

Obituary for Orie L. Loucks

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Orie L. Loucks, noted ecologist and environmentalist, died peacefully with his family by his side, on Saturday September 10, 2016. He passed away at his home in Waunakee Wisconsin as a result of Multiple Myeloma cancer.

Orie Loucks was born on October 2, 1931 on the family farm near the town of Minden in Haliburton County Ontario. He was the second son of Albert Vinton Loucks and Letitia Emily (Hunter) Loucks. Life on the family's hilly and rocky lakeside farm was difficult throughout Orie's childhood but the family of six children always had sufficient food and warmth. In addition to farming of oats, hay and potatoes and a small number of livestock animals, they earned modest income from numerous enterprises including maple syrup production, cutting ice, producing cream for butter and renting rooms to tourists. Two thirds of their farm was never cleared for crops and was covered by dense, mature forests of Maple and Hemlock. From an early age, Orie was enchanted by the forest for its diversity and dynamics, marveling at how young maples would survive for years in wait of the opportunity to take the place of a fallen tree. His love for trees and forests created a special bond with his father who had dreamed of becoming a lumberman as a youth. Both relished the annual ritual of securing sufficient split firewood to heat the family home through each long winter.

Orie excelled in school and managed to pass the Province's high school entrance exam at the age of eleven. His studies were soon delayed when he contracted scarlet fever and then whooping cough in the fall of 1942. It took several months to recover. That winter it was decided he would help his father fulfill a contract for thirty large hemlock logs that would be used to rebuild a bridge in Minden. During this effort he learned the art of cutting trees so that they would fall exactly in the intended direction. He found the work tiring but rewarding further cementing the special bond with his father. He resumed his studies the following year and completed Grade 13, matriculating at Lindsay High School at the age of 17.

In 1949, he entered the University of Toronto, School of Forestry where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in 1953 and a Master's Degree in 1955. He participated in many campus activities including the Wrestling team and the university's newspaper The Varsity. An excellent writer, he rose through the ranks to become Managing Editor of The Varsity his senior year. The Layout Editor was an English major from Belleville named Elinor Jane Bernstein. The resulting partnership would endure for more than 60 years.

In 1955, Orie was offered a research position with the Canada Department of Forestry in Fredericton New Brunswick. Faced with being separated once again, as in 1953 and 1954 when Orie conducted field research in the distant Quetico, Orie and Elinor decided to marry with no advance notice on October 7 of that year and move to Fredericton as husband and wife. Always in pursuit of new and stimulating research opportunities he applied to study the emerging science of plant ecology under John T. Curtis at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The Forestry Ministry, eager for the stature of employing a US trained scholar would fund his

education with the promise that he would return to resume his work mapping the biomes of the Maritimes. His field research would be conducted on forests in northern New Brunswick so the young couple travelled back and forth between Wisconsin and New Brunswick collecting data each summer and attending classes the rest of the year. Orie earned his PhD in May 1960 publishing the thesis, "Environmental and Phytosociological Ordination of a Regional Forest Vegetation." This work included use of a digital computer, unheard of in the biological sciences, to perform statistical calculations with precision that could not be obtained from a slide rule. The family now, numbering three in size returned to Fredericton where Orie was contractually committed to seven years of service to the Canada Government.

In June 1961, John Curtis died of cancer and Orie applied for the vacant faculty position despite the fact that he was still under contract. When the government learned that he was the University's top candidate, they vacated the agreement and allowed him to assume the faculty position with the condition that he complete two ongoing studies in the Maritimes. The family, now numbering four, emigrated from Fredericton, NB to the United States in August of 1962. He quickly established a reputation as a skilled and creative researcher, winning several important grants and earning the rank of Associate Professor in 1964 and full Professor in 1967.

On October 28, 1968, the Environmental Defense Fund and a local group, Citizens Natural Resources Association of Wisconsin, filed a petition with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to have the pesticide DDT declared a water pollutant effectively banning its use in the State. Orie worked with these groups and other UW scientists to present the petition at an administrative hearing that began December 2. The case needed to be scientifically strong and complete in the face of a vigorous defense mounted by the agro-chemical industry. He was selected to testify last of 27 PhD's to summarize the petitioner's case. His skillful testimony earned him a 'Page One Citation' from The Capital Times and he is credited with assembling the pieces linking DDT to reproductive failure in wild birds. Terms like persistence in the environment and bio-accumulation were introduced to the vernacular and this successful banning of DDT in Wisconsin in June 1969 was viewed as impetus for a nationwide ban three years later.

