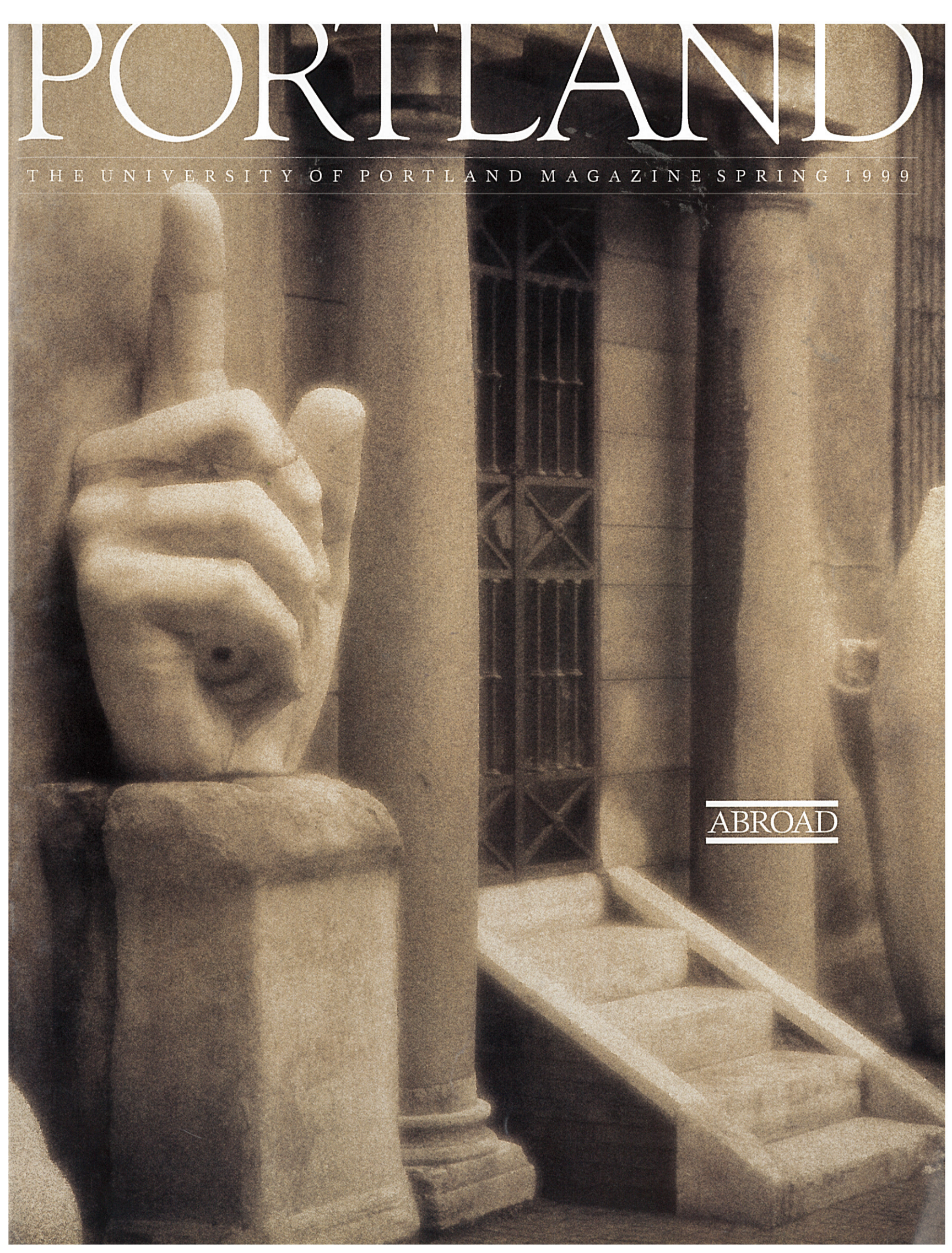


# PORTLAND

THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND MAGAZINE SPRING 1999

ABROAD





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# the EXPLORER

"Go away and go far," Father John Delaunay told a dreamy University freshman in 1947, and the boy spent the rest of his life discovering lost cities, delving teeming jungles, sailing across the Pacific, and generally becoming one of the most famous explorers of the 20th century.

by Marcus Covert '93, '97 M.A.

Gene Savoy looks like an explorer — steely eyes that have seen countless tribulations, a wiry frame that has carried him through dense jungles and up huge mountains, an apparently boundless energy, and a storyteller's skill with tales. He has told his own story many times, primarily in his own books about his adventures in Peru and in the Pacific, but on this day, on a bright afternoon at his home in Nevada, he spins a different tale — one that begins with a beloved teacher, mentor, priest-confessor, and friend named Father John Delaunay, who set Gene Savoy in motion as an explorer of physical and spiritual worlds. In many ways, Gene Savoy's

colorful journeys began on The Bluff. From the University he would go far, always following his heart and his imagination, always trying to find truths unknown or dismissed by conventional archeological authorities.

