NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The first General Meeting of the Society for 1982 will be held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace, Adelaide at

8.00PM MONDAY, 22 MARCH, 1982

AGENDA

1. Apologies.

2. Minutes of Previous General Meeting.
   Minutes of the previous General Meeting, held Monday, 26 October, 1981 to be confirmed. A copy of these minutes is attached.

3. New Members.
   The following new members have been elected to the Society:
   Richard N. WARD
   Christopher MOBBS
   David N. McGrath.

4. Papers and Journals.
   Papers and Journals from other Societies and Organizations will be tabled at the meeting.

5. Business.

6. Speaker.
   MRS. COLLEEN MORROW, Proprietor of the Sunray Gallery at Hahndorf, will present the Meeting with an address and exhibition of basketware from the Indonesian Islands, including Lombok and Borneo. Included in the exhibition will be basketware from the Sunray Gallery and some items from Mrs. Morrow's private collection. South Australian Museum slides of similar articles will be shown following this address.

7. Supper.

VERN TOLCHER,
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RODNEY WEAVERSBEE (1916-1982)

Rodney Weathersbee's Secretaryship of this Society (1967-1972) and assumption of the Presidency (1973-1974) obtained the Society a prompt, efficient, servant and a distinguished leader. His activities as Founding President of the Friends of the South Australian Museum, Founder Chairman of the Friends of the Art Gallery of South Australia and his work for the National Trust of South Australia, the Charles Sturt Memorial Trust and the Adelaide Collectors Society are no doubt being acknowledged by most organisations. In view of his special interest in the South Australian Museum and his work as a member of its Board, it is worth pausing to enquire how it came about and what it has achieved.

Rodney's arrival in Adelaide in 1959 to take over the General Managership of Arnott Notteram and Menz Limited, found him with already established interests in exotic cultures and a successful businessman's skills with planning and personal relationships. The new environment produced new stimuli. Chief among these was the evident attachment of so many of Adelaide's collecting and scholarly men to Aboriginal Australian matters. Rodney soon met the State's major collectors of ethnographical and archaeological specimens and his acquaintance with C.P. Mountford and H.M. Cooper became close friendships and influential encounters. Harold Cooper (Tindale's former assistant) encouraged Rodney's curiosity in collecting archaeological stone implements, directed him to known sites, reviewed his gleanings, inspired his discovery of new sites and cajoled him into the discipline of cataloguing and localising his finds. 'Monty' introduced him to the living art of the Aborigines, won from a half century's dogged reportage and vastly enriched with personal knowledge of Aboriginal people themselves. The circle grew, his family holidays to the Birdsville Track became regular collecting expeditions and were improved by joining in the work of T.D. Campbell, Paul Hossfeld and Robert Edwards in excavation, field recording and rescue ethnography.

Rodney's original collecting passion had focussed upon the Orient and he had already amassed a fine collection of Japanese art and craft work. These interests were maintained and elaborated upon as the circle of acquaintances widened.

Chief among his personal assets was his possession of exceptional personal charm combined with a genuine concern for the performance of good works. Maybe his innate businessman's instinct compelled him to see his knowledge put to good use by making it bring benefit to others. Those of us who knew him well will remember his business promotions, usually on behalf of indigent missionaries, to assist them create a return upon tribal arts for the original artists. There can be few of us who were spared from the responsibility of acquiring a Maningrida bark painting or a Popondetta tapa cloth in those early years!

