

CURATOR AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE NAMED TO BOARD OF ELLIS R. KERLEY FORENSIC SCIENCES FOUNDATION

WASHINGTON – Paul Sledzik, M.S., curator of the anatomical collection at the National Museum of Health and Medicine, has been named to the board of directors of the Ellis R. Kerley Forensic Sciences Foundation in San Diego, Calif. He will serve a two-year term.

The foundation was established in 1998 after the death of Dr. Ellis Kerley to continue his research in the field of forensic anthropology, which is the science used to help determine cause of death and identify the victim at crime scenes.

Kerley was best known as a consultant on government forensic cases, including identification of the Challenger astronauts for NASA in 1986, identification of Josef Mengele's remains for the U.S. Marshals in 1985, and the investigation of the Philadelphia MOVE victims in 1985. From 1957 to 1966 he was employed in the orthopedic pathology section of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

The Kerley foundation works on behalf and at the direction of its board to reinforce the discipline of the science of anthropology, while enhancing educational opportunities at the university level through scholarship awards and enrichment programs for students. For information visit: www.elliskerleyforensicsciencesfoundation.org.

“I'm delighted to have been asked to serve on the board of this prestigious organization,” said Sledzik. “Dr. Kerley was a pioneer anthropologist who was instrumental in establishing forensic anthropology as a professional scientific discipline. He devised a method to determine the biological age of skeletal remains by examining the replacement of bone cells, a technique known today as the Kerley method. His work for the federal government highlights his commitment to public service.”

As a member of the seven-member board, Sledzik will help select two forensic anthropologists in training to receive annual scholarships as well as participate in the selection of a practicing forensic anthropologist to receive a research award presented in conjunction with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences - Physical Anthropology Section.

Sledzik came to the museum in 1986 as collections manager of anatomical and skeletal collections and was named curator in 1989. He is also a consulting forensic anthropologist for the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner and team commander of the Region III Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team in the National Disaster Medical System.

Sledzik has a master's degree in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Connecticut and a bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Rhode Island. He resides in Germantown, Md. with his wife and family.

Forensic anthropology is the application of the science of physical anthropology to the legal process to identify human remains and to assist in the detection of crime. In addition to assisting in locating and recovering suspicious remains, forensic anthropologists work to suggest the age, sex, ancestry, stature, and unique features of a decedent from the skeletal remains.

The National Museum of Health and Medicine began as the national repository for Civil War injuries in 1862 when Surgeon General William Hammond directed medical officers in the field to collect "specimens of morbid anatomy . . . together with projectiles and foreign bodies removed" and to forward them to the newly founded museum for study.

The museum's first curator visited battlefields and solicited contributions from doctors throughout the Union Army. During and after the war, museum staff took pictures of wounded soldiers showing effects of gunshot wounds as well as results of amputations and other surgical procedures. The information collected was compiled into six volumes of "The Medical and

Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion,” published between 1870 and 1883. The collection continues to support advances in clinical research.

In addition to the 2,000 specimens in the Civil War Skeletal Collection, the anatomical collection at the National Museum of Health and Medicine includes about a dozen other collections of anatomical and pathological skeletal specimens; medical research collections containing slides, tissue blocks, and related documentary materials; fluid-preserved gross organs, and other miscellaneous material. The collections are accessible to researchers in pathology, forensic pathology, forensic anthropology, physical anthropology, Civil War medical history, orthopedic injuries, and human biology.

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PHOTO CAPTION:

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