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In Memoriam

JEAN LUTHER LAFFOON 1922-1973

Jean L. Laffoon, Professor of Zoology and Entomology at Iowa State University, died January 19, 1973, in Ames, Iowa, after a brief illness.

Dr. Laffoon was born in Sioux City, Iowa, on August 19, 1922. He graduated from Central High School, Sioux City, in 1939 and was awarded a B.S. degree in biology from Morningside College in 1942. In the fall of that year he entered the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, but withdrew to volunteer for service in the United States Navy. Upon his discharge, three years later, he enrolled in the Graduate College at Iowa State University, where he earned an M.S. degree in 1948 and a Ph.D. degree in 1953, both in entomology. Under the direction of Dr. C. J. Drake he surveyed Iowa for natural avian vectors of malaria, the subject of his M.S. thesis. His Ph.D. dissertation, guided by Dr. H. M. Harris, involved a taxonomic revision of the Nearctic species of fungus gnats of the genus *Fungivora* (Diptera: Mycetophilidae).

In 1946 Dr. Laffoon was appointed Instructor of Entomology in the Department of Zoology and Entomology, and in 1962 he was promoted to the rank of Professor. His principal responsibilities in the Department included teaching general and systematic entomology, acting as curator of the Iowa State University Insect Collection and guiding undergraduate and graduate students.

His introduction to entomology came during his assignment to the United States Naval Medical Research Unit Number 2, then based in the South Pacific. At the time one major function of this organization was malaria control throughout the South Pacific Theater. While he lacked specific training, he was a tireless collector and soon gained the respect and admiration of the entomologists in his unit. From this early exposure he remained fascinated by the Diptera throughout his professional career. He was justly proud of his ability to collect insects, and the extensive Diptera collection at Iowa State University attests to his talents.

Dr. Laffoon participated actively in several of the scientific and professional societies to which he belonged. For the Entomological Society of America he served as Secretary for the General Entomology Section in 1958. He also served on the Committee on Entomological Nomenclature in 1953 and again from 1957 to 1959. From 1954 to 1963 he was a member of the Committee on Common Names of Insects, serving as its chairman from 1958 to 1961. As a Fellow of the Academy of Science he served on the Library (1953-1957) and Constitutional Revision committees (1955-1956). He was a charter member of the Society of Systematic Zoology, a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London, and a member of the Entomological Society of Washington, the American Entomological Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Association of University Professors and the Council for Basic Education, as well as Zeta Sigma, Beta Beta Beta, Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Sigma Delta and Sigma Xi.

Dr. Laffoon pursued his avocations with the same gusto



he brought to his professional pursuits. Foremost among these was his file of biological terminology. Originally an effort to provide students with easy reference to unfamiliar terms, it grew over the years from a few hundred entries to more than 100,000 at the time of his death. From his high school days he maintained an active interest in the German language; he was president of the High School German Club and locally renowned for singing spirited German songs, a habit which was carried over to the halls and classrooms at Iowa State University. In recent years he developed an interest in the works of Bertolt Brecht. He read extensively, collected recordings, became familiar with the songs written for Brecht's plays and presented a series of seminars on Brecht in the undergraduate Honors Program.

Dr. Laffoon's straightforward, honest nature, his dedication to entomology and his love of life did not go unappreciated among those who knew him. His death has deprived us all of the benefits of his leadership, the wealth of his knowledge and the warmth of his friendship.

Dr. Laffoon is survived by his wife, Jayne, and a son, Lee.

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and
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