of its kind at these altitudes and provided baseline data and concepts that are useful to this day (Bishop *et al.*, 1966; Marcus and Brazel, this issue, pp. 221–234). The lessons learned about human survival at these elevations had implications for the space program, human physiology, and military endeavors at altitude (Bishop *et al.*, 1962b, 1966). Perhaps most satisfying, the editors at *National Geographic* magazine loved his work and were forced to buy his photos and article (Bishop, 1962) for far more money than it would have cost to keep him on staff.

The ascent of Ama Dablam and his National Geographic affiliation led to Barry's invitation to join the American Everest Expedition in 1963. This time the Society had learned its lesson and, in anticipation of his time and efforts on Everest, Barry was transferred to the Foreign Editorial Staff, the group that writes articles and provides photography for *National Geographic*. His appointment lasted from January 1963 to January 1964. The epic Everest adventure, detailed in this issue (pp. 289–292) by Dennis Hanson and by Bishop (1963b), saw Barry reach the summit, but at the cost of losing his toes and the tips of several fingers to frostbite. Although Barry would continue with mountaineering in high-elevation environments after Everest, the loss of digits spelled the end of his technical climbing.

Barry's growing interest and focus on research would probably have led to that outcome in any case. He was increasingly fascinated by all facets of mountain environments, but particularly by the interaction between people and land. Cashing in on his hard earned scientific credentials and his status as one of the first Americans to reach the summit of Everest, he requested appointment to the Committee for Research and Exploration at the National Geographic Society. This move was to set the stage for much of what Barry accomplished during the rest of his professional life.

GROWTH AS A SCHOLAR, 1964–1980

In 1964, Barry took the job of Secretary of the Committee for Research and Exploration, then chaired by Melvin Payne, who was to become Barry's great mentor at National Geographic. This job spurred Barry on to new levels of scholarship when he decided that he was not bringing sufficient academic credentials to the committee nor was he fulfilling his own intellectual potential. He also wanted to be remembered as more than just a climber of Everest. In 1966, Barry took academic leave of the Society and enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the Department of Geography, University of Chicago, one of the premier departments in the country at that time. His supervisor was Marvin Mikesell.

The late 1960s became an incredibly productive but fragmented period in Barry's life. He juggled many tasks and roles; that he dropped none is a testament to his remarkable skills and long, long working hours. During 1966–1968 alone, he managed to: (1) complete the resi-

dency and candidacy requirements of the university; (2) reconnoiter (with Charles Houston and Melvin Marcus) research sites in the Yukon and Alaska for the High Altitude Physiology Studies (HAPS) and the High Mountain Environment Project (HMEP), jointly sponsored projects of the American Geographical Society and the Arctic Institute of North America (Bishop *et al.*, 1967); (3) lead the mountaineering research team that established the Logan High station at 5,311 m for HAPS research (see the Chronicle by Joseph LaBelle, this issue, pp. 313–318); (4) participate in HMEP research at Chitstone Pass, Alaska; (5) develop his Karnali Zone, Nepal, dissertation topic and obtain funding from the National Science Foundation, the Agency for International Development, and the National Geographic for his field research; (6) continue to serve on the Committee for Research and Exploration; (7) plan and execute with Lila all logistical arrangements for the Bishop family's sojourn in Nepal, including overland travel across Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia; and (8) sustain some semblance of family life through hectic times, in part by relying on Lila Bishop's own store of independence and drive.

In reference to this last statement, it is notable that Brent Bishop was born in 1966 while Barry was reconnoitering Mt. Bona in Alaska, one of the possible sites for the High Altitude Studies. Tara Bishop had been born on 22 May 1964, a year to the day after Barry summited Everest. Tara was only three and Brent was just short of two years old when the Bishop family set out on their two-and-one-half year trek through Barry's research sites in Nepal. Lila and Barry pioneered, especially for North Americans, the concept of full family participation in travel and work in an isolated mountain region. Indeed, the children became part of the communities being studied and enhanced the research by encouraging greater trust from the villagers. The inclusion of the Bishop family in exotic research settings was read about by tens of millions in *National Geographic* (Bishop and Bishop, 1971) and, to this day, many outside the worlds of geography and mountaineering best remember Barry and know Lila for the groundbreaking role models they established in this regard.

Barry's field work in the Karnali Zone of western Nepal was extraordinarily comprehensive. It was structured as a cultural–ecological analysis. The work identified, described, and analyzed the hierarchy of economic systems, including the seasonal movement of people, animals and goods, along a vertical transect of the western Nepal Himalaya (Figure 1). It was the overview summary of this two-and-one-half year research experience that reached so many readers in the November 1971 issue of *National Geographic*.

