

In Memoriam

W. Thomas Edmondson (1916–2000)

W. T. (Tommy) Edmondson died in Seattle in January after months of paralysis and complications from an automobile accident. He had been Professor Emeritus of Zoology at the University of Washington since 1986. Retirement did not diminish his academic scholarship; he remained active and was working on several manuscripts at the time of his death. Dr. Edmondson leaves limnology and ecology a rich legacy of original contributions to population biology, secondary production, and trophic dynamics. In particular, his Egg Ratio Method for calculating birth and death rates facilitated the scientific revolution in zooplankton ecology during the 1960s and 1970s. His reviews of secondary production and his revision of *Ward and Whipple's Freshwater Biology* rendered immense service to his colleagues.

Details of Edmondson's career as well as insights into his thinking are published in *Limnology and Oceanography* (**33**(6) part 1), the *Journal of Limnology* (formerly *Memoriae della Istituto Italiano di Idrobiologia* **47**: 45, **59**: 1), and *Hydrobiologia* (**186/187**: 109, in press). He became a charter member of the American Society of Limnology in 1936 while still an undergraduate student, as a gift from his own mentor, G. Evelyn Hutchinson. He served as president of ASLO from 1960 to 1961 and was awarded ASLO's G. Evelyn Hutchinson medal in 1990.

Edmondson amassed public recognition for his research contributions, particularly his monumental studies of Lake Washington, that include the Cottrell Award for Environmental Quality from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 1973; he was elected to membership in the NAS the same year. He held the August Thienemann-Einar Naumann Medal of the International Association for Theoretical and Applied Limnology and was named Eminent Ecologist by the Ecological Society of America.

Edmondson's passing deprives science of a keen intellect and illuminating spirit. The passionate interest in aquatic environments and biota that gripped him as a youth did not diminish over time. One cannot study his publications or biographical materials without sensing that he took tremendous and continual joy from lakes and lake organisms. The uniform excellence and durability of his contributions testify to the careful thought behind each one. Edmondson was not a practitioner of science by committee; of more than 100 major publications, he was sole author of all but 25. The imprint he left on the field of limnology is unambiguous and undiluted. He taught by example how to harness intellectual power and apply it to resolution of seemingly intractable problems of nature. He was particularly proud of a few "good ideas" for methods that he developed, including the famous Egg Ratio Method. His thinking is best illustrated by a quote written in 1990 (Mem. Ist. Ital. Idrobiol. **47**): "Given brains, the creation of ideas is limited by information. The creation of information is limited by methods."

Tommy is survived by his wife, Yvette Hardman Edmondson, Editor Emeritus of *Limnology and Oceanography*, and recipient of the ASLO Distinguished Service Award.

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