OBITUARY: DAVID H KELLEY

by Don C Stone[1]

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David Humiston Kelley, a founder member of FMG and author of several articles in *Foundations*, died in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on 19 May 2011, aged 87. He "retired" some years ago from the archaeology faculty of the University of Calgary. Early in his career he was a pioneer in the phonetic decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing. He was coauthor with Eugene Milone of an archaeoastronomy book, *Exploring Ancient Skies*, a second edition of which was recently issued by Springer. (For information and reflections about Dave's career as an archaeologist, see *In Memoriam: David Humiston Kelley* at http://www.mesoweb.com/reports/DavidKelley.html.)

Dave became interested in genealogy at an early age and communicated with various prominent genealogists. One of them, G Andrews Moriarty, FSA, FASG, encouraged him to write up some research on the probable Gallo-Roman ancestry of Charlemagne and submit it to the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*. The result was published in April 1947 as "A New Consideration of the Carolingians," while Dave was an undergraduate at Harvard. In his introduction to the article, Moriarty said that Dave was "*an authority upon Roman pedigrees in both the Western and Eastern Empires*" who possessed "*the largest collection of such pedigrees known to the writer.*"

Dave was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists in 1970.

He helped to point Sir Anthony Wagner to much of the material on ancient descents that appears in Wagner's "Bridges to Antiquity" chapter and charts in *Pedigree and Progress: Essays in the Genealogical Interpretation of History* (1975).

Dave was knowledgeable about genealogy in many different cultures and claimed expertise, for example, in pre-Columbian genealogy in Mexico and Guatemala and ancient Polynesian genealogy.

He could read very rapidly, enabling him to absorb large amounts of information about many different areas. He was thus able to make connections and see correlations that others would not be able to. He was eager to share information with others who were working on the same problems he was. He was even glad to share his speculations, though with the requirement that these speculations not be cited in print until they had appeared in print; he didn't want an article to report that "Dave Kelley says X" about some topic unless there was a way for the reader to see what Dave Kelley's reasoning was.

One of Dave's important contributions was to supply this needed corrective to the common opinion that royal ancestry must be relatively rare: "*Royalty had a tremendous breeding advantage and a substantial survival advantage over the nobility, who had similar advantages relative to those below them. What this means is that we all probably descend from Charlemagne tens of thousands of times for every time we descend from one of his peasants, even if most of our own immediate ancestry consists of peasants.*" — from "A Mediaeval Miscellany," *The American Genealogist* 69 (1994): 110.

[1] This obituary was largely extracted from *A Tribute to David H. Kelley* at http://donstonetech.com/DHKelleyTribute.htm