

Rao wove threads of India, Tampa

Some doubt ride-sharing has it covered



BAYLIFE Page 1

Georgia's Ocala State Park offers picturesque paths

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WEATHER

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The PASSION of the SHROUD

Clearwater doctor spreads word of Christ's burial cloth



JASON BEHNKEN/STAFF

Scientific support

See a partial list of Phillips' data and sources. **Page 14**

BY MICHELLE BEARDEN
Tribune staff

CLEARWATER — In the mid-1970s, Wayne Phillips saw a television program telling the story of the Shroud of Turin, a centuries-old linen cloth that bears the image of a crucified man.

At first, he was miffed. Years of Catholic schooling — Jesuit High School in Tampa and Notre Dame University — and he had never known about this artifact? (He would later learn that it was a delicate subject at the Vatican.)

A doctor, he has a curious mind. A mind shaped by logic and by science. But as a Catholic, he understands some beliefs are still a mystery. He yearned to reconcile

both and know the truth in his mind and in his heart. So Phillips began his own decades-long investigation to determine the shroud's authenticity.

There have been many ups and downs in this journey. But today, Phillips says without hesitation: "I believe it is real." Now he wants to share his knowledge with others. In his spare time, at no cost, the Clearwater allergist gives seminars designed for the layman on the shroud's history.

In the past three years, he's made that PowerPoint presentation for packed audiences in Catholic and Protestant churches, schools and organizations nearly 60 times.

He details highlights of **SHROUD, Page 14**

Wayne Phillips, speaking at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, above, and at home, inset, specializes in the Shroud of Turin.

Rao wove threads of India, Tampa

India native sowed seeds for city's Bollywood Oscars

BY PAUL GUZZO
Tribune staff



SARALA RAO

Vijayadhwa Rao was a leader in the community.

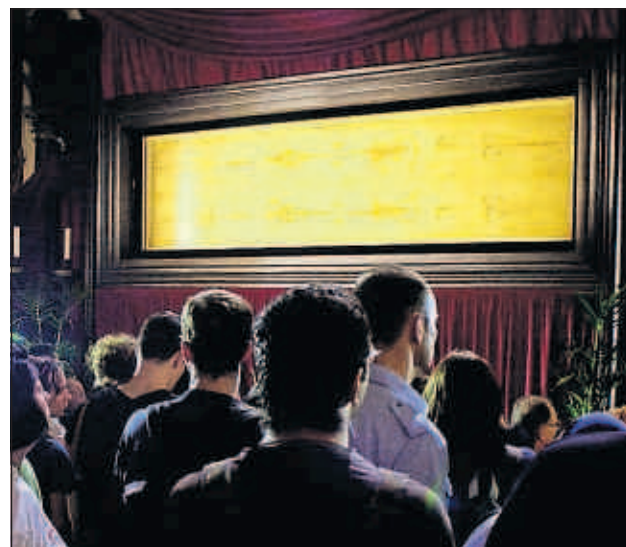
community, creating a welcoming atmosphere for people with ties to the subcontinent.

That atmosphere is credited with helping Tampa emerge as the first U.S. city to host the annual International Indian Film Academy awards, which takes place this week. Few Indians in Tampa's tight-knit Indian

RAO, Page 13

Race for governor offers a stark contrast of personalities and styles

METRO Page 1



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

Pilgrims in 2000 view the Shroud of Turin, revered by some as Jesus' burial cloth, at the Cathedral of Turin in Italy.

Some doubt ride-sharing has it covered

Uber, Lyft respond to insurance liability questions

BY MIKE SALINERO
Tribune staff

TAMPA — Uber, Lyft and other ride-sharing companies tout their services as quicker, cheaper and more convenient ways to get around town.

Insurance regulators in California, Ohio and other states would add another description: underinsured.

The question of who is liable when an Uber or Lyft driver gets in a wreck has been hotly debated in cities targeted by the rapidly expanding "trans-

Catching a Lyft

Columnist Richard Mullins details his ride-sharing experience. **Business, Page 1**

portation networking" companies.