It was Orie's vision that ecological studies were inherently multidisciplinary and that comprehensive research programs will necessarily reach into many departments across the campus. As an example of this, he conceived the Lake Wingra Study in 1969. With funding from the International Biological Program this study considered hydrology, meteorology, chemical transport and fate along with a dozen biologists representing biota from benthos to fish to obtain a complete picture of the inner workings of a lake ecosystem and the impact of human activity. Eutrophication entered the Madison consciousness.

Orie worked with the US EPA and the International Joint Commission to negotiate the first Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the US and Canada in 1972. He continued to help shape the agreement and managed to get a section on persistent and toxic substances added to the agreement when it was amended in 1978

By 1978, Orie found that the teaching and administrative requirements enforced by his college at UW took too much time away from his focus on multidisciplinary ecological research and he moved to the Holcomb Research Institute at Butler University in Indianapolis to pursue his research vision. Initially, he served as the Science Director of The Institute of Ecology but became Institute Director in 1983. Joining HRI in only the fourth year of its existence, he guided the development of its programs in Water Sciences, Biotic Resources and Environmental Economics and Policy.

The excitement of field research, the kind that required the drive and initiative of graduate students, drew Orie back to a Faculty Position at a major university. In 1989, he joined the Miami University Department of Zoology, as Miami University's first Ohio Eminent Scholar, where he was given generous latitude across the Campus to form multidisciplinary teams. He worked with Professor Ray Gorman of the Business School to develop a landmark course in Sustainability. He used the course to co-write the text book Sustainability Perspectives for Resources and Business with Dr. Gorman. He continued a program of groundbreaking research

on forest decline in the Appalachians and southern Ohio until his retirement from academia in 2002.

Dr. Loucks was a prolific writer all his life and was invited to write chapters and essays in more than 80 books. Many are not as technical as one might presume; one of his best is "In Changing Forests, A Search for Answers" in *An Appalachian Tragedy*. But perhaps his greatest work was the one that took the longest to write. Working with Elinor and his sister Barbara for more than ten years, he produced *Surviving Four Migrations, The Loucks of Haliburton*; a comprehensive genealogical history of his family covering seven centuries that is surprisingly readable and entertaining. Another gem, Orié's own account of the DDT trial, is presented in Chapter 7 of *Patient Earth*.

Orié was bestowed with many Honors and Awards during his long career. Among his most cherished were the National Conservation Achievement Award from the National Wildlife Federation, the aforementioned 'Page One Citation' and the Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community Service Award presented to Orié and Elinor in 2013. He was the recipient of the Ecological Society of America's Mercer Award in 1964 for the best paper by a young researcher.

The team of Orié and Elinor Loucks made an impact in every community in which they lived always serving the local Unitarian Universalist Church on multiple committees, working to preserve natural areas and participating in local social circles. They did this in Fredericton, NB, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and back in Haliburton County where they established a second home in 1985. This was true even in Texas where they lived just one year. Their contributions of time and energy to The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin and the Three Valley Conservation Trust in Ohio are enormous. They were founding members of the Unitarian Fellowship in Fredericton and were nearly indispensable pillars of the Prairie Society in Madison and the Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community of Oxford, Ohio.

Orié was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Albert and Leon, his sisters Barbara and Phyllis, and his niece Moira O'Sullivan. He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Elinor, their three children and their spouses; Eric (Mary), Kimberly (Michael) Coplien, and Edward (Tina), his grandchildren William and Emily Loucks and Lucy Robbins, his brother Foster (Dianne) and Sister-in-law Susan and 15 cherished nieces and nephews and their many children.

Friends and family are invited to gather at Ingoldsby United Church, Ingoldsby from 12:30 pm on Saturday October 8, 2016 until the time of the Funeral Service at 1:30 pm. Interment to follow at Ingoldsby Pioneer Cemetery. Reception to follow at the Pinestone Resort, Haliburton.

Orié supported many charitable causes but his favorites include Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation Tranquility Trail, the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust and Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community of Oxford, Ohio

The family would like to extend their gratitude to both Dr. Longo and his nurse Beth (UW Hospital Hematology Clinic) and Dr. Pankratz (UWHC Geriatrics) and his nursing staff for their gentle patience and the wonderful care that Orié was given over the last 20 months in Madison. In addition we would like to say thank-you to Jayne and Don Schwartz for their coordination of the Madison Chapter of the Multiple Myeloma Support Group, Orié was very grateful for all you taught him which helped him cope better with his Myeloma.

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