A native of Bellingham, Washington, Savoy served two years in the Naval Air Service in the Second World War and then spent a year at Multnomah Business College before pursuing his dream to be a priest. He enrolled at the University in 1947, planning to major in psychology. The incident that would change his life came in a theology class, however, when his professor told him that the contents of a paper he'd written were "very close to heresy." Alarmed, Savoy did what countless other young men at the University did in those days: He sought out Father Delaunay — psychology professor, dean of men, and legendary counselor to students.

"The first thing you did with him was get on the floor, on one knee, and he'd hold your hand and say, 'Okay, baby, what's your problem?'" Savoy remembers. "Delaunay was a busy man, and when he took time for you it was an honor. We discussed my paper. I said, 'What do I do, Father, what do I do? I'm not a heretic, I believe in the Church...'"

Delaunay read the paper and told Savoy, "Son, listen. You remind me of [Pierre] Teilhard de Chardin" — the French Jesuit paleontologist, philosopher, and author whose speculative works about cosmology were censured by the Vatican. "If you're going to become a priest, you're going to wind up like Teilhard," continued

Delaunay. "Maybe you shouldn't be a priest. I'll tell you something from the heart: I'm a priest, and when you're a priest you have to *serve*, and you don't have any personal choices sometimes. You know, when my mother was dying, I couldn't even get permission to go to be with her. That was a painful thing for me. Imagine what it was like for Teilhard, who wasn't allowed to publish his writings, and how that would be for you if you are interested in pursuing this field. I think you have a mission to perform, to do your own thing. I just have a feeling. Maybe to pick up where Teilhard leaves off and to continue in that field. Go out in the world for a year, go before they scare it out of you! Go pursue this, follow your heart, or you'll end up like me, teaching in dusty classrooms. You can always come back."

"I almost fainted," says Savoy. "I was shocked; I didn't expect that. I had talked to an awful lot of priests, but Delaunay just knocked me over. So I took off for what was to be a year." First he worked as a journalist, traveling throughout the Northwest as editor of the *State Review* ("The Voice of the Logging Industry") and then editor of *The Lombard Booster*, a North Portland weekly business newspaper. He also worked as a photographer; among his favorite subjects were Indian petroglyphs in the Columbia Gorge. He and his friends planned trips to Mexico or Peru to search for lost cities, but mostly they contented themselves with mountain-climbing or hunting for arrowheads close to home. All this time he con-





Above: Gene Savoy '51 — explorer of Peru's dense jungles, oceanic adventurer, and "one of the great figures in the history of exploration."

Left: The ill-fated 75-foot mahogany catamaran Feathered Serpent III off the shores of Hawaii.

tinued to study, religion, mostly — "Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, the Chinese classics, Zen . . ." He read accounts of St. Thomas the Apostle visiting India and possibly the Americas — reading that led him to study of the cultures, religions, and history of Peru.

In 1956, as Savoy neared age 30, his life changed utterly. His business collapsed, taking with it his home, belongings, even his marriage. As luck would have it, however, his documentary film of Columbia Gorge petroglyphs, carvings, and pictographs was picked up just then by a national news service, and his theories about similarities between North and South American picture drawings attracted the attention of an American archaeologist, who offered to take Savoy along on a botanical expedition to Peru. The archeologist needed a photographer — at no pay. Savoy instantly accepted, boarded a plane for Peru, and so began a lifelong love affair with an ancient country and people.

Peru is a vast country — 1.28 million square kilometers, nearly the size of Alaska. Generally it is composed of three terrains: the arid western coastal region, the *costa*; the eastern lowland jungles of the Amazon Basin, the *selva*; and the towering Andes mountains, the *sierra*, which hold the *montaña*, thick rain forests that envelop their high eastern slopes.

Francisco Pizarro's capture, ransom, and murder of the Inca emperor Atahualpa, in 1532, began a series of Spanish victories, Inca rebellions, and civil wars that forever changed Peru. Countless ancient cities were emptied and forgotten, soon to be engulfed by the creeping tendrils and verdurous mosses of the jungle.

These vanished cities — especially those east of the Andes — fascinated Savoy, and with the help of Peruvian friends like Don Jose Eugelio Garrido, of Peru's Archaeological Museum, he resolved to find them.

In 1961, now remarried and the father of a young son, Savoy determined to search the *montaña* and *selva* for long-forgotten cities. He founded the Andean Explorer's Club and settled in Yungay, a little town below the spectacular Cordillera Blanca mountain range. Looming above Yungay is massive Nevado Huascarán, at 22,000 feet Peru's highest mountain. Yungay was to be Savoy's base of operations, a jumping-off point for explorations of the ancient Chavin cultural sites nearby.