Tampa is the latest. The companies connect passengers with drivers via smartphone apps. The drivers use their personal vehicles and usually carry only their own personal auto insurance, unlike taxi drivers, who must carry a commercial driver policy.

Uber and Lyft say they have excess liability policies of up to \$1 million per incident that kick in when the driver's personal

INSURANCE, Page 13

Ryan Hanigan has two homers and 6 RBIs in Rays' 16-1 rout of Yankees

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Shroud

From Page 1

the 100 scientific facts that he and others say support their conclusion that the shroud did indeed wrap the lifeless body of Christ before the Resurrection on Easter morning 2,000 years ago.

Phillips, 67, doesn't attempt to convert, just educate, carefully referring to the image as the "man in the shroud."

His conviction is not based on faith; he says science gave him the answers.

"I've never found anything in my life that connects my beliefs to science," Phillips says, "until the Shroud of Turin."



It is arguably the most studied religious artifact of all time — and one of the most controversial.

Is it a witness to the Resurrection of Christ or a medieval fraud? People on both sides of the argument contend they have enough proof to make their case.

One fact cannot be disputed: It is a 14-foot-long, 3-foot-wide linen cloth, dotted with blood and bearing an image of a man who suffered physical trauma.

The shroud has reputedly been in the possession of royalty, bishops, popes and even the Knights Templar. It has been studied, poked, prodded and examined by scientists, researchers, religious leaders, scholars and doubters. It is the main focus of hundreds of organizations worldwide and the subject of thousands of studies and books.

The shroud's iconic image is venerated by many Christians, specifically Roman Catholics.

Conversely, it has been mocked by disbelievers, landing on the cover of tabloids such as the National Enquirer and satirized on an episode of "South Park."

Pat Linse, co-founder of The Skeptics Society, calls the shroud "a highly stylized, somewhat amateur rubbing. It's like Big Foot. Every time someone comes up with a new theory or whatnot, it's gets a big flurry of attention."

Linse has no problem with believers who hold the shroud sacred as an article of faith.

But when people claim they have scientific proof that it's real, they had better be prepared to stand their ground against the critics. For the 100 facts in the shroud's defense, Linse says, "we can counter with 1 million that show it's a fake."

"Europe is full of stories and tales about icons like this," Linse says. "They've found enough crosses from the 'real' crucifix to build Noah's Ark."



After a circuitous journey that began in Jerusalem around 30 A.D. (if you're a believer), the shroud ended up in Turin, Italy, in 1578. It's still there, in a bulletproof case in the royal chapel of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

Public displays in the modern era are rare. The last one was in 2010. The next one wasn't supposed



JASON BEHNKEN/STAFF

Wayne Phillips answers questions after his presentation last month on the Shroud of Turin at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Tampa. The linen has fascinated him for decades.

to be until 2025, but Pope Francis caught the faithful off guard in December when he moved it up to next year, authorizing a three-month public exhibition that will begin April 19.

"The image, impressed upon the cloth, speaks to our heart," the pope said, though he stopped short of declaring it an official church relic. "The face in the shroud conveys a great peace; this tortured body expresses a sovereign majesty."

Wayne Phillips intends to make the pilgrimage to Turin. That was a no-brainer for him.

He was among the 2.5 million viewers who went four years ago to see the relic that captivates his attention daily. He expects it will again be a profoundly spiritual experience.

"The church keeps it alive because humanity can't prove it's real," Phillips says. "It can't prove it's not, either."

He understands the doubters.

His lifelong friend, Ralph Ruso, a retired Hillsborough County educator and school administrator, is one of them.

Phillips and Ruso grew up together in Seminole Heights and Davis Islands and served as best man at each other's weddings. Ruso has been to three of Phillips' presentations, learning something new every time.

But does he believe?

"It's still a mystery to me," Ruso says. "I can't say it's real. What I do like is that there's this ongoing process of studying it and trying to figure it out. I love Wayne's passion for it. He says there's hope for me yet, but I'm not there."

Phillips says even his wife of 44 years, Bridget, a devoted Catholic, thinks he's "insane" (she really doesn't), and only one of their four grown children has come to one of his talks. He's fine with that, because the shroud is his obsession, not theirs.

