

Dr. Robert Joseph Bandoni (1926–2009)

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Prominent Canadian mycologist Dr. Robert Joseph Bandoni died on May 18, 2009, at the age of 82 in Vancouver, British Columbia, after suffering from a stroke.

Dr. Bandoni was born on November 9, 1926, in Weeks, Nevada. He was the second of seven children born to Guiseppe and Albina Bandoni, who immigrated to the United States from Italy. He graduated from high school in Hawthorne, Nevada, and then continued his studies at the University of Nevada at Reno, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1953. He obtained his Master of Science degree from the University of Iowa in 1956. He then continued his studies with Prof. George W. Martin and was granted his Ph.D. in 1957. The title of his Ph.D. dissertation was “Taxonomic studies of the genus *Tremella* (Tremellales).” After brief postdoctoral and teaching appointments at the Illinois Natural History Survey and Wichita State University, he joined the Department of

Botany at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1958, where he worked until his retirement in 1989. Dr. Bandoni was awarded the Lawson Medal from the Canadian Botanical Association in 1990 for his cumulative, lifetime contribution to Canadian botany. After his retirement, he remained active as an Emeritus Professor at UBC.

Dr. Bandoni was a well-known and prolific mycologist who published more than 80 research papers, as well as several chapters of books, mainly on the taxonomy and morphology of jelly fungi. He published several papers with the internationally acclaimed Prof. Franz Oberwinkler of Germany. These publications included the noteworthy papers on Heterobasidiomycetes that appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Botany* and *Mycologia*. Dr. Bandoni also published a review paper in the *Transactions of the Mycological Society of Japan*. These papers became the basis for the modern taxonomy of this group of fungi. A unique and significant paper he co-wrote with Dr. Koske appeared in the journal *Science*. This paper explained how small spores can even travel upward on a monolayer of water on a leaf surface. He also contributed significantly to fungus sections of several excellent textbooks of botany written with his University of British Columbia colleagues. He was an ardent naturalist, and an active member and one of the leaders of the Vancouver Mycological Society. For many years, two editions (1954, 1976) of his field guide entitled *Guide to Common Mushrooms of British Columbia* were the most popular and credible field guides to mushrooms of that region.

Dr. Bandoni was a special person to quite a few Japanese mycologists. He visited Japan many times, starting in the early 1980s, for periods lasting from a few weeks to several months. He established close friendships with many Japanese mycologists in various stages of their careers. He developed good relationships with both young and well-established

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mycologists. Among the many contacts he made in Japan, his friendship and cooperation with the late Prof. Keisuke Tubaki of the University of Tsukuba (and his students) are important and worth mentioning here. Dr. Bandoni and Dr. Tubaki enjoyed a professional and personal friendship. They called each other by their first names, and together with Dr. Tubaki's students they formed strong bonds similar to those formed by close-knit families. Whenever Dr. Bandoni visited Japan, Dr. Tubaki and his students were gracious and willing hosts; they spent significant amounts of time together and accompanied Dr. Bandoni on his extensive travels and fieldwork throughout Japan. Together Dr. Bandoni and Dr. Tubaki encouraged and educated several leading mycologists in Japan; they were revered as teachers, mentors, and friends. Unfortunately, Dr. Tubaki died in 2005. His obituary was written by Dr. Bandoni in *Mycoscience* (46:381–382, 2005).

Whenever I met Dr. Bandoni, he was always carrying several manuscripts of papers written by Japanese mycologists. He helped many Japanese mycologists by correcting their English and also reviewing the scientific content of their manuscripts. Many Japanese mycologists were fortunate enough to benefit from his generous support and wisdom. Dr. Bandoni had been an honorary member of the Mycological Society of Japan for many years.

Dr. Bandoni successfully organized the 5th International Mycological Congress, which was held at the campus of

the University of British Columbia in Vancouver in 1994. He was a tireless member of the Congress, and in 1994 he was the president of the Congress and the chairman of the organizing committee.

He was not only an excellent, serious scientist and educator but also a kind, pleasant, dependable, honorable, and handsome man loved by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. Although most Japanese could not understand his unusual English humor, he is fondly remembered by many for his disarming smile and few Japanese words, such as “konichiwa!” and “ogenki de suka?”

On September 13, 2009, a celebration of Dr. Bandoni's life was held at the beautiful Botanical Garden of the University of British Columbia. It was attended by many of his relatives, friends, former students, and colleagues. The Mycological Society of Japan sent a lovely bouquet of flowers for the occasion. Dr. Takayuki Aoki, a student of the late Dr. Tubaki, and I attended the celebration, representing the many Japanese mycologists who knew Dr. Bandoni from his numerous visits to Japan. Dr. Aoki gave an excellent speech reminiscing about times he spent with Dr. Bandoni in Japan.

The mycological community in Japan, and indeed throughout the world, has lost a great friend, compassionate mentor, and an excellent teacher. He will be missed.