

IN MEMORIAM: PHILIP L. WRIGHT, 1914–1997

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Philip Lincoln Wright, a member of the AOU since 1942 and an Elective Member since 1977, died at his home on 16 July 1997 following a battle against amyloidosis. Phil was born on 9 July 1914 in Nashua, New Hampshire. He earned B.S. (1935) and M.S. (1937) degrees in zoology from the University of New Hampshire and a Ph.D. (1940) from the University of Wisconsin. His Ph.D. work consisted of a two-part study on the reproductive biology of Red-winged Blackbirds and short-tailed weasels. The blackbird study was significant in documenting that yearling males in subadult plumage are capable of spermatogenesis (see *Condor* 46:46–59).

Phil moved to Missoula in 1939, fresh out of graduate school, and taught zoology classes at the University of Montana until his retirement in 1985. He was Chairman of the Zoology Department from 1956 to 1969, during which time he helped establish the department's doctoral program. His mammalogy and ornithology classes were legendary in that they were extremely demanding, yet tremendously entertaining and rewarding. Phil's research interests centered around mammalian reproduction (he was a pioneer in the study of delayed implantation in mustelids), but 14 of his 39 scientific publications concerned birds.

No one will match Phil's contribution to ornithology and mammalogy in Montana. Phil was instrumental in developing the collection of birds and mammals at the University of Montana's zoology museum. In recognition of his commitment to the collection, the museum was renamed the Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum during a dedication ceremony on 5 May 1997. Phil was keenly interested in the distribution of common birds and the occurrence of rare birds in Montana, and he continued to study bird distribution throughout his "retirement." He was a member of the Montana Bird Records Committee from its inception in 1991

and was a subregional editor for *American Birds* and *National Audubon Society Field Notes* for many years. His last act as a scientist occurred six days before his death when he signed the proofs for a lengthy article on Montana's rare birds (*Northwestern Naturalist* 77:57–85). This article will form the basis for a book, of which Phil will be a coauthor, on the status and distribution of Montana's birds.

In addition to his work within Montana, Phil made many contributions at the national level. He served three terms as a Director of the American Society of Mammalogists between 1957 and 1977, was a Trustee from 1977 to 1983, and was an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Mammalogy* from 1956 to 1967. Phil joined the Boone and Crockett Club in 1971, served as Chairman of the Records Committee from 1978 to 1986, and was elected an Honorary Life Member in 1984. In honor of his lifetime service to the club, Phil was awarded the prestigious Sagamore Hill Medal in 1996. Phil also was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a long-time member of the Cooper Ornithological Society.

Phil was completely dedicated to his family and to his profession. His enthusiasm for the things that interested him was infectious, and he always was willing to help a student or colleague. These qualities, and his almost photographic memory, were responsible for his excellence as an educator. I suspect that Phil taught more ornithology and mammalogy students than anyone else on earth. Considering the influence that his students have had on their students, and on down the line, Phil's lifetime "fitness" as an educator is incalculable.

Phil was preceded in death by his first wife, Margaret. He is survived by his second wife, Hedwig; two sons, Alden and Philip, Jr.; a daughter, Ann Dwyer; a brother, Paul; and four grandchildren. Everyone who knew Phil well cared for him deeply, and his loss will be felt by all of us.