Larry Delmar Agenbroad died in Hot Springs, South Dakota, on 31 October 2014 following a brave, hard-fought battle with kidney disease. His life ended fittingly in the shadow of his beloved Mammoth Site of Hot Springs, a site he first opened in 1974, and as its director developed it over the next 40 years into the premier paleontological center that it now is.

Larry was born on his family’s farm near Nampa, Idaho, on 3 April 1933, and he spent his childhood there. He served with the U.S. Navy as a Seabee in North Africa, married his childhood sweetheart, Wanda, and did petroleum exploration in New Mexico for a time. But his eventual goal of academician and scientist was realized through graduate work at the University of Arizona, earning both a Ph.D. in geology there in 1967 and an M.A in anthropology in 1970. He went on to serve on the faculty at Chadron State College (Nebraska) from 1967 to 1978 and then finished his teaching career at Northern Arizona University from 1978 to 2003. Following his retirement from NAU in 2003, his last ten years saw some of his most productive research.

During his years as an academician and a researcher, Larry engaged in many field projects, including many with colleague Jim Mead. These projects were both geological and archaeological in nature, and include the Hudson-Meng Bison Kill of Paleoindian age in Nebraska, the Bechan Cave work on an extensive deposit of mammoth dung in Utah, a Siberian mammoth recovery, geological and archaeological work at both the Murray Springs and the Lehner Mammoth kill sites in Arizona, and many seasons excavating pygmy mammoths on Santa Rosa Island, California. But the true pièce de résistance of Agenbroad’s scientific career has been his work as the founder and director of the Mammoth Site of Hot Springs in Hot Springs, South Dakota. This unparalleled sinkhole find of more than 60 individual mammoths (mostly Colombian), along with other Pleistocene fauna, has become a center for international study, as well as one of the most visited tourist locales within the Black Hills. An immense amount of research has taken place at the site over the past 40 years, and many volumes of scholarly papers have been produced. He was instrumental in making the Mammoth Site an active educational center, providing an organized curriculum and study opportunities for public schools, a chance for young people to participate at the site through their Junior Paleontology sessions, and offering access to the site for international academicians with the Visiting Scholars program. He has appeared in numerous television and IMAX films dealing with mammoths and has presented papers on the subjects internationally. The name Larry Agenbroad has become synonymous with all things mammoths.
Larry was a member of the Explorers Club, receiving the Explorers Club Lowell Thomas Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2005, and he was given the Rip Rapp Archaeological Geology Award from the Geological Society of America in 1996. Larry mentored a great many students, encouraging them and following their academic careers through their Ph.D. studies. His legacy lives on through their careers in the fields of geology, paleontology, and archaeology.

Larry’s keen sense of humor and his unbounded enthusiasm for life and friends and family will long be remembered. Within three months of his passing, he was joined in death by his beloved wife, Wanda. Larry and Wanda are survived by their two sons, Finn and Brett, their daughters-in-law, Heidi and Maria, and two grandchildren, Andy and Katy.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LARRY DELMAR AGENBROAD

1976 Buffalo Jump Complexes in Owyhee County, Idaho: Tebiwa, Miscellaneous Papers of the Idaho State University Museum of Natural History, no. 1, 38 p.


