

Anthropology Brown Bag presentation

I Need Your Help! Kenyan Memorial Statues (Vigango) and the U.S. Tax Code

Dr. Monica Udvardy

Friday, Sept. 16th, 12:00pm Lafferty Rm. 213

My activist research centers on tall, wooden statues, called vigango, erected by the Mijikenda peoples of Kenya to commemorate men who during their lives were members of a particular secret society. Hundreds of vigango have been trafficked to the USA by a single, California based dealer who then mediated their purchase by members of the Hollywood entertainment industry. He then brokered their donation to more than 20 U.S. museums. I assume the wealthy donors colluded with him because they could deduct the appraised value of the statues on their tax returns as charitable contributions. However, I am an anthropologist, not a tax accountant, and need your help determining what the monetary advantage was for them.

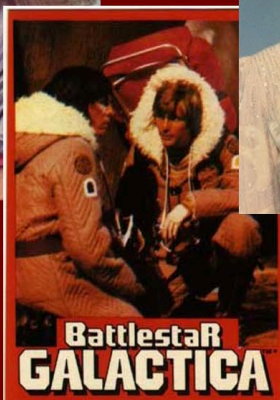
Celebrities who have given vigango to museums



Andy Warhol, Self-portrait



Shelly Hack



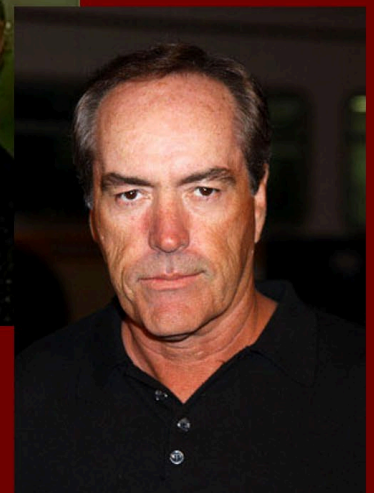
Dirk Benedict



Linda Evans



Gene Hackman



Actor Powers Boothe (above) who donated Kalume's *vigango*