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Grover Krantz was big on bones. They were, in fact, his life work. And even after death, Krantz is using bones to teach visitors to the Smithsonian, the national museum of natural science in Washington.

His Irish wolfhound, Clyde, is helping, too.

Krantz was an eccentric and beloved teacher of osteology, the study of bones, at Washington State University. The anthropologist, author of 60 academic articles and ten books, had an illustrious career spanning from the 1960s until his retirement in 1998.

His work helped tidy up the family tree of early man and his research on the first humans helped us better understand how human speech developed.

He worked on the controversial Kennewick Man case when Native American tribes went to court to claim the bones of a 9,000-year-old Paleoamerican man found on the banks of the Columbia River. Krantz testified that the skeleton could in no way be traced back to any cultural or ethnic group living today.

He also believed in the existence of Bigfoot. His knowledge of early humans and the footprints they left convinced him that the huge footprints found across the Pacific Northwest belonged to an isolated band of gigantopithecines believed to have gone extinct 300,000 years ago.

Krantz shrugged off the ridicule of his academic peers and wrote several books on Bigfoot. He loved figuring out how things worked and wasn't afraid to let his curiosity take him outside the pale of respectable science.

The professor was well liked by his students despite his notoriously difficult exams. He often ate lunch with them and talked with them about their lives and plans after school.

He also loved Irish wolfhounds and had three — Clyde, Icky and Yahoo — who preceded him in death. Naturally, he kept their bones.

In 2001, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and began tidying his affairs. Krantz hit upon a plan so that he could keep on teaching after death. He gave his body to science and wanted his bones to go on public display. Several universities and museums turned him down for lack of funding.

Krantz's brother, Victor, was a photographer for the Smithsonian Institution and Victor made his case to officials of the prestigious museum, where plans were being laid for an upcoming exhibit, "Written In Bone: Forensic Files of the 17th Century Chesapeake."

Meanwhile, Krantz died. As he wished, his body was sent to the University of Tennessee's "body farm" where researchers studied human decay rates to aid in forensic investigations. His bones were used at George Washington University to teach forensics.

Then, Smithsonian officials saw a way to honor his request. His skeleton would be mounted at the end of the Written in Bones exhibit — exactly as he requested: Krantz wanted the bones of his wolfhound, Clyde, to be displayed, too.

Museum taxidermist Paul Rhymer had worked with the bones of foxes, monkeys and penguins, but never with human bones. He worked with a thick tome on human anatomy at his side. And a photograph. A photo most wolfhound owners understand. It was a picture of Clyde raring up on his hind legs, resting his paws on Krantz. And that's how Krantz and Clyde are displayed at the Smithsonian.

They look like they're both smiling, the man and his big dog, together in death as in life, embracing.