On January 10, 1962, the inhabitants of Yungay were celebrating the Feast of the Christ Child. Savoy recalls that he was writing at his desk when he "heard a loud, roaring

sound. It came like distant thunder from the direction of the Huascarán." It was an avalanche that would kill more than 4,000 people. Savoy helped search for survivors; his memories of that day are grim.

Passable roads and running water were nowhere to be found. The threat of plague hung over the valley; the water supply was fouled by human and animal bodies. Savoy flew to Lima in hopes of obtaining a water filter for his village and medical help for the sick, among them his son Jamil. But before he could find help Jamil died, not yet three years old, taken in the night by fever.

A heartbroken Savoy soon found himself even more determined to continue his work in Peru. Of particular interest to him were tales of Vilcabamba, the legendary "Last City of the Incas." Pizarro had installed a puppet ruler, Manco, after defeating the Inca Empire in 1534. But Manco rebelled against the Spanish in 1536 and escaped into the eastern Andes, hoping to carry on the Inca dynasty at Vilcabamba. In 1544 the Spaniards finally caught and killed Manco, but the Inca Fringe, the symbol of royalty among that powerful people, passed from Inca to Inca until Tupac Amaru, last of the Vilcabamba kings, was executed at Cuzco in 1572. After being looted and burned, Vilcabamba was taken by the jungle, and vanished from maps.





In 1911 the American explorer Hiram Bingham discovered the breathtaking ruins of Machu Picchu, near Cuzco. This beautiful mountain citadel, now a Peruvian national treasure, was believed by Bingham to be Vilcabamba, a claim he made often in print. Savoy's studies of Peruvian and Spanish records left him unconvinced of Bingham's claims. "Spanish priests who visited Vilcabamba wrote that it was in a large, flat alluvial plain, deep in the tropical rain forest, a 'hot country,'" he says. And so he eagerly began his first Vilcabamba expedition in 1964.

Savoy's plan was to follow old Inca roads and to use information gathered by explorers who traversed the Vilcabamba country before him. Their accounts led him to believe that old Vilcabamba was located near an area known as Espíritu Pampa — "Plain of the Ghosts." Bingham had visited the site in 1911 when he was searching for Vilcabamba, but never found enough ruins to convince him it was a significant find. Savoy decided to have a look for himself. He pinpointed Espíritu Pampa on the map, about 100 miles northwest of Cuzco, and picked out the roads, both modern and ancient, that should lead him there. The trip would take him deep into the *montaña*, into a high rain forest known as the "cloud forest" or *ceja de selva*, the "eyebrow of the jungle."

With the help of an old man named Ascensión Luque, Savoy found Espíritu Pampa, although Luque would not enter the area for fear of "spirits of the ancient ones." Benjamin and Flavio Cobos, sons of a local coffee grower, took Savoy and his companions on a hot, sweaty trip through the jungle, cutting trail as they went. Finally the explorers found themselves in a what appeared to be a natural bowl in the jungle floor.

From Savoy's journal: *I wiggle my way through an opening and nearly bump my head on a large Inca aryballoid water jar, perched atop a fallen tree. I straighten up and, looking around, see that we are standing in an ancient Inca room . . . I had crawled through [the entrance] without knowing what it was.*

Littered about the floor were red ceramic tiles; further into the jungle was another large ruined building. A day later, helped by local machete-men, the expedition found ruined buildings and fountains scant feet from where they had been the previous day. They found streets, bridges, staircases, buildings, walls hundreds of feet long, and a canal, all encased in centuries of jungle growth. That night Savoy allowed himself a mo-



*The cliff necropolis of La Petaca, which contained the remains of Chachapoyas aristocracy.*

ment of triumph. From his journal again: *For the first time I realize what we have found. We are in the heart of an ancient Inca city...I experience an overwhelming sense of the history the ruins represent...The city represented everything for which the Incas stood. It was a monument to their industry, their struggle with nature, their fight for freedom against overwhelming odds. This was immortal Vilcabamba — that legendary city of a thousand history books. If I never succeeded in finding another city it would not matter. Legend had been turned into history...*

On his return to Lima, Savoy found that word of his discovery had preceded him. He was received by Peruvian president Fernando Belaúnde-Terry, himself an amateur archaeologist. Luis Valcárcel, director of Peru's National Department of Archaeology, expressed his confidence that old Vilcabamba had indeed been found. Articles appeared in local and international publications, including the *Peruvian Times* and *Time* magazine.

