

Preface

In publishing ANNUAL EDITIONS we recognize the enormous role played by the magazines, newspapers, and journals of the public press in providing current, first-rate educational information in a broad spectrum of interest areas. Many of these articles are appropriate for students, researchers, and professionals seeking accurate, current material to help bridge the gap between principles and theories and the real world. These articles, however, become more useful for study when those of lasting value are carefully collected, organized, and reproduced in a low-cost format, which provides easy and permanent access when the material is needed. That is the role played by ANNUAL EDITIONS.

This fourteenth edition of *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology* contains a variety of articles relating to human evolution. The writings were selected for their timeliness, relevance to issues not easily treated in the standard physical anthropology textbook, and clarity of presentation.

Whereas textbooks tend to reflect the consensus within the field, *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology 05/06* provides a forum for the controversial. We do this in order to convey to the student the sense that the study of human development is an evolving entity in which each discovery encourages further research and each added piece of the puzzle raises new questions about the total picture.

Our final criterion for selecting articles is readability. All too often, the excitement of a new discovery or a fresh idea is deadened by the weight of a ponderous presentation. We seek to avoid that by incorporating essays written with enthusiasm and with the desire to communicate some very special ideas to the general public.

Included in this volume are a number of features that are designed to be useful for students, researchers, and professionals in the field of anthropology. While the articles are arranged along the lines of broadly unifying subject areas, the *topic guide* can be used to establish specific reading assignments tailored to the needs of a particular course of study. Other useful features include the

table of contents abstracts, which summarize each article and present key concepts in bold italics.

In addition, each unit is preceded by an *overview* that provides a background for informed reading of the articles, emphasizes critical issues, and presents *key points* to consider in the form of questions. Also included are *World Wide Web* sites that are coordinated to follow the volume's units.

In contrast to the usual textbook that by its nature cannot be easily revised; this book will be continually updated to reflect the dynamic, changing character of its subject. Those involved in producing *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology 05/06* wish to make the next one as useful and effective as possible. Your criticism and advice are welcomed. Please complete and return the postage-paid *article rating form* on the last page of the book and let us know your opinions. Any anthology can be improved, and this one will continue to be.

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