The completed and published dissertation did not come as quickly. There was much data reduction and analysis to be performed after the Bishops returned to the United States in September 1972, but there was also a living to be made. Barry taught the fall term at the University of Michigan as a Visiting Lecturer and then returned to the Society, this time on the Editorial Staff, where he penned one article (Bishop, 1976) and researched, summarized, and recommended subjects for

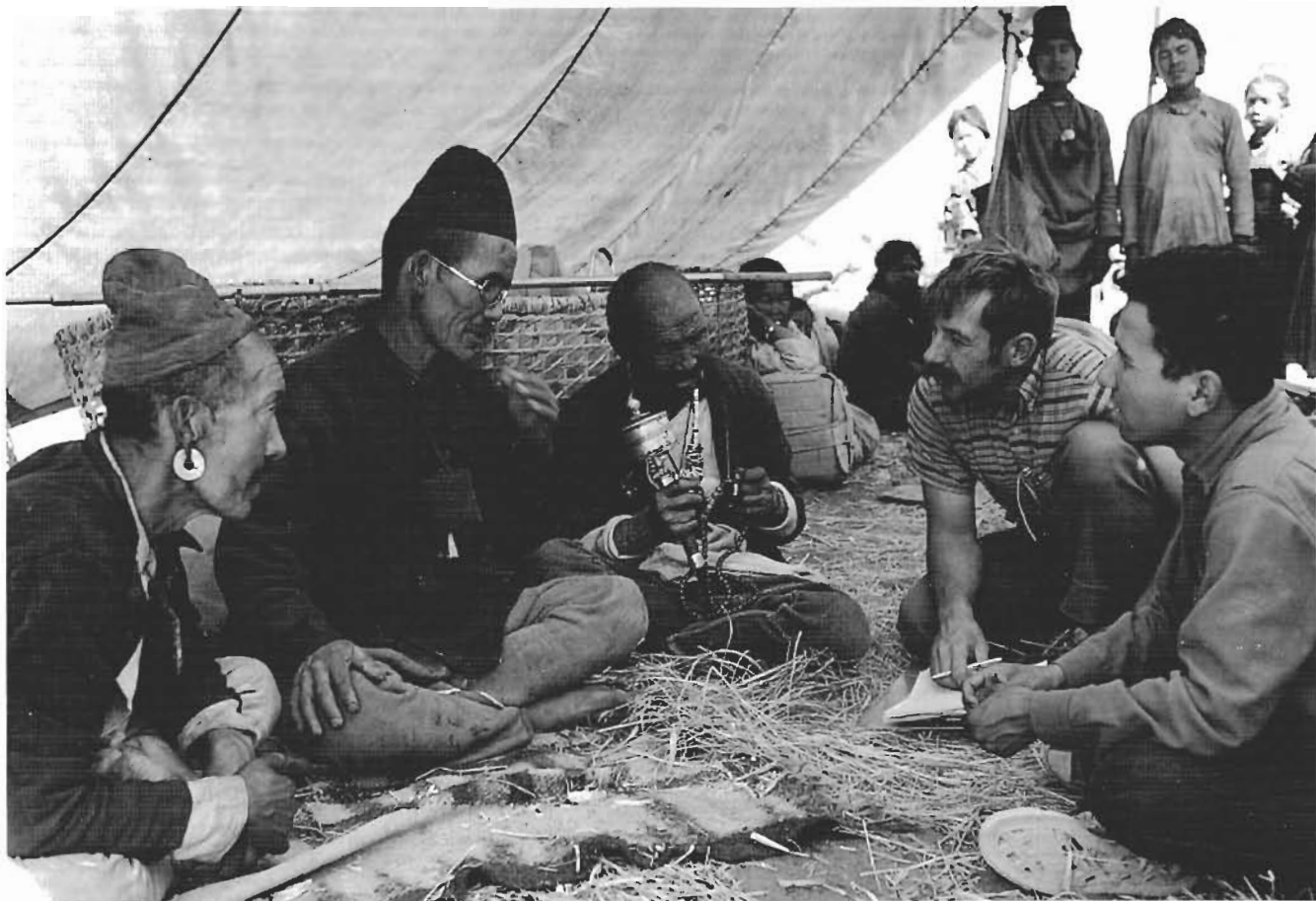


FIGURE 1. Barry Bishop interviewing local residents about their farming practices in the Karnali Zone, Nepal, during his Ph.D. research. Photograph by Lila Bishop, © National Geographic Society.

many more. Lila contributed to the family income by managing the production of Bishop Ultimate tents, the first ever external frame tent, which had been developed by Bob Blanchard and refined by Barry for the 1963 Everest expedition. Barry's duties and related lecturing and entrepreneurial equipment production with Lila were economic necessities.