Savoy led two more expeditions to Vilcabamba, but when guerrilla activity made the region too dangerous for exploration, in 1965, he turned his attention elsewhere — this time to the Pajatén, near Chachapoyas. After weeks of travel, his group found ruins at a site more than 9,000 feet in elevation. Under heavy moss and vines was exquisite stonework, building after building carved with figures complete with radiant headdresses and wings. Diamond-shaped and zigzag friezes were set into the walls, clearly the work of expert masons of antiquity. Savoy and his companions

named the find Gran Pajatén, after a nearby river and an old Spanish mission site to the north. The discovery of Gran Pajatén, on the heels of the Vilcabamba expedition, cemented Savoy's reputation as a major figure in South American exploration — but perhaps more importantly, the round buildings and carvings of the "bird city" of Gran Pajatén were Savoy's hands-on introduction to the "cloud people," or Chachapoyas.

The Chachapoyas were a mysterious race of fair-skinned, ferocious warriors conquered by Inca Tupac Yupanqui in 1480. The great chronicler Inca Garcilaso de la Vega put their number at 40,000 souls, in a province "which lies east of Cajamarca, [and] was as famous for the beauty of its daughters as for the courage of its sons." The Chachapoyas rebelled against the Inca in 1500; it took eleven years for the new Inca Huayna Capac to crush the revolt. In the space of twenty years the Inca were themselves defeated by the Spanish Conquistadors; then the Chachapoyas fell into decline, their cities emptied or abandoned, fair game for the intractable jungle.

Savoy believed that by uncovering Gran Pajatén he had discovered vestiges of the Chachapoyas civilization. This marked the beginning of his El Dorado expeditions, a series of explorations from 1965-70. Tupac Yupanqui, in quelling the Chachapoyas revolt, spoke of seven great cities that were defeated by his troops. The chronicler Garcilaso mentioned a capital city named *Llauantu*, or Levanto; Savoy made it his quest to locate these seven cities and identify the ancient Chachapoyan capital. Savoy's determination to locate these cities, still in the realm of legend, led to his discovery of 40 ancient cities of all sizes,



among them the necropoli *Pueblo de los Muertos*, or City of the Dead, and the 12 Cities of the Condors.

Season after season of exploring the *montaña* provided Savoy with a lifetime's worth of hair-raising experiences. Parasites were a constant worry. Savoy writes of the ants that showered down from branches above like rain, of *garrapatas*, jungle ticks that had to be removed with burning cigarettes lest they infect their hosts with a form of leprosy, and of black spiders: *The black spider, he noted in his journals, inflicts a bite that results in a terrible sickness...the flesh rots away, the disease spreading to the rest of the body through the bloodstream...*

Other dangers included the ever-present possibility of getting lost in the unforgiving jungle, and the often-present dangers of bandits and guerillas. Savoy managed to evade these problems, he says, only by the generous assistance of the Peruvian natives. "I was successful, I was able to protect my colleagues *only* through the help of the Peruvians. I respected them, I understood them, they were equals in my ventures. Once I gained their trust, they would tell me where to find ruins and old Inca roads; perhaps most importantly, they would warn me of danger — 'they are waiting for you in this city or village, they plan to kill you' — and we were often able to avoid danger altogether with this information. On every expedition I've also had a military presence. I've always had escorts. I've always had a letter from the Peruvian president, always had letters from the top generals in the Army, the *Guardia Civil* as we used to call it, now the National Police.

"I was in Leimabamba one time and 300 people attacked our camp. The guerrillas had these people all riled up, yelling 'Kill Savoy, kill Savoy!' I had my sons with me, and these people wanted to kill us. We were taken to a kangaroo court. The church bells were ringing, and I discovered that the Catholic priests were a strong presence there. The priests helped us, everybody calmed down, and we got out of that mess..."

If the exhilarating freedom of the *montaña* spurred Savoy's determination to find the seven lost cities of the Chachapoyas, it was mounting pressure from Peru's civilized regions that began to dissuade him. While the press heralded his discovery of Vilcabamba in 1964, before long they were running stories that questioned the validity of his find — questions later put to rest by scholars. Rumors

began to fly; stories were told of Savoy leading a pack train of 40 mules through the Vilcabamba region, laden with plundered gold. He was said to have sent a scuba diver to the bottom of the Lake of the Condors, and to have fought with the diver over fantastic treasures found there. Most seriously, he was accused by local officials of looting, of being a *huaquero*. This charge was soon put to the lie by another noted explorer, Gary Zeigler, who was asked to investigate the reports. Accompanied by the Peruvian National Police, he verified Savoy's honesty — and discovered many years later that Savoy, hidden nearby, had kept an eye on Zeigler's party with binoculars.

