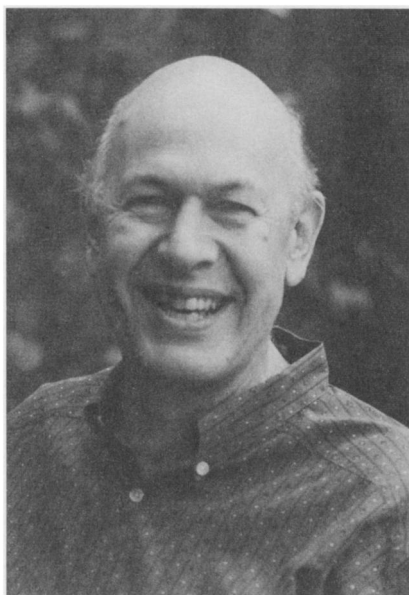


DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CITATION



Lee N. Miller

The Distinguished Service Citation is given by the Ecological Society of America to recognize dedicated service and important contributions by individuals to the Society itself. At a time when recent recipients of this award have been superbly appropriate, the dedication and contributions to the Society of the 1996 winner are still extraordinary.

The journals of the Ecological Society are the heart of the Society. They are absolutely necessary to its function. Without them, the Society would be of little import to its members or to the science. I am confident that the majority of Society members believe that the journals are not only necessary, but are sufficient alone to justify the existence of the Society. Nothing else we do as a society so directly and importantly impacts so many of its members and their scientific obligations. The Society, then, is critically benefitted by an individual who is primarily responsible for simultaneously increasing the quality and objectivity of manuscript reviews

and reviewers, systematizing the disposition of manuscripts from submission to publication, enhancing the efficiency and value of manuscript editing, ameliorating the increases in cost of the printed page, and significantly enhancing the overall quality of the journals.

Dr. Lee N. Miller, 1996 recipient of the Distinguished Service Citation, took the helm as Managing Editor of *Ecology* and *Ecological Monographs* in December 1978. At that time, the leadership of the journals had been unstable for at least a decade. Much to the relief of the last in a rapid succession of multiple voluntary editors, the first paid Managing Editor began work in January 1972. Following the often frustrated efforts of three successive managing editors in seven years, the search committee carefully surveyed a large field of applicants in fall 1978. They selected Lee, whom the Council appointed as Managing Editor of the journals, and as Editor-in-Chief of both *Ecology* and *Ecological Monographs*, to begin January 1979.

At that time the journals were highly respected, holding two of the top six ranks among impact factors by ecological journals (they held two of the top three in 1992). The problems were the familiar backlogs of unpublished manuscripts as well as late publication of printed journals (5 months behind) and a slow publication schedule that required up to two years from the date of submission. These problems were not peculiar to the 1970s; the report of the publications committee in the Proceedings Issue of *Ecology*, April 1921, described the new journal *Ecology*: "The first volume has been issued and contains 313 pages. Owing to delays incident upon organization and to troubles in the printing industry, the first number did not appear until July 7th, approximately six months late."

Lee's efforts not only eliminated the backlog of unpublished papers

and brought out issues on their publication dates, but he reduced the average time to publication to its current 18-month average over a time that saw an approximate doubling of pages, articles, and journals published. Yet, these statistics define only the improvement of publication logistics. Important as they are to the authors and readers awaiting their latest articles, the logistics are a small part of the positive influence Lee has had on the journals in his 17 years at the helm.

Many changes he made maintained and enhanced journal quality. A few of those changes include:

- Developing a system that identifies competent and relevant scientists to review manuscripts, evaluates reviews, prevents old-boy favoritism, and avoids overloading the best reviewers.
- Identifying top scientists of sufficient breadth and judgement to serve as editors and convincing them to serve 3-year terms.
- Diversifying the Board of Editors by seeking advice and opinions from a broad cross-section of ESA members for positions on the Board, by adding women, minorities and foreign editors, and by doubling the size of the Board.
- Developing and promoting the use of ethical guidelines on conflicts of interest, prior publication of submitted manuscripts, misuse of unpublished data, and so on. These guidelines have since been incorporated into the Society's code of ethics.

If the selection of changes listed above suggests that Lee was focused on implementing high standards and intense organization in the Managing Editor's office, it should be emphasized that he did so with humor, compassion, and considerable concern for editorial office staff and among editorial board members, the reviewers, and last, but not least, the authors. Jane Shaw, Office Manager in Ithaca, notes that "Lee has been a master at

coordinating the efforts of many different personalities by diffusing conflict and solving problems, allowing staff [and off-site personnel] to create publications of high quality in which all take a great deal of pride." His ability to instill that pride and motivation with minimal damage to human sensitivities is a hallmark of Lee's ad-

ministration of the office of Managing Editor.

All of this has been accomplished with Lee's absolute dedication to the journals, and to the Society he served so well. The Society could not have chosen a more deserving candidate to honor with this Distinguished Service Citation.

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