



Professor William Lee Peters (1939-2000)

The mayfly world has recently lost one of its leading figures, Professor Bill Peters of the Florida A & M University in Tallahassee. It was with great sadness that we received the news that Bill had died suddenly of a cardiac arrest on 3 June this year.

Bill was born in Kansas in 1939 and in 1960 obtained his BA from the University of Kansas. He subsequently moved to the University of Utah where he became a student of the legendary Professor George Edmunds, Jr. He obtained his Ph.D. in entomology in 1966 with a thesis on the taxonomy and phylogeny of the Leptophlebiidae, and it was this mayfly family that was to become his major research field in the years to come. After his appointment at the Florida A & M University in Tallahassee in 1966 he began his efforts to make Tallahassee a centre of research on the Ephemeroptera. In this direction Bill took the initiative to hold the first mayfly conference in Tallahassee in 1973. This was a big success and Bill became the driving force behind the mayfly conferences that have been held every three years since. His vision and enthusiasm for the conferences has been a major factor in their success in bringing together mayfly workers, novices, experienced amateurs and professionals, in a convivial, yet scientific environment. He was in a sense the father of the mayfly family. One will always remember with a certain fondness the contrast of Bill formally opening the mayfly conference in his smart suite and tie compared to his subsequent informal discussions wearing his usual outlandish brightly coloured leisure shirts.

One of Bill's outstanding attributes was his care for both younger, aspiring mayfly workers and those from the developing countries where the study of mayflies was in its infancy. Many of today's established mayfly workers owe much to Bill's help and understanding. This was very much expressed in, along with his wife Jan, the open house tradition in Tallahassee. Through his extensive fieldwork overseas and contact with mayfly workers worldwide, Bill built up the mayfly collections in Tallahassee such that it became, not only a centre of mayfly research, but also the site of major mayfly collections.

In much of this work Bill had the strong support of his Jan, and the mayfly workers wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Jan and their daughter Rae in the loss of a husband and a father.

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