

# The Florida Anthropologist



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# THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGIST

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**FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:  
DR. BARBARA A. PURDY**

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**Dr. Barbara A. Purdy was honored by the FAS Board with a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the FAS 74th Annual Meeting in Miami, May 7, 2022.**



**FAS President, Jason Wenzel, presented a plaque to Dr. Purdy “for outstanding research and outreach in Florida Archaeology.” Photo by Steve Koski taken at awards ceremony on May 7, 2022.**

Dr. Purdy is Professor Emerita of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Florida (UF), and she is Curator Emerita in Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, in Gainesville.

Dr. Purdy taught in the UF Anthropology Department for more than 20 years and inspired many students of Florida Archaeology. Her popular “Anthro” courses included World Prehistory, North American Indians, North American Archaeology, Archaeological Field Schools, and Lithic Technology. She also taught social science courses, such as Economics and Politics of Minorities, Energy and Society, and America in International Affairs.

Dr. Purdy served as principal investigator for many projects in Florida, plus others in Arizona, Idaho, and Washington. She has presented papers at national meetings as well as international conferences. She secured many grants and won teaching awards, such as 1985 Teacher of the Year in the UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

During her career, Dr. Purdy has authored and co-authored more than 45 scholarly articles and reports, and 16 books. Topics include lithic, bone, and wooden artifacts, weathering, pyrotechnology, and thermoluminescence. She has investigated wet sites, waterlogged canoes, steamboats, and colonial contraband. She has done pioneering work at early lithic sites in Florida.

In 1948, Barbara earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from San Diego State College. She then married and had four children. She was married 67 years to the late “Hank” Purdy, a professor of plant pathology. She now has five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Barbara was a homemaker when she returned to school, achieving an M.A. degree in anthropology at Washington State University in 1967. She already was deeply interested in lithic artifacts when, in 1969, Barbara attended the first flint-working session at Shoshone Falls, Idaho, funded by the National Science Foundation and taught by master flintknapper Don Crabtree.

In 1967, Barbara moved to Gainesville, and she immediately began classes and fieldwork in archaeology at UF. Her dissertation focused on chipped stone technology. She earned a Ph.D. degree in 1971 in Anthropology and Geology, and then joined the UF faculty. In 1971, she was lead author, with UF geologist Kelly Brooks, of an article in the journal, *Science*, titled “Thermal Alteration of Silica Minerals: An Archaeological Approach,” which remains a classic study.

In the 1970s, Dr. Purdy investigated lithic sites near Gainesville. One was the Container Corporation of America (CCA) Site, in Marion County, near Ocala. There, she discovered remains that she interpreted as pre-Clovis, a perspective ahead of its time. New investigations of the site have taken place in the 21st century. The Florida Museum of Natural History has aided its study. Two lithic workshops provided opportunities for lithic experts to examine the site's stone remains and to observe stratification.

Also beginning in the 1970s, Dr. Purdy's research expanded to include water-saturated wooden artifacts, especially Florida dugout canoes. She worked at Florida wetlands, such as Hontoon Island and Lake Monroe along the St. Johns River. During the 1980s, she assembled wetland research in a book, *The Art and Archaeology of Florida's Wetlands* (1991). She also organized conferences on wetland archaeology in 1986 and 1999, producing publications such as *Wet Site Archaeology* (1988).

A long-time member of FAS, Dr. Purdy regularly gives presentations to FAS chapters as well as other interested groups. Her desire to educate the public on the correct way to do archaeology culminated in her book, *How to Do Archaeology the Right Way* (1996, second edition in 2016). Two other books are geared for the general public, *Indian Art of Ancient Florida* (1996) and *Florida's People During the Last Ice Age* (2008).



Dr. Purdy has worked closely with knowledgeable persons such as Ben Waller, Alvin Hendrix, Paul Lien, Robert Knight, and Don Munroe. She has encouraged participation in recovering Florida's past, while stressing the importance of accurate documentation and preservation. Many artifacts collected by Hendrix are featured in Dr. Purdy's book, *Florida's Prehistoric Stone Technology* (1981). Another of her notable books, co-authored, is *Lithic Quarry Production* (1984). In 2012, colleagues Scott Mitchell and "Monty" Pharmer of Ocala's Silver River Museum, where the Alvin Hendrix Collection resides, named a newly recognized stone tool as the "Purdy Uniface" (*The Florida Anthropologist* 65[1-2], March-June 2012).

In 2011, Dr. Purdy received the prestigious Ripley P. Bullen Award from FAS, nominated by the Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society (see *The Florida Anthropologist* 64[2], June 2011). In 2013, Dr. Purdy was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southeastern Archaeological Conference. In 2022, Barbara's career is featured in the *Mammoth Trumpet*. It is a distinct honor for the FAS Board to recognize Dr. Purdy with an FAS Lifetime Achievement Award.

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Editors' Note: This year, the Bullen Award, Lazarus Award, and Arthur Lee FAS Chapter Award were not presented. There were no applicants for grants and prizes.

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