

### Obituary

William S. Woolcott

William Starnold (Bill) Woolcott, Jr. (14 April 1922-18 April 1998) was professor emeritus of biology at the University of Richmond. He was on the faculty of UR from 1955 until his retirement in 1992. Bill was from Tennessee, served in the US Navy in World War II, and graduated with a degree in biology from Austin Peay State University in 1947.

He earned a master's degree in 1948 from George Peabody College, now part of Vanderbilt University, and then taught for four years at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He obtained his Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1955 where he worked under the renowned ichthyologist Edward Raney. At UR, Bill specialized in ichthyology and taught graduate seminars and courses in vertebrate natural history, vertebrate morphology, general biology, and a variety of related subjects. He was awarded the distinguished educator award by the University and the endowed Kuyk Chair in 1980. He coordinated the graduate program in biology for many years and indeed kept the graduate program alive when there were efforts to abolish it. Bill died of complications from a long fight with cardiovascular problems starting with an aneurysm in the mid-1970s.

Bill amassed a large collection of freshwater fishes, most of which were from central Virginia, that was housed at UR until his retirement. The collection is now part of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science fish collection in Gloucester Point. Bill's primary interest was systematics and morphology of fishes. Most of his post-graduate work was with his students. Eugene Maurakis worked with him in the 1970s when Bill and others obtained National Science Foundation and Virginia Power funding to study the fishes of the James River. Gene worked with Bill off and on for several years and most recently they collaborated on several projects. These include several papers on the systematics of fishes of the southeast and a professional 25-minute video entitled *Phylogenetic Systematics* now used by several museums and universities around the world. Of his 60 or so papers, most dealt with fishes, and most were based on populations and collections from Virginia. He published one paper on reproduction in scarlet snakes and two with me, one on red-backed salamander ecology and another on brown water snake reproduction. The latter was based on a thesis by David White directed by Bill and me. Bill was most at home directing research for graduate and senior undergraduate students.

Bill was a member of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, the Society of American Zoologists, the Virginia Academy of Science, and the Association of Southeastern Biologists. He participated actively in the latter two societies where he would insist that his students present the results of their research.

Bill Woolcott is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Betty, two daughters, and two grandsons. His legacy will continue in the students he taught that have gone on to become academic biologists and professionals in other areas of science.

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