Struggling to complete his dissertation, Barry took an academic leave of absence in 1977. In 1978, he published portions of his work (Bishop, 1978a, 1978b), but required deep immersion in the topic to develop the larger story he wanted to tell. In 1979, he spent a year as Visiting Adjunct Professor at Arizona State University, where he "further developed his ideas on cultural ecology, mountain people and habitats, and geographic patterns that shaped his...dissertation" (Nietschmann, 1994: 7). Taking over 14 years to complete, involving a legion of porters, sherpas, aides, investigators, and advisors from two continents, three universities, and the Society, and requiring a tremendous commitment from Barry's family, Nietschmann accurately notes that when the Ph.D. was awarded in 1980, "many people worldwide felt that they had a stake in that fabled dissertation." The wait was worth it; with its 1990 publication in book form, *Karnali Under Stress* was recognized as the standard for studies of mountain peoples and environments.

THE LATER YEARS AT THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, 1980–1994: TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN GEOGRAPHY

The accomplishments of Barry Bishop's last 15 years at the National Geographic Society, particularly with the Committee for Research and Exploration, are chronicled in this issue by Steven Stettes. He was made Vice Chairman of the Committee in 1984, then moved to the Chair position in 1989. It was a busy time for the Committee, which continually expanded its support for research and developed new initiatives. Barry's other role, as Chief of the Society's Geographic Liaison Office from 1980 to 1989, opened the door for the fruitful partnerships that evolved between the Society, the American Geographical Society, the Association of American Geographers, the National Council for Geographic Education, and various universities.

Despite his many administrative duties, Barry managed to carry the usual overload of research and service. He organized and led two Himalayan research expeditions: the 1983 interdisciplinary investigations of human impacts on cultural and physical landscapes north of the Annapurna Himal (see Jacquez and Patten pp., 265–273, and Marcus and Brazel, pp. 221–234, in this issue) and the 1985 winter reconnaissance of alpine regions of north-central Bhutan. In the winter of 1983–1984, he was

Chief of Field Operations for the Boston Museum of Science/National Geographic Society Sagarmatha Khumbu photo-mapping program, one result of which was the splendid 1:50,000, 40-m contour map of Mt. Everest and environs (National Geographic Society/Boston Museum of Science, 1988). He also continued his writing for *National Geographic*, producing two articles while chairing the Committee for Research and Exploration (Bishop, 1985; Bishop and Thompson, 1988).

Approximately every other year, Barry continued to lead or co-lead with Lila a major Himalayan trek, as often as not opening new areas in northeast India or western Nepal. Barry's continued participation in these field expeditions and excursions filled a spiritual need, but also represented a philosophical commitment to field studies. He often reiterated that research could not slide solely into the realm of keyboards, consoles, and simulations—that the reality check of field-based science was imperative. It was his coda and one that he imprinted on the Research Committee's deliberations. Barry's outstanding efforts on behalf of research at National Geographic resulted in his appointment as Vice President for Research and Exploration in 1992.

Barry Bishop received many honors, especially in his last fifteen years. Three honors he took special pride in were a Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, from the University of Cincinnati in 1994; honors for meritorious achievement from the Association of American Geographers in 1993; and the Explorers Club Medal for extraordinary contributions to exploration and scientific research in 1987. He was pleased that he was to receive the Distinguished Geography Educator award, an award which was accepted by Lila after Barry's death at the annual meeting of the National Council for Geographic Education in November 1994.

Honors and increasing job responsibilities did nothing to diminish Barry's commitment to good causes; in fact, the commitment seemed to increase in later years. He served on the Board of Directors of the Population Reference Bureau from 1986 to 1994. He also served on the Board of Directors of the educationally-oriented Yosemite National Institutes from 1988, and of the Woodlands Mountain Institute from 1989 until his death. These were not honorary positions. They demanded real work and valuable time, but they also provided Barry with a platform to bring geographic perspectives to environmental issues and environmental education.

On a different organizational level, Barry provided guidance to organizations committed to scholarship and/or exploration. He served on the Council of the American Alpine Club (1965–1967), the Council of the International Mountain Society (1980–1994), and the Board of the Explorers Club (1983–1987). From 1984 through 1985 he was Vice President of the Explorers Club. He also served American Geography as a member of the U.S. National Committee to the International Geographical Union (1977–1980; 1985–1992).