And they understand that it is his nature to be meticulous. When the kids were young, he was their soccer coach. After practice, he would show them videotapes he made of them on the field, giving pointers on how they could improve.

"All my friends hoped he would take an interest in on-shore fishing for snook and redfish, because he would be the type to study the tides and figure everything out in advance," says his son, Michael, who works in private equity finance.

Michael Phillips isn't surprised by his father's intense interest in the shroud. The elder Phillips'



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

A 2000 photo shows a segment of the shroud.

other hobby gets similar attention: the former Notre Dame Glee Club member came in second to the late Karen Carpenter in a national talent contest, and he sings in his strong tenor as a cantor at his parish church and at weddings.

"My dad has the kind of brain that when he finds something intellectually stimulating, he goes all in with it," Michael Phillips says. "He's pragmatic, he's reasonable and he knows how to organize information."



Wayne Phillips has lost track of the hours he spent studying every document he could get his hands on.

His zeal caught the attention of the elite Shroud Science Group, a cross-disciplinary organization of more than 130 doctors, scientists and historians who share information and host conferences worldwide.

Phillips says he was invited to join partly due to his training as an allergist — he has a particular interest in the pollen found on the shroud.

"I rarely put my 2 cents in," he says, chuckling. "I'm afraid of getting blasted for being an idiot."

In 2012, he completed a yearlong program to earn his diploma in the Specialization of Shroud Studies through the Vatican Apostolorum College.

That same year, he completed five 30-minute programs that aired on EWTN's "Women of Grace" syndicated show. And videos of two presentations he's made at Jesuit High School are on YouTube.

Despite his conviction, the ride has been like a roller coaster at times.

In 1978, two years after Phillips saw the documentary, a team of American scientists banded together for the Shroud of Turin Research Project.

They were not predisposed to putting their stamp of approval on it; according to Phillips, most were in the group were agnostic, and only two were Catholics.

After five days of repeated tests, sample taking,

photographs and X-rays using state-of-the-art equipment, they eventually determined the shroud "showed no evidence of the hand of an artist" and that its image was of a "real human form of a scourged, crucified man."

"Shroudies," as enthusiasts like Phillips are sometimes called, were elated.

But in 1988, laboratories in Zurich, Oxford and Arizona performed carbon-14 dating on a small corner of the linen. All three came back with a date range of 1260 to 1390, declaring the cloth to only be 600 to 700 years old.

A story in The New York Times called the shroud a fake.

"I was completed destroyed," Phillips says. "Just devastated. A dozen years into this, and I felt like I had been duped."

Still, a small part in him wouldn't let go. As much as he relied on science, what if the testing proved flawed?

The debate continued, though the naysayers felt the case was closed.

Then, in 2005, a scientific paper concluded that the sample used to test the shroud's age in 1988 was taken from a rewoven area, rather than an original swatch of the linen. Therefore, the radiocarbon date was not valid for determining the shroud's true age.

Resurrection once again for the shroud. Eventually, Phillips took on the mission of restoring its reputation through his talks.



Phillips always arrives in a coat and tie, the same professional look he has in his medical office. He brings his own equipment, including an 8-foot-wide projection screen.

Phillips offers three different presentations: 30, 45 or 90 minutes. He follows with a 10-minute question-and-answer session, but he is always willing to stay later.

"It can be overwhelming, all the information," he admits.

Some people come back multiple times to keep absorbing. Because of Phillips' connection to the Shroud Science Group, he is constantly fine-tuning the talk with up-to-date developments.

Bridget Phillips jokingly says her husband's passion for the shroud "keeps him out of trouble."

She says she doesn't need the scientific data to confirm that it's real.

