René Millon's death last February left many colleagues and former students bereft of his friendship. A professor of anthropology at Rochester from 1961 to 1986, René remained interested in us, his students, throughout his academic career at the University and throughout his 30 years as professor emeritus of anthropology. In his 70s and 80s, he was still consulting and giving papers, and even in his 90s he was advising, telephoning, meeting, and corresponding with former students and colleagues.

René secured his scholarly reputation in the 1970s with the Teotihuacan Mapping Project. The project, funded primarily through the National Science Foundation, involved mapping the eight-square-mile area of the pre-Columbian city of Teotihuacan in central Mexico. According to René’s former student Martha Sempowski ‘83 (PhD), a research fellow at the Rochester Museum and Science Center, the project was “considered groundbreaking in scope and scale. Its use of comprehensive aerial photography extended well beyond the estimated limits of the city proper. It was preceded and accompanied by surface survey and collection of about one million artifacts from some 5,000 sites within the mapped area.”

The project is ongoing, involving scholars from universities in Mexico, the United States, Canada, and Japan, and has had a significant impact on studies of urbanism worldwide.

René displayed a close—and sometimes maddening—attention to detail. Warren Barbour ’76 (PhD), a colleague, former student, and cherished friend of René’s, recalled René’s reaction when he handed him a paper with a typo. “Warren, it was something magical about René’s personality. His friend Kroum Markov ’91 fondly and most aptly dubbed him “Merlin.” His many admirers were pleased when he was elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences in 2002, and when he and his close colleague, George Cowgill, were jointly awarded the A. V. Kidder Award for 2004 by the American Anthropological Association.

Despite his modest height, René’s were the proverbial shoulders upon which many subsequent archaeologists must stand.

—GRETCHEN KOCH MARKOV ’57, ’83 (PHD)

Markov is a former student of Millon’s and a retired teacher in the Rochester City School District.