"You don't take *anything* without the authorities in Peru knowing about it," Savoy says. "When I was in Chachapoyas, every time, I left my baggage to be inspected. Anybody who knows me, anyone who has



Savoy and a colleague examine stonework at one of the Gran Vilaya ruins in Chachapoyas.

been on my expeditions, knows that. I mean, what are you going to do with all that gold? Are you going to sell it on the open market, or take a suitcase full to the United States? It's impossible, it's laughable, I'd be scared to death! I just don't do it! You've got to respect the dead."

Throughout his El Dorado expeditions Savoy found references to a Peruvian folk hero known as Viracocha. Legend had it that he was a fair-skinned, bearded man who appeared to the ancient Peruvians, served as a god-like teacher, and departed Peru by way of the sea. Savoy believed that Viracocha sailed to the North, emerging in Mexico as Quetzalcoatl — an Aztec Nahuatl word for Feathered Sea Serpent. "Just

as our era began with Christ," wrote Savoy, "that of the ancient Mexican people began with Quetzalcoatl. He is the central and most powerful figure in the mythology of all Mesoamerica." After years of following legends of Viracocha in the Peruvian jungles, Savoy decided to follow his route north to Mexico by sea.

With the help of Peruvian artisans, Savoy built a 36-foot tortora-reed boat, or *balsa*. One-man reed floats known as *caballitas de tortora*, or "little sea-horses," have been used by Peruvian fishermen for centuries, but Savoy's *balsa* was on a scale unheard-of since ancient times. In order to replicate conditions faced by the mariners of old, the *balsa* had only sails and a wooden tiller to propel it up the South American coast. Christened the *Feathered Serpent*, the *balsa* sailed from Salaverry, Peru, in 1969.

The wonders and hardships of this voyage are told in detail in Savoy's

book, *On the Trail of the Feathered Serpent*; CBS also produced a documentary by the same name, hosted by the late Charles Kuralt. In one dramatic passage, Savoy describes an incident when the *Feathered Serpent* nearly ran aground: *My throat was dry, my hands sweaty. Now the Feathered Serpent was fighting for her life. For the first time I began to think of the balsa as a living thing rather than an inanimate bunch of reeds, bamboo, and*

*lines. I understood how old sailors loved their ships like women and talked to them as if they had souls. I could feel the force of the sea and the wind pulsing through her structure like blood pumping through arteries... she was struggling to carry us away from the beach and out to sea again. "Come, my beauty!" I shouted against the sound of the pounding surf. "Get us out of here!"*

After sixty-four days, the battered crew and *balsa* entered Panama Bay. They had not reached Mexico, as Savoy had hoped to do, but they had made it to Central America, and Savoy was satisfied that the voyage had proved his point about ancient seafarers — much as his Norwegian friend Thor Heyerdahl's raft voyages had proven similar points.

Savoy returned to his headquarters to mounting frustrations. In 1968, President Belaúnde-Terry was deposed by the *Junta Militar*, whose





The cliff necropolis called Pueblo de Los Muertos (City of the Dead) above the Utcubamba River at Tingorbamba. Savoy's 1968 expedition found mummified Chachapoyas remains in the mud-and-fiber funerary casings pictured here.

leaders quickly assumed dictatorial powers in Peru. They seized American-owned companies, nationalized Peruvian industries, and "broke up all the haciendas and plantations," Savoy says. "They set Peru back by 50 years. They killed a lot of people, dear friends of mine." By 1970 Savoy became increasingly disconcerted with his situation in Peru. He began to regret revealing the location of Gran Pajatén; government-sanctioned explorers and scientists, he felt, were causing harm to the ruins by exposing them to the elements. The final blow came in 1970. "I had written a letter to a wealthy New Yorker who wanted to know if it was a good idea to invest in building a huge paper plant in Peru," he says. "I advised him against the idea. They got hold of that and decided I was a traitor to Peru, even though I was about six months shy of being a naturalized citizen.

"They had the *Denuncia* — if you were officially denounced, you were presumed guilty until proven innocent; they could hold you as long as they wanted. So I decided I had better get out of the country, before I was brought up on some trumped-up charge. I just didn't feel like being killed." Savoy flew out of Peru, supposedly for two weeks. He would not return to Peru for 15 years.

After a year in Mexico, Savoy moved to Nevada, establishing the Andean Explorers Foundation &

Ocean Sailing Club in Reno. He led expeditions and tours to Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras, Venezuela, and the Holy Land, among many other regions. He continued his lifelong religious studies, founding a group called the International Community of Christ in 1972. He wrote books about his adventures, among them *Antisuyo* (1970) and *On the Trail of the Feathered Serpent* (1974). In 1977 he again set sail in search of ancient sea routes, this time between South America and Hawaii, in voyages aboard the *Feathered Serpent II*, a 60-foot modern schooner.

