

Dr. Dirkmaat – T. Dale Stewart Award Announcement

Announcing the winner of the prestigious 2021 T. Dale Stewart award is quite an honor. On the other hand, writing an ambiguous introduction without immediately revealing who the winner is? Well, that puts me *in a tight spot*.

The person in question is someone that has had a tremendous impact on forensic anthropology through their education and training programs, their scholarship, and their casework. Over the course of their career, they've mentored over 100 graduate and 400 undergraduate students in forensic anthropology. They've authored or co-authored 80 publications in various journals and volumes, including an edited volume on forensic anthropology, and a yet-to-be published book on forensic archaeology that they first got a sabbatical in order to complete, back in 2001. They've conducted nearly 200 forensic search and recoveries, analyzed nearly 300 sets of forensically significant human remains, testified more than 25 times; and appeared on three episodes of an unsuccessful true crime television show about forensic anthropology.

This person believes in education through experience, and always includes students in their casework. I'll never forget my first recovery with them. They looked to me and said: "*This is a very complicated case ... You know, a lotta ins, a lotta outs, lotta what-have-yous.*" Truly a life lesson.

This person is often associated with a certain part of the country that you might consider "*a geographical oddity, two weeks from everywhere.*" Raised on a steady diet of black and gold, this person received their bachelorette, I mean baccalaureate and PhD from the University of Pittsburgh in 1989 and ultimately settled a bit north of Pitt, in a "stranger" environment with spectacular sunsets and lake-effect snows.

But, let's *tie this room together*. What else is this year's recipient known for?

- Their emphasis on the importance of forensic archaeology and forensic taphonomy.
- Their capacity to tell you whether or not bears have clavicles
- Their efforts in the recovery of the Flight 93 crash on 9/11/2001 in Shanksville, PA.
- Their advocacy for changing the name of this section from Physical Anthropology to Anthropology.
- Their ability to seamlessly weave quotes from Coen Brothers movies into any conversation; although, *that's just, like, my opinion man*.
- And, their emphasis on forensic anthropology education, not only in terms of their undergraduate and masters programs, but also the summer short courses that they have been offering annually since 1993 in Erie, Pennsylvania.

I'd like to ask if you would please stand or raise your hand if you have ever:

- Been a student of this person in their undergrad or graduate program [pause]
- Worked with this person [pause]
- Or attended one of the short courses offered at Mercyhurst University

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Well, I don't know about you, but *I take comfort in knowin' he's out there*. This Dude abides. Please join me in congratulating the 2021 recipient of the T. Dale Stewart Award, Dr. Dennis Cornelis Dirkmaat.