

In memoriam: Prince Sears Crowell Jr.

Prince Sears Crowell Jr., professor emeritus of zoology, died at the age of 92, on April 11, 2002. He is survived by his wife, Villa Bailey Crowell, and their three children, Persis Ann, Polly Foster, and Prince “Skip” Crowell III.

Crowell earned degrees from Bowdoin College (AB’30) and Harvard (MA’31, PhD’35). He taught briefly at Brooklyn College and spent 12 years at Miami University of Ohio before joining the Indiana University faculty in 1948.

Crowell was a member of the IU faculty for 31 years. An expert on invertebrates, he taught Invertebrate Zoology, as well as Introductory Biology, Embryology, Anatomy, and Ornithology.

Crowell’s fascination with marine biology dated back to childhood courses taken at the Children’s School of Science in Woods Hole, Mass. His interest in the subject deepened during his teen years, which were spent at Woods Hole collecting specimens for the Marine Biological Laboratory.

The MBL continued to play a key role in Crowell’s life throughout his career. His research, which centered on Cnidarians such as hydroids, sea anemones, and jelly fish, was carried out predominantly at MBL. He taught their invertebrate class for several years, first meeting his wife, Villa, when she enrolled in his 1937 summer course. Crowell served on the board of trustees for the Marine Biological Laboratory and was a member of their Executive Committee for two terms.

Crowell was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the Indiana Academy of Science. His other memberships included the Society of Developmental Biology, the International Society of Developmental Biology, and the American Society of Zoologists, where he was their first program officer and the first managing editor of their journal, *American Zoologist*.

In 1979, the year he retired, Crowell’s former students and colleagues created a scholarship in his honor. The Sears Crowell Scholarship helps support students enrolled in a field program, preferably at a marine lab. Crowell Scholars have attended programs throughout the United States, as well



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In addition to his professional accomplishments, Sears Crowell was an avid sailor who enjoyed croquet, billiards, and cards.

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— Charles Wyttbach

as in such diverse places as Grand Cayman, the Virgin Islands, Mexico, South Africa, and Australia.

Physician **Paul Yonover**, BA’93, was a 1991 Crowell Scholarship recipient. He wrote, “Like countless others, my life was greatly affected by Dr. Crowell. I [received] a scholarship ... to support my studies of seagrass beds in the Virgin Islands. ... That summer had an enormous impact on my life, both professionally and personally. It was a time of growth for me, and I hold dear those memories.”

Charles Wyttbach, BA’54, MA’56, an emeritus professor of biology at the University of Kansas, was a key figure in the cre-

ation of the Crowell Scholarship. He was touched that so many former students expressed such high esteem for their beloved mentor by establishing the award. “I know Sears took great satisfaction in the scholarship,” Wyttbach stated, “for he took an active part in selecting the recipients and followed their progress with interest.”

Wyttbach spoke at Crowell’s memorial service at Woods Hole. He credited Crowell with inspiring him to pursue a career in academics. Wyttbach recalled how impressed he was with Crowell’s vast knowledge of biology, adding, “In the day of increasing specialization, he retained an interest in biology in the broadest sense.”

Crowell was a member of the American Civil Liberties Union, belonged to Citizens for Good Government, and was a Rotarian. Thanks to his mother’s influence, he was an avid birder. Together, they studied the displacement of terns by gulls on southern Massachusetts islands. He was active in the Audubon Society and other environmental groups. Crowell was a skilled sailor who raced competitively for more than 60 years, winning with his father two Class National Championships. His love of competition was also seen in billiards, cards, and croquet.

Yonover said, “Dr. Crowell was a man of science and his professional accomplishments reflected his great talents. Perhaps more important, however, was his pursuit of hobbies and interests outside of his line of work. Having such passion is a great example for us all.”

Wyttbach said at the memorial service, “By his example, I learned what is really important in life — not just professional accomplishments, but also integrity, a sense of humor, and the importance of family and other relationships.”

If you would like to make a contribution to the Sears Crowell Scholarship endowment, please contact Kathy Wyss, development officer for biology, at (812) 855-6195 or by e-mail to kwyss@indiana.edu.