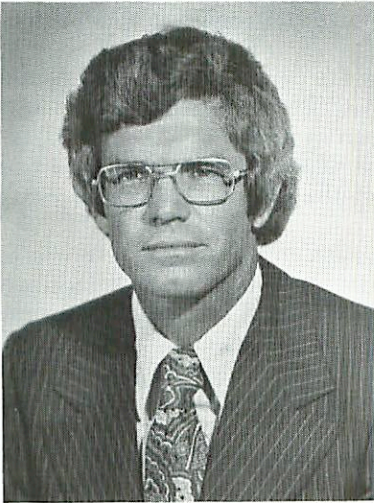


O B I T U A R Y
William Henley Cross
1928 - 1984



The world has lost a dedicated scientist and naturalist in the untimely death of William H. Cross. Bill was killed in western Mexico in early April while on a collecting trip studying the ecology of the boll weevil. Those who knew Bill well can take some consolation in the fact that he died in his favorite pursuit — exploring exotic locations for insects and their host plants.

Bill was born on December 10, 1928, in Baker County, Georgia, but grew up on the shore of Lake Jackson in Tallahassee, Florida. His interest in nature began early. His mother remembers that almost as soon as he could walk, he was turning over rocks to see what lived under them. Somewhat later, he began to collect the myriad dragonflies and damselflies that emerge from Lake Jackson and

to observe the birds that live there. His extensive notes and collections reflect his early enthusiasm.

Bill was salutatorian of his 1947 High School graduating class and attended Florida State University, earning his B. S. degree with honors in 1949 and his Master's degree in 1951 with his thesis on dragonflies. He attended the University of Georgia where he received his Ph.D. in 1956 with a broad ecological study of insects as his dissertation.

He was an entomologist doing mosquito research in the Air Force from 1955 to 1957 at Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico, and Fort Detrick, Maryland. After leaving military service, he worked on the USDA Screwworm Eradication program at Orlando and Sebring, Florida, until its successful completion in 1961. He then joined the USDA Boll Weevil Research Laboratory as it was being formed near Starkville, Mississippi, and was Biology and Ecology Research Leader there until his death. He served as adjunct professor in both the Entomology and Biological Sciences Department at Mississippi State University. He was major professor for ten Doctoral and nine Master's students and served on numerous other graduate students' committees.

Bill was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi, and Gamma Sigma Delta. While with the screwworm program, he received an Outstanding Rating and his team, a USDA Unit Award. He was a member of the group that received a USDA Superior Service Award in 1975 for the development of the boll weevil pheromone program. Bill was the 1980 recipient of the Mississippi Entomological Association Award for research. He received a 1980 USDA Certificate of Merit for superior performance as leader of the Biological Evaluation Team in the Boll Weevil Eradication and Optimum Pest Management Trial programs, and his team received a USDA Unit Award in 1982.

Bill's research accomplishments formed the basis for numerous symposia on the boll weevil and are further documented in over 70 scientific papers. An internationally recognized authority on the ecology of the boll weevil, Bill traveled widely in Latin America and recently aided the Brazilian government in assessing the boll weevil problem there. His insistence that behavioral studies be carried out under natural conditions in cottonfields has resulted in many valuable observations.

Bill's contributions to systematic entomology are perhaps best exemplified by his tireless efforts at merging his creation, the ARS Cotton Insect Collection, with the collections of the MSU Entomology Department to form the Mississippi Entomological Museum. Bill was interim director of the museum until a full time director was found. This museum currently has the largest collection of cotton insects in existence.

His broad interests included active participation in civic affairs. He was an experienced pilot, and since his first solo flight in 1970, Bill enthusiastically developed flying as a research tool. Bill was a past president and staunch supporter of the Starkville Lions Club. Affectionally known to young scouts as "Dr. Bug," Bill was an active member of Boy Scout Troop 45 for over a decade. More recently, Bill had been coordinating the Christmas Bird Counts of the Audubon Society for this area.

Bill was well known for his youthful enthusiasm and methodical nature. Those of us who knew him as a friend remember him as a quiet, kind, and considerate person, a dedicated husband and father. He will be deeply missed.

William L. McGovern
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