These personal resources were soon to be marshalled for the Museum's benefit when in 1966, with the support of our then Director, Peter Crowcroft, Rodney established the Friends of the Museum. Although he unfaillingly attributed this to the inspiration of Crowcroft and the support of the staff, the original rationale of the Friends - a means whereby a rather academically introverted institution might bridge its barriers of incomprehension with its public and win them to its cause by displays and public lectures, thereby making money for its programmes - bore the distinct impress of Rodney about it and obtained its hoped-for results. The 'George French Angas' (1968), 'Miniature Arts of Japan' (1972) and 'Seafarers of the Pacific' (1974) exhibitions were strikingly memorable alliances of Friends and Staff, and despite our primitively up-held scruples about admission charges, made good money from the associated sale of refreshments. Some fairly spectacular purchases of specimens and instruments came about as a result.
His achievements as continuing President of the Friends of the Museum, together with his executive experience in a wide variety of voluntary organisations such as the National Trust and the Sturt Memorial Trust, influenced his appointment to the Museum Board in 1974. The opportunity thus offered him of public service through one of the State's major cultural institutions with responsibilities in both the Natural and Human Sciences, evoked a deep response. He very clearly perceived the unique value of the Museum's cultural collections and the potential they offered for educating the public into the real and often unpalatable realities of today's world. He quickly made it his mission to press the Board, the staff and the Government, to confront such a commitment. He saw his brief as ensuring that the predominantly taxonomic research and field collecting outlook of the Museum should be enhanced by its acquisition of corporate managerial skills, inspired toppline skills in education and display and repairs to the neglect of an adequate staffing establishment for the Human Science collections. He quickly established himself as an insistent promoter of Development within the Board to which end he cultivated a wide circle of relationships with the Museum staff at all levels and an equally wide circle of relationships with other cultural institutions and the upper levels of Government. He became an untiring and persistent champion of any proposal which lent promise of bringing about what he saw as necessary and long overdue changes to the Museum's structure. One of his favourite causes was what he saw as the anomalous statutory responsibilities of the Museum Board, charged on the one hand with responsibilities for the protection of the collections, but on the other denied any direct line of communication to the Minister or control over the appointment of staff. Another of his pressing concerns was the potential of the Museum's collections for improving the local and tourist public's awareness of the abiding values of the Australian Aboriginal, Pacific Islander and Asian societies. These concerns he pressed at Board meetings and upon anyone and everyone he felt could help bring about appropriate changes. They emerged in a spate of submissions, personal encounters and participation in the various committees which have helped to establish Museum Redevelopment as a reality in this State. Significant among these were his Asian gallery proposals of 1976, his Chairmanship of the Education and Display Subcommittee of the Museum Relocation Committee of 1977, and his contributions to the Government's decision to inquire into the Museum's situation in 1978 which has led by degrees to the Final Edwards Report.

Retirement from Arnotts, three years ago, it could be anticipated, was perceived by Rodney as an opportunity to extend his public and cultural interests. He entered with enthusiasm into the work of relocating himself and his oriental collection at Oakbank in a combined dwelling and gallery of striking design. But one of his chief expressed concerns was to detail and publish his extensive collection of archaeological stone artifacts collected on his many expeditions. His acceptance of an Honorary Associateship in Anthropology and Archaeology (March 1980), characteristically became an opportunity not solely for research but help with the difficulties we face in curating the archaeological collection. His fertile mind applied itself to the problems posed in classifying stone artifacts where morphological groupings are so fluid they often seem to defy rational arrangement. He was deeply interested in Research both as a person and as a Board member and he singled out the work we have been doing at Roonka as one of the most publicly significant scientific breakthroughs to emerge from the Museum in recent decades and made it his business to induce both us and the Board to adopt an explicit project managerial attitude towards its conduct. He persuaded the Board to establish a separate Subcommittee for the project's overseeing and he and Alan Hickinbotham in turn induced us to look beyond our exclusively research concerns and pay heed to the promotional and cultural park development implications of what we were doing. He also initiated a programme of personal researches, completing one manuscript on his work at Waldeila,
South Adelaide Plains, and collaborating with me on a review on Aboriginal history in the Lower South East of the State.

Death in this instance intervened most injudiciously and undeservedly into a life well spent in matters of worth and with much more to give. Although Rodney's innate modesty shrank from any form of acknowledgement (he is known to have declined major civil decorations), Alan Hickinbotham's proposal that our Anthropology and Archaeology Research Facility be given Rodney's name as a tribute, seems a most judiciously modest and apt acknowledgement of what has been a most worthwhile conferral of energy and humane wisdom upon the Museum's affairs.

I am grateful for having been invited to contribute this brief tribute to the influence Rodney has exercised upon the Museum this past decade and a half and to personally acknowledge the debt I know is felt by us all.

Graeme L. Pretty.