

## William Lee Peters (1939 - 2000)

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In the summer of the year 2000, the mayfly world lost one of its most respected and beloved members to heart failure.

William L. (Bill) Peters was born in Leavenworth, Kansas, USA. He received the the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Kansas in 1960, then went on to the University of Utah where he received the degree of Master of Arts in zoology and entomology in 1962. In 1966, working at the University of Utah under the tutelage of George F. Edmunds Jr, he earned the PhD degree with a dissertation entitled *A revision of the generic classification of the Eastern Hemisphere Leptophlebiidae (Ephemeroptera)*. (Bill liked to say to say that he was descended from the great J.G. Needham, who taught Jay Traver, who taught George Edmunds, who taught Bill.)

In the same year that he received his degree he was hired as associate professor at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida, given, as he liked to say, "an insect net and a box of pins" and was asked to start an entomology program. By the time of his death, this internationally recognized program had grown under his guidance to a dozen faculty members and was authorized to award the PhD degree. Bill continued to serve as head of the Entomology program until his death.

He also served many years as Research Director of the College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture at Florida A&M University, overseeing all research and related function the College. In 2000 he received the Leadership Recognition Award from the Association of Research Directors of 1890 Colleges and Universities.

Bill was the organizer and convenor of the first International Conference on Ephemeroptera held in Tallahassee in 1970 and served as chairman of the Permanent Committee of International Conferences on Ephemeroptera from its inception until his death. He attended and participated in each of the eight conferences before his death.

Among his many accomplishments Bill served as President of the Florida Entomological Society, was a Research Associate of the Florida Collection of Arthropods, and was an adjunct professor at the University of Florida, the Florida State University, and the University of Maine at Orono. He was a member of the editorial board of the journal *Aquatic Insects*. He was a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society and a member of several scientific societies, including the Kansas Entomological Society and the Florida Entomological Society of which he served as president. He was an honorary member of the Florida Pest Control Association and the Alabama Pest Control Association.

In addition to these leadership functions, Bill spent much of his time teaching entomology. Throughout his teaching career, Bill touched the lives of many students. He was tireless in shepherding both undergraduate and graduate students through problems of both their lives and their education. Bill was tireless in his

encouragement and guidance of undergraduate students. He never hesitated in stepping in to help solve any problems a student might experience: educational, personal, or financial. Among the students who received the PhD degree under his direction are P.T.P. Tsui, M.L. Pescador, H.M. Savage, P.M. Grant, T.J. Fink, J.H. Epler, S.K. Burian, and M.D. Hubbard.

Bill (along with his wife Jan) was renowned for his hospitality. They invited countless visiting scholars and students to stay in their home over the years. It seemed there was always someone at their house in the extra room or at the dining table. The only charge was that one had to listen to his stories.

Bill made major contributions to the study of Ephemeroptera. His scientific research dealt mainly with the mayfly family Leptophlebiidae on a cosmopolitan level. He published over one hundred scientific papers and monographs, established over sixty new genera and subgenera, and described countless new species. He also encouraged, guided, and collaborated with many other mayfly researchers.

Bill is survived by his wife of 36 years, Jan Peters; one daughter, Rae Vinson; and four grandchildren, Alex Adams, Zoe Vinson, Evan Vinson, and Dillon Vinson. We will all miss him.

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