In 1984 a team of researchers from the University of Colorado announced that they had made a major find in the Peruvian jungle: Gran Pajatén, a "lost city of the Andes." Savoy, stunned, objected that he had discovered the city years before, a controversy erupted, and Savoy found himself in the international spotlight once again. By then, a constitutional government had replaced the junta, and Savoy was itching to return; he was warmly received on his arrival, and instantly resumed his explorations in the old Chachapoyas kingdom.

And immediately he started finding ruins again — this time a vast urban complex at 9,000 feet above sea level. According to Savoy, the city ran along a mountain ridge for 25 miles, covered more than 100 square miles, and contained "at least 20,000 structures, probably many more." He named the great city Gran Vilaya; he would spend the next nine years exploring the site. Savoy was now certain he had fulfilled his old quest for the seven great cities of the Chachapoyas. The old capitol of

Levanto had eluded him before his exodus from Peru, the only one to do so; but Gran Vilaya, he believed, was in fact Levanto.

In 1989 Savoy made a startling discovery: In a cave high in the cliffs of Gran Vilaya, he and his expedition members found three giant stone tablets inscribed with, according to him, "Phoenician or Semitic symbols similar to those found in the Holy Land." For years Savoy had been developing theories of contacts between the world's ancient societies; one of his most controversial theories was that Biblical-era Israelites could have traded by sea with the pre-Colombian Americas. He believed the stone tablets were the proof he needed. "Did the ships of King Solomon come to the Americas and trade with the Mexicans and Peruvians, who were rich in gold?" Savoy told the *Washington Times*. These questions became the basis of one more Savoy adventure: the 1997 voyage of the *Feathered Serpent III*.

The voyage of the third *Serpent* was vintage Savoy. At age 70, he decided to sail around the world in search of clues that could revolutionize theories of contact between societies of the ancient world. Peruvian artisans based the design of the 75-foot mahogany catamaran on depictions of ancient sailing vessels found on pottery fragments. Its most striking feature: a pair of dragon heads on the prow. After an inauguration ceremony attended by Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, Savoy and his crew of six set out from Callao, Peru in late 1997, heading first to the Hawaiian Islands — a trip of 5,000 miles. Surviving 50-knot winds, a broken tiller, and six becalmed days, the *Serpent* made Hawaii in 42 days, then departed for Australia. On August 18, 1998, Savoy and crew crossed the Equator and celebrated with a bottle of sake. But early the next morning two of the thick mahogany beams holding the hulls snapped, and as gales reached 35 knots and waves grew to 12 feet, the ship broke apart. In the dark and chaos, Savoy and his crew issued an emergency call and scrambled onto the starboard hull, which had a shred of deck still afloat. And there, stunned and soaked, as the broken hulls continued to smash and saw into each other, the captain and crew of the *Feathered Serpent* waited for rescue.

Their precious supplies were still in the wreckage: food, water, flares, medicine, radio. "But everything was underwater," says Savoy, "and diving



into the wreck was dangerous. I was also concerned about the great numbers of black spotted sharks; we seemed to be right in the middle of their breeding grounds." The ship's radio officer went into the wreck to retrieve the radio, and emerged safely — but was then hit by a wave and dropped the radio into the sea. Soon after the ship's homing beacon ceased functioning, and the crew's hearts sank.

But a few hours later Savoy was treated to "the most beautiful, wonderful, best sight of my life," a Coast Guard C-130 airplane, which dropped a radio, supplies, and life rafts to the survivors; the pilot then radioed that a container ship would pick them up next morning. After passing a wet night, during which Savoy remembers thinking of Father Delaunay's stories of meeting Gandhi — "he said he was 'flabbergasted,' a good word to describe my feelings about my beautiful ship being gone" — the crew was rescued and carried to Japan. Characteristically, Savoy spent his time aboard the rescue ship planning his next sea expedition.

While the world press has always been absorbed by Savoy's claims of intercultural contact by sea, archaeologists and anthropologists have been generally skeptical. "Everything that this man says has to be approached with skepticism," said Peruvian archaeologist Duccio Borania Berber. "It is nonsense to suppose that petroglyphs seen by Savoy have some special significance, because in Peru there are 2,000 to 3,000 locations with the same petroglyphs," said Federico Kauffmann-Doig, director of Peru's Institute of Amazonian Archeology.

But other scholars find Savoy's claims riveting. "Amateur or maverick explorers," says Daniel Buck, an editor with *South American Explorer* magazine, "are fascinating characters, impervious to criticism, determined to follow their dreams. They are usually self-taught, and they have a tendency to grandiose claims; they study things and are prone to wild leaps. So naturally, there will always be antagonism between the self-taught, maverick explorers like Savoy and the traditional scientific community."

