

Obituary

With great sorrow, I note the passing of Robert G. Wetzel on April 18, 2005. Bob Wetzel was one of the outstanding biogeochemists and limnologists of the 20th Century. Since earning his BS (1958) and MS (1959) from the University of Michigan and his Ph.D. (1962) from the University of California at Davis, Wetzel wrote 23 books and more than 400 professional publications. Few other scientists have had as much influence on their field. Two of Wetzel's books are particularly noteworthy: his classic text on limnology, now in its third printing (Wetzel, R. G. 2001. *Limnology: Lake and River Ecosystems*, 3rd Edn. Academic), and his text with Gene Likens on methods used in freshwater ecology, also now its third printing (Wetzel, R. G. and G. E. Likens. 2000. *Limnological Analyses*, 3rd Edn. Springer-Verlag). Much of Wetzel's extremely productive research career was devoted to examining the biogeochemistry of carbon in aquatic ecosystems, an area in which his profound influence will long be felt.

Bob Wetzel held an impressive array of academic positions. He rose through the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor of botany at Michigan State University, serving on the faculty there from 1965 to 1986. In 1986, he moved to the University of Michigan as a professor of biology. Then from 1990 to 2001, he served as the Bishop Professor of Biology at the University of Alabama. In 2001, he moved to the University of North Carolina as a faculty member in the School of Public Health's Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, and he became the William Kenan Distinguished Professor in 2003. Since 1982, he also served continually as the Erlander Professor at the distinguished Institute of Limnology at Uppsala, Sweden. Wetzel was a great mentor, and his former students include such talented scientists as Joann Burkholder and Jim Cotner.

Not surprisingly, Bob Wetzel was awarded many prestigious awards. A few examples, among many: the Hutchinson Science Laureate Award for outstanding contributions to the fundamentals of limnology and the international dissemination of knowledge (2005); the Society of Wetland Scientists' Lifetime Achievement Award (2000); the Hutchinson Medal from the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography (1992); and the Baldi Memorial Award from the International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology (1989).

To me, one of the most impressive aspects of Bob Wetzel's professional life was his devotion to community service. He was a member of over 30 professional societies, and held key roles in some of these. He was the founder and first president of the International Association of Aquatic Vascular Plant

Biologists. He was the president of the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography from 1980 to 1981. He was the General Secretary and Treasurer of the International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology (SIL) from 1968 until his premature death this spring. Gene Likens, the current president of SIL as well as a close colleague and friend of Bob Wetzel, noted that Wetzel was the glue that made SIL the great professional society it has become over the past many decades.

Many years ago now, I asked Bob Wetzel to join the editorial board at *Biogeochemistry* as one of our Associate Editors. Many colleagues told me the Wetzel was much too busy, and too famous, to help with our journal, but I asked him nonetheless, as I greatly admired his integrity, his incite, and his depth of scientific understanding. Somewhat to my surprise, Bob accepted my invitation, and he served the journal with great dedication right up until his death. He will be deeply missed by his many colleagues and friends around the world, including those of us at *Biogeochemistry*.

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