The SMU Department of Anthropology and
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PRESENTS:

The 2017 Fred Wendorf Distinguished
Lecture in Archaeology

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Professor, Stanford University

Modern Human Origins

In 1987, a landmark exploration of mitochondrial DNA diversity popularized the idea of a recent African origin for all living humans. The ancestral African population was estimated to have existed 200 ka (thousands of years ago) plus or minus a few tens of thousands of years. A corollary was that at some later date the fully modern African descendants of that population expanded to swamp or replace the Neanderthals and other non-modern Eurasians. The basic concept soon became known as “Out of Africa,” after the Academy Award winning film (1985) that took its title, in turn, from Isak Dinesen’s classic autobiography (1937). Many subsequent genetic analyses have reaffirmed the fundamental Out-of-Africa model. The fossil and archaeological records also support it strongly. The fossil record implies that anatomically modern or near-modern humans were present in Africa by 150 ka; the fossil and archaeological records together indicate that modern Africans expanded to Eurasia beginning about 50 ka. They then rapidly replaced, and sometimes interbred with, the Neanderthals in western Eurasia and the Denisovans, another archaic group who lived mostly further east.

Wednesday, October 25, 2017; 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.,
Dedman Life Science, Room 110 (www.smu.edu/maps)