"The fact is that even if the only thing Savoy ever gets credit for is to have discovered his ancient cities, he still advanced our knowledge of these places and he made them popular. That is a great contribution. In the history of exploration, he is one of the great figures."

"We [the academic community]

tend to disagree with him on this transoceanic stuff," says David Wilson, professor of anthropology at Southern Methodist University. "But explorers like Gene Savoy and Thor Heyerdahl force the old fuddy-duddies to at least consider these things. I read his *Antisuyo* in the 1970s, and the romance of reading Savoy led me to pursue a career studying Peruvian cultures. I would put Gene Savoy somewhere between the outlandish crackpots and the dyed-in-the-wool conservatives. We need people like him. I think people should pay attention to him when they are reading widely. I know the romantic aspects of *Antisuyo* provide the impetus to keep many Ph.D. candidates going; any archaeologist worth his or her salt should have a copy of *Antisuyo* on the bookshelf."

"I'm not a rebel when it comes to archaeology," says Savoy, who is calm in the face of occasional criticism. "It's a noble science, as is an-



*This circular building, cut out of the rain forest by Savoy's 1965 expedition, is part of the Gran Pajaten ruin, the southern extent of the ancient Chachapoyas kingdom.*

thropology. But [academics] are kind of fixed in their ideas, and you can't rock the boat too much. They don't like to go on speculation, and they don't like romanticists, as a general rule. That's logical. There's nothing wrong with that. They do their thing and I do mine."

By doing his own thing Savoy has amassed an impressive list of awards, at home and abroad. Hawaii declared a day in honor of the *Feathered Serpent III* expedition. Reno declared a Gene Savoy Day to honor its citizen's contributions to world exploration. The Peruvian city of Ica presented him with a silver medal in honor of his close study of Peruvian cultures. The Peruvian Ministry of Industry and Tourism awarded him a

silver hummingbird and a gold medal for his work on Gran Vilaya. Savoy is proudest, perhaps, of one award: the Andres Reyes Medal of Merit (order of the Grand Cross), presented him by Peru's Senate in 1989. Named for Peru's first president, it is the nation's highest award, and Savoy was only the fifth person to receive it.

"You accept such an honor gratefully, with humility," says Savoy, "but you don't kid yourself that your name will live forever. What I've done is open up the history of certain areas. But I have no dreams of my work being immortal. I'll be forgotten with time. I've already accepted that. I do this because I enjoy doing it, and my work has kept me young, kept me alive."

"I often think of Father Delaunay, who had the heart of a young child, and who was close to Jesus, very close. I think I knew him at a time of transition — like when a man knows he is dying, and as a result tells you nothing but the truth. He changed

my life! Delaunay taught me about the heart, you see. He taught me that people who have dedicated their lives to the service of God in whatever capacity — priest, doctor, psychologist, whatever — become more universal. You look for the Christ in Man. It doesn't matter if a person is a

Buddhist, Muslim, Communist; you look for the Christ in that person's heart. Delaunay taught me that. I've dedicated my life to that philosophy, and it was John Delaunay who pushed me out there. I'm grateful to him for that, more than I can ever say, and I'll be grateful to him until the day I die." □

Marc Covert '93, '97 M.A., is a writer who lives in Portland; his articles and drawings have appeared in Willamette Week and The Social Science Perspectives Journal, among other publications.

*Editor's note: Gene Savoy is planning to build a fourth Feathered Serpent in Australia and resume his voyage around the world by 2001. He will return to the jungles of Peru this summer, in a jungle expedition in July to be filmed by the BBC. Readers curious about Savoy's adventures might visit the Andean Explorers Foundation & Ocean Sailing Club web site, [www.aefosc.org](http://www.aefosc.org).*





## CLASS • NOTES

Kaye, Gayle, and Michael, and if they would like to fill us in on grandkids, well, they are most welcome to do so.

Mauro Potestio '50, '54 was featured in Southeast Portland's The Bee newspaper in its October 2007 issue. Turns out Mauro maintains a museum-worthy collection of Frank Sinatra memorabilia in the basement of the Woodstock neighborhood house he has called home for the past 55 years. According to the piece by Merry MacKinnon, "There are Sinatra plates, Sinatra CDs, Sinatra movies, and, of course, photos of Sinatra...Potestio also has all of Sinatra's albums displayed, along with a special photo of Sinatra inscribed to Potestio that says 'Thank you for giving me a place of honor in your party room.'" Who knew? Besides the many friends who have attended parties in Mauro's rumpus room, of course.

Ralph E. Byrne '50 passed away on December 14, 2006. Our prayers and condolences.

Sylvia J. Christenson '50 passed away on August 2, 2007, in Portland, Ore. She was a nurse for Providence St. Vincent Hospital and the Portland VA Hospital. She is survived by her sister, Georgia Beatty; niece, Sandy Klump; and companion, John Boyd. Our prayers and condolences.

