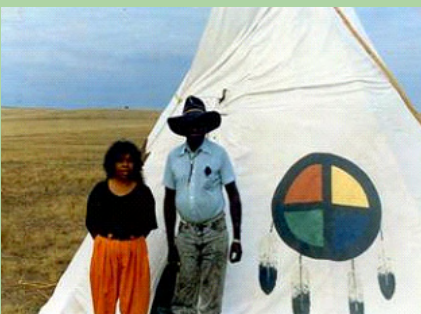


*WAC seeks to promote interest in the past in all countries, to encourage the development of regionally-based histories and to foster international academic interaction.*

In 1989, Patrick Mbunwe-Sambe, an archaeologist from Cameroon, Africa, stood at the Missouri River near Vermillion, South Dakota, USA, staring at a fisherman. When asked why, he remarked how he'd never seen water such as that river before. It was his first time traveling outside of his own country, and he had done so with funding from the World Archaeological Congress (WAC). Patrick was attending WAC's congress on archaeological ethics and the treatment of the dead. He had the opportunity to meet archaeologists, students, and Indigenous peoples from all over the world, take part in creating "The Vermillion Accord", a document of ethics on the treatment of human remains by scientists, and to participate in a Sioux reburial ceremony at Wounded Knee. Patrick returned home with a new energy and passion for his own work, his own heritage, and the Indigenous people of his own country. He often remarked on how WAC had changed his life, a life that tragically ended in July of 2003 when Patrick was shot to death in the Yaoundé, the Cameroon capital, where he had become an activist for the rights of Indigenous peoples in Africa.

Founded in 1986 by several archaeologists worldwide, WAC is a membership-based organization which :

- | is committed to the scientific investigation of the past, ethical archaeological practice and the protection of cultural heritage worldwide.
- | supports the empirical investigation and appreciation of the political contexts within which research is conducted and interpreted
- | promotes dialogue and debate among advocates of different views of the past
- | is committed to diversity and to redressing global inequities in archaeology through conferences, publications and scholarly programs
- | has a special interest in protecting the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples, minorities and economically disadvantaged countries
- | encourages the participation of Indigenous peoples, researchers from economically disadvantaged countries and members of the public
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Carolyn Gartside is an Aboriginal Australian whose work with WAC led her to a position at the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Office, and later with local government, working on Native Title and Heritage and Culture. Gartside attended the WAC's *Archaeological Ethics and Treatment of the Dead* in Vermillion, South Dakota, in 1989 as part of the Australian Delegation. She is pictured to the left camping at Wounded Knee with her friend Kom-bul. Nearly twenty years later, she still refers to the Vermillion Accord document at "her bible".

*"It is people like Peter [Ucko, one of WAC's founder] and many others who gave voice to my people in relations to the Treatment of our ancestral remains." – Carolyn Gartside*

As seen in Patrick's story, WAC's mission is met by hosting international Congresses and Inter-Congresses and providing scholarships for indigenous people to attend them. *Archaeologies*, a tri-annual publication produced by WAC, is translated into many languages and distributed worldwide. In addition, WAC supports other publications and symposia around the world. WAC's *Global Libraries* program provides publications to carefully selected libraries in the Third World, an initiative to get archaeology materials into places that have no resources. The *Archaeologists Without Borders* program provides educational opportunities, supporting archaeological education and training in economically disadvantaged countries. A standing committee of WAC members, Indigenous peoples, and WAC executives regularly review their "Code of Ethics" document, a set of standards that every archaeologist is encouraged follow.

Traditionally, WAC has been supported mainly by membership dues. The Executive Board is reluctant to raise dues, as several members are in economically disadvantaged countries. Currently, WAC has about 600 paid members, while 1500 people attend the Congresses and Inter-Congresses, and over 2000 people subscribe to the email discussion list. The main objective each year is to have enough paying members to sustain *Archaeologies*, which requires approximately \$12,000 a year. The 5th WAC Congress, held in Washington, DC, in 2003, was able to earn a surplus to help support other WAC activities, but it is not expected that WAC-6 in Ireland in 2008 will do the same. Some minor funding comes from royalties from publications and grants. Grants will come in to support travel for members to the Congresses. WAC does little to actively seek donations, other than a recent campaign dedicated to the memory of Dr. Peter Ucko, one of their founders who passed away in early 2007. There are almost no donors with any big donations. A fundraising committee is currently in place and is developing a long-term plan to address these issues.

WAC's Executive consists of the officers, the two editors of *Archaeologies*, regional representatives, the Chief Executive Officer, and an Indigenous representative, all of whom have a background in archaeology and academia. They meet face to face at least once a year, but maintain daily contact on an email listserv. Their goals are to develop and implement policy related to the mission. The WAC Council, made up of the Executive Officers, two representatives from each region (a junior and senior representative), and eight representatives of Indigenous peoples meet every four years at the WAC Congress to elect the Executives and to ratify major policy changes and motions from Congress sessions. Task forces, committees and the CEO handle the majority of day-to-day business.

For Patrick Mbunwe-Samba the World Archaeological Congress allowed him to explore his heritage and travel the world. He was able to bring the knowledge and experience he'd gained with WAC back home to make a difference in his own country. For many others, the story is similar. WAC has changed the practice of archaeology from being about objects and artifacts to being about people and their heritage. Funding for WAC will allow future Indigenous people to have opportunities like Patrick experienced and will create stronger standards and ethics within the archaeological communities.

