

awards

EMINENT ECOLOGIST

E. C. Pielou

The Eminent Ecologist Award is given to an ecologist who has made important and significant contributions to the field. The first award was given to H. S. Conrad in 1954. Since then, it has been given to 30 ecologists including, in the last five years:

- 1981 R. H. Whittaker
- 1982 E. S. Deevey
- 1983 W. T. Edmondson
- 1984 J. L. Harper
- 1985 J. H. Connell

This year we are most pleased to present the Eminent Ecologist Award to Dr. E. C. Pielou.

Chris Pielou is not your typical ecologist. She started her career by earning a certificate in radio-physics from the University of London when she was just 18 years old. She then completed three years of war service as a Navy technical assistant. During this time, she met, and subsequently married, a biologist. As a result, she went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Botany from the University of London.

Within two years of completing her bachelor's degree, she had her first publication, in the *Journal of Ecology*, on the vegetation of the Rukwa Rift Valley, Tanganyika. Twelve years would pass before she was awarded a Ph.D. (again from the University of London). Yet during that time, she continued to do independent research, publish on statistical ecology, and raise three children to school age. She then entered, for the first time, the money economy as a scientist—as a research statistician with the Canadian Department of Forestry and later the Department of Agriculture. When she finally entered the world of academe, she did it as a Full Professor, first at the Queens University in Ontario, then at Dalhousie for 10 years, and finally at the University of Lethbridge, from which she retired last year. During those years, she was also invited to be a visiting professor at North



Carolina State, Yale, and the University of Sydney in Australia. In the same period, she earned a D.Sc., the senior doctoral degree in the British system.

We are honoring Dr. Pielou tonight not only for her long and productive career, but especially for her contribution to ecological research. Her book, *Introduction to Mathematical Ecology*, first published in 1969, literally changed the direction of ecological research. Her approach spread rapidly, not only among theoretical ecologists, but among experimental and field biologists as well.

Her other books, on Population and Community Ecology, Ecological Diversity, and Biogeography, had an equal impact on an eager audience. Open any issue of *Ecology* today and you will probably find a reference to Pielou, and certainly will detect the influence of Pielou's quantitative approach to ecological research.

Dr. Pielou continues to be an active researcher, even in retirement in rural British Columbia. Her most recent works emphasize biogeography and the interface between bio-

geography and ecology. I have heard a rumor that she is in the middle of another major new project, but she told me that she does not discuss her work until it is completed. Thus, you and I will have to watch carefully for the next publication by Pielou.

In the meantime, the Ecological Society of America is honored to present the Eminent Ecologist Award to Dr. E. C. Pielou.

Written by Barbara Bentley

Selection Committee:

Barbara Bentley (Chair)

Robert Colwell

Francis Evans

John Ewell

Harold Mooney

Gordon Orians

Daniel Simberloff