Herbert C. Carlson '50 passed away on August 31, 2007, in Portland, Ore. Survivors include his brother, John E.; and sister, Caroline Center. Our prayers and condolences.

Edward Patrick Walsh '50 passed away on September 8, 2007, in Portland, Ore. A Navy veteran, he served in World War II and worked at Oregon Steel Mills. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Mary; sons, Patrick and Thomas; daughters, Rosemary Young, Kathleen Tomassi, and Molly O'Donnell; and 24 grandchildren. Our prayers and condolences to the family.

James T. Walker '52 passed away on August 14, 2007, in Portland, Ore. A lifelong Portland resident, Walker taught fifth, sixth, and seventh grades at Our Lady of Sorrows School for 33 years. He is survived by his sister, Lillie MacRitchie; and brother, Thomas. Our prayers and condolences.

Joseph Edward Gibbons '53 passed away on August 1, 2007, in Salinas, Calif. Joe's long career in sales included ownership of his own company, J. Gibbons and Associates, which produced packaging for the produce industry. He is survived by daughters Carla

### THE EXPLORER AT REST

We were saddened to learn of the passing of **Douglas Eugene Savoy, Jr.**, on September 11, 2007, at his home in Reno, Nevada. Savoy, whose story was featured in the Spring 1999 issue of *Portland Magazine*, attended the University in 1947 with the intention of going on to become a priest. Heeding the counsel of his mentor and father confessor, Rev. John B.

Delaunay, C.S.C., Savoy left the University at the end of the school year to pursue religious studies that Delaunay felt would put him at odds with traditional Catholic teachings. He went to Peru in 1957 in the wake of a failed marriage and business; there he found a destiny which would lead him to become one of the most celebrated and enigmatic figures in modern South American exploration and archaeology.

In a career that spanned over 40 years, Savoy discovered more than 40 ruined stone cities in the jungles of Peru, including Vilcabamba, the Incas' last refuge from the Spaniards, once thought to be located at Machu Picchu. He also founded the International Community of Christ in 1959, a church now based in Reno, Nevada. Savoy is survived by his first wife, son Geno Michaels '80, and son Jon; second wife Elvira "Dolly" Clark and adopted son Juan; third wife Sylvia Ontaneda and sons Gene Jr. and Christopher Sean, and daughter Sylvia Jamila Savoy; brothers Bill, Jack, and Douglas Dailey; and six granddaughters and two grandsons. A son, Jamil, by his second marriage, died in Peru in 1962, and two granddaughters preceded him in death, one in 2005 and one in February 2007. Our prayers and condolences.

—Editors

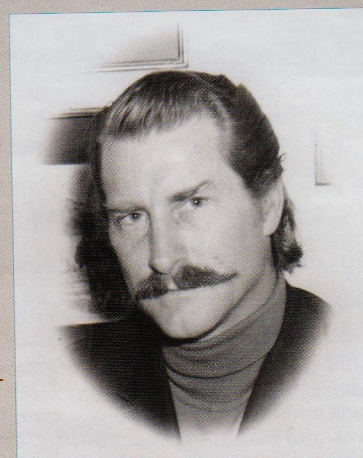


PHOTO COURTESY SAVOY FAMILY

Cullerton, Joanne Castello, Kathleen Henry '86, and Karen Pee; ten grandchildren; sister, Eileen LaFay; and many nieces and nephews. Our prayers and condolences.

Thomas B. Satchell, Jr., '53, '64, passed away on August 5, 2007, in Portland, Ore. He served in the Marine Corps in World War II, and again in the Korean War, including the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, and received a Purple Heart after being run over by a tank. He was a physical education teacher at Gilbert Middle School for more than 30 years. He is survived by his daughter, Jodi; sons, Thomas and Robert; sisters, Katherine McEntarffer and MaryAnne Carey; brothers, Louis and Don; and one grandchild. Our prayers and condolences.

Ann Nett '53 passed away at home in Pickerel, Wisc., on September 13, 2007, surrounded by family. She is survived

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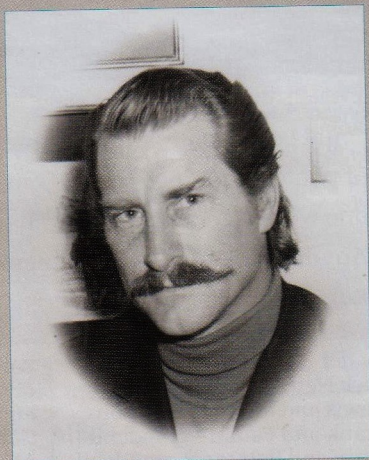
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—Editors