
RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT

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Richard G. Beidleman: 1923–2014



Richard Gooch Beidleman was a very active ecologist, who belonged to 26 professional organizations, and consequently was spread too thinly to become a leading voice in the Ecological Society. His vita contains a seven-page list of professional activities, and his 30-page bibliography lists over 420 publications. Born in Grand Forks, North Dakota, his peripatetic family also lived in Tacoma, San Diego, and Yonkers before he entered Brown University on a scholarship to study zoology in 1940. He stayed a year before transferring to the University of Colorado for two years before joining the U.S. Navy. During World War II, he served in the Pacific theater; afterwards, he returned to Colorado, where he earned his three degrees (1947, 1948, 1954).

Dick spent his career before retirement in Colorado, at the University of Colorado (1946–1948), Colorado State University (1948–1956), and Colorado College (1957–1988). At Colorado College, he served as chairman of the Biology Department, 1968–1971. He also served as a summer Ranger Naturalist at Yosemite National Park (1948, 1949) and at Rocky Mountain National Park (1956–1960). I was also a summer Park Naturalist at Rocky Mountain National Park in 1959, where I met Dick before heading to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for graduate study in history of science. He was already heavily into the history of American natural history and ecology studies by then, and our mutual interests led to over a half-century relationship conducted almost entirely through correspondence.

Dick had two daughters and a son with his first wife, Reba Ethel Rutz, and after his retirement, he

and Reba moved to his parents' former home in Pacific Grove, California. Immediately after they were settled, they went for a walk down to the shore, where she was struck by a car and died. In 1991, he married a former student, Linda Havighurst Price. Dick acknowledged the assistance of both wives in his most important publication, *California's Frontier Naturalists* (2006).

After "retirement," Dick worked as a volunteer archivist for the University of California Herbaria at Berkeley, which enabled him to produce more articles on the history of biology. He also lectured and taught numerous short courses both in Colorado and California with Linda.

Dick spent several sabbatical leaves studying the natural history, ecology, and history of biology of Australia. Partly as a result, his daughter Janet married and moved to Tasmania. Daughter Carol married and lives in Santa Fe, and son Kirk married and lives in Estes Park.

Dick was fortunate to remain healthy into old age. In summer 2013, my wife, Andrea and I had the pleasure of visiting Dick and Linda, in their Pacific Grove home. His last yearly participation in the Monterey Peninsula Christmas Bird Count was in December, 2013, at age 90. Andrea and I expected to visit Dick and Linda in 2014, but he died two weeks before our trip from Wisconsin.

Written by Frank N. Egerton

Addendum by Dennis H. Knight

Among his many accomplishments, Richard Beidleman was on the National Steering Committee for the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS, 1961–1964), and one of the authors for the ecologically oriented "Green Version" of the *BSCS High School Biology* textbook, published in 1968 and arguably Dick's most important contribution to the advancement of ecology as a profession. That same year Dick was co-author of a book titled *Interaction of Man and the Biosphere* (Rand McNally), which predated the first Earth Day. Over the years, he authored hundreds of other publications that ranged from poetry and book reviews to ornithology, riparian ecology, and the history of ecology.

A popular teacher, Dick was a national lecturer for the American Institute of Biological Sciences Visiting Scientist Program. He gave hundreds of lectures in the United States, Great Britain, and Australia at places such as the Smithsonian Institution, the British Museum of Natural History, Kew Gardens, and numerous colleges and universities. Though Colorado College focused entirely on undergraduate education, Dick and his students contributed to the development of the International Biological Program's initiative on the grassland biome; and his students participated regularly at meetings of the Colorado-Wyoming Academy of Sciences, an organization for which he served as executive secretary, journal editor, and president. He also served on the Colorado State Park Board, Colorado State Natural Areas Council, and the boards of the Horace Albright Training Center, Rocky Mountain Nature Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Thorne Ecological Institute. For many of us working in the Rocky Mountain Region, he was a friend, mentor, and example for how to be an effective ecologist.

Dick's accomplishments and service were recognized with numerous awards, including the 1971 Citizen of the Year Award from the city of Colorado Springs, the 1987 Environmental Achievement Award from the Thorne Ecological Institute, and an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Colorado College in 1989.