Barry's many accomplishments at National Geographic and in the national and international geography community took a toll in time and effort, however, and he often spoke of eventually returning to live in the mountainous

West, where he could continue his professional work in a less frenzied manner while also indulging his love for hiking, carpentry, and exploration. As the National Geographic Society began to restructure and downsize in the 1990s, the Society made a generous retirement offer to senior employees in December 1993. Barry took advantage of this offer and moved to Bozeman, Montana in July of 1994. In truth, his "retirement" was only partial. Although resigning as Vice President, he planned to remain on the Committee for Research and Exploration and play a major role in directing its agenda.

Barry also planned to enjoy life as an active academic geographer. He was an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at Montana State University, had made plans to teach a seminar on cultural ecology of the Himalaya, and was already looking into potential research and consulting topics in the Yellowstone area. In his last visit to the department, he was making plans to hang wall-size photos of the Himalaya and its people along the corridors of the Earth Sciences Building. "I'll see what I can do" he said with a wink, a sure sign that out of the depths of his National Geographic connections and personal collection we would soon have exceptional photos of the Himalaya, bringing to life the geography of his special part of the world.

These plans were not to be. In September 1994, Barry and Lila were driving to San Francisco to participate in a reunion of Everest climbers and to see their son, Brent, receive the "American Alpine Club David Brower Award for Environmental Achievement" for his cleanup work on Everest (see Bishop and Naumann, this issue, pp. 323–327). For unknown reasons, the car Barry was driving veered off the road and flipped near Pocatello, Idaho. Lila emerged with broken ribs and an injured shoulder. Barry died instantly.

BARRY CHAPMAN BISHOP: EXPLORER, GEOGRAPHER, FRIEND

Barry Bishop was the quintessential geographer; the *places* where he worked were just as important to him as the kind of work he was doing. In fact, as often as not, Barry chose a place first, then created a job that required him to go there (see Prologue by Jack Ives on this topic). This love that Barry held for mountains and adventure led him to every continent on Earth, with those travels often including the exploration of new sites and the first-time research of previously undocumented environments.

For Barry, however, places were not fun, much less interesting, without people. He was never a hermit of the high mountains, running off to seek solitude from humanity in the aery wastes, nor was he a theoretical wizard, locked away in speculative towers of abstract thought. Rather, he reveled in working with, playing with, and understanding people. He was fond of quoting Proust, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." Barry gained those new eyes by immersing himself in the worlds of others, whether it be the rough humor of mountaineering camps, the high palaver of Washington society, or years spent living with the peoples of Nepal. The grand re-

search achievement of his life, *Karnali under Stress: Livelihood Strategies and Seasonal Rhythms in a Changing Nepal Himalaya*, reflects this devotion to people and place, documenting in loving and masterful detail the relation between the residents of Karnali and their land.

Most who met Barry, however, were never aware of the full breadth of his extraordinary feats and scholarship; he certainly never told them. Although an excellent raconteur, Barry avoided tales of himself, finding it all too self-aggrandizing and congratulatory. He preferred simple one-on-one conversations without the obstacle of preconceptions. It was not uncommon to see Barry stop his work, often urgent, to help some stranger who phoned or walked into his office. Even after being appointed Vice President at the National Geographic Society, Barry often continued to eschew his secretary's help and would answer his own phone, often startling callers who only realized after some minutes of conversation that they weren't simply chatting with the hired help. Although the number is legion, no one will ever know exactly how many naifs, unknown to Barry until they walked in his door or phoned, were saved from some political, cultural, or expeditionary folly...but always with kindness and with such counsel that their adventures might have a true chance of success. Of course, experienced scientists and explorers were also wont to use Barry as a sounding board; he never disappointed them.

Even those who knew Barry best rarely think of him in terms of awards, titles, and accomplishments. It is true that Barry had a life force matched by few; mere proximity to him seemed to generate adventures and grand schemes. At the same time, he was a complex individual,

prone to overanalyze and become paralyzed by the minutiae of a decision one minute, play the gleeful prankster the next, then hatch masterful strategies a second later. Meetings with Barry were always a dialogue, a sharing of needs, hopes, tales and plans, an open invitation to join with him in contemplation of the day-to-day struggles as well as the grand adventures of life. Barry cared deeply for people and showed an openness to their styles, needs, and wants that was extraordinary. One did not approach Barry to sit at the feet of the master, a role he could easily have adopted had he wanted to. Instead, his many companions approached him to discuss their professional and personal lives, to receive counsel, to laugh at the absurdity of the world while planning its conquest, to hear great tales of far away places, and to share in his open spirit—in short, for friendship.

We will miss this rare man. He understood the challenges and the potential.

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

...for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

From *Ulysses*
Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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