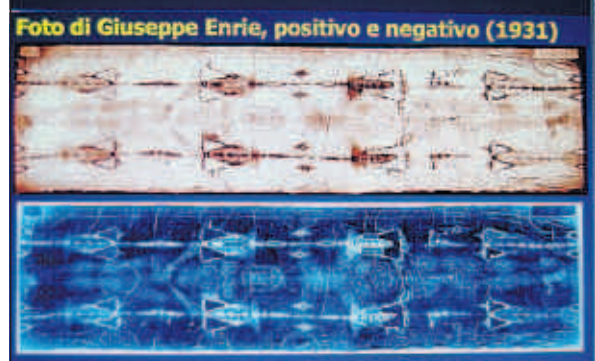


Foto di Giuseppe Enrie, positivo e negativo (1931)
Top, a 1931 image by professional photographer Giuseppe Enrie shows the Shroud of Turin. Below, the photo's negative has also been extensively studied.

Scientific support for the shroud

Clearwater allergist Wayne Phillips cites 100 scientific facts to support his conclusion that the Shroud of Turin is authentic. Here are some of his top picks:

- ◆ Carbon-14 dating in 1988 that suggested the shroud was only 600 to 700 years old has been refuted scientifically.
- ◆ In 1978, the Shroud of Turin Research Project proved the image is not a painting.
- ◆ STURP also proved in 1978 that the image is made of three-dimensional encoded information. No other photos have 3D information.
- ◆ An 1898 image by Italian lawyer Secondo Pia has qualities of a photographic negative 400 years before photography was invented.
- ◆ Modern science cannot duplicate the image. Many have tried, but none have succeeded.
- ◆ Three details of the image disagree with previous thought: The thumbs cannot be seen because the damage of the median nerve moved the thumbs out of plain sight; nails passed through the wrist, not the palms; and Christ wore a cap of thorns, not a crown.
- ◆ The body dematerialized from within the shroud. Modern science reached this conclusion through the details of more than 20 proven image characteristics.

Phillips recommends these websites:

- ◆ shroud.com
- ◆ shroudstory.com

Want to read a good book about the burial cloth of Christ? Phillips likes these two:

- ◆ "The Shroud" by Ian Wilson (Bantam Press, 2010)
- ◆ "The Truth about the Shroud of Turin" by Robert Wilcox (Regnery, 2010)

To schedule a free presentation by Phillips, email him at wayneshroud@yahoo.com. Honorariums or donations go to the Shroud of Turin Education and Research Association Inc.

—Michelle Bearden

"It makes it more interesting, but with or without it, I believe it is Christ's image," she says.

Phillips says he got the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg's blessing a few years ago to speak at local parishes.

He hopes one day to create a small "Shroud Army" composed of directors of religious education who will teach the basics in classes to members and new converts.

More importantly, he wants to reach out to teens and young adults so they will have educated answers if they get in religious debates at college.

"That's an age when you're encouraged to question. I know — I was at Jesuit and Notre Dame," he says. "It's also an age when youth tend to fall away from their faith. Understanding the shroud is one way of proving that our faith is for real."

At a recent presentation at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Tampa, occupational therapist Paul Scaglione of Odessa said he arrived as a "leaner" toward believing in the shroud's authenticity.

By the time he left, he was convinced the burial cloth is the real deal.

Aida Rodriguez, also in the audience, isn't quite there yet. The personal injury lawyer, a 1982 graduate of Tampa Catholic, was

skeptical at first.

As Phillips made his case for its authenticity in a logical and convincing matter, she became more intrigued to that possibility. Her 77-year-old mother, on the other hand, needed no prodding.

"How much more proof do these people need?" she asked her daughter.

Walter Poff came for a second time. The retired corrosion engineer and consultant says "anyone with a lick of common sense" would know the shroud is miraculous.

He always believed "something just wasn't right" with the 1988 carbon-14 dating. And like Phillips, he says Christ left the linen as proof of his crucifixion and resurrection.

"How could anyone deny this?" Poff asks.

Yet there is one test that cannot be conducted. And for that reason, the Catholic Church cannot sign off on the shroud.

It is impossible to get a DNA sample from the risen Christ, Phillips says.

"It won't happen in my lifetime; it won't happen ever," he says simply.

So he will continue to be an ambassador for a relic that may never be fully recognized by his church.

He's OK with that, because he doesn't need that final piece of proof.

He just believes.

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