

In memoriam—Frank B. Golley (1930–2006)

Monica G. Turner · Gary W. Barrett · Robert H. Gardner · Louis R. Iverson ·
Paul G. Risser · John A. Wiens · Jianguo (Jingle) Wu

Published online: 6 January 2007
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2007

It is with much sorrow and heavy hearts that we mark the passing of Dr. Frank B. Golley, a leading landscape ecologist and the founding editor of this journal. Born in Chicago, Illinois, on September 24, 1930, Frank Benjamin Golley III died in Athens, Georgia, on October 8, 2006. Frank earned a B.S. in Agriculture from Purdue



M. G. Turner (✉)
Department of Zoology, University of Wisconsin,
Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: turnermg@wisc.edu

G. W. Barrett
Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, Athens,
GA, USA

R. H. Gardner
Appalachian Laboratory, University of Maryland
Center for Environmental Science, Frostburg, MD,
USA

L. R. Iverson
USDA Forest Service, Delaware, OH, USA

P. G. Risser
Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City, OK,
USA

J. A. Wiens
The Nature Conservancy, Washington, DC, USA

J. (Jingle) Wu
School of Life Sciences & Global Institute of
Sustainability, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ
85287, USA

University, an M.S. in wildlife management from Washington State University, and a Ph.D. in Zoology from Michigan State University. He joined the faculty at the University of North Carolina upon finishing graduate school in 1958, but soon moved to the University of Georgia (UGA) where he remained for the rest of his career.

Frank was the consummate scholar, widely read, broadly interested in diverse subjects, synthetic in his thinking, and always seeking—and defining—the big picture. Frank's research interests evolved considerably throughout his career, from an initial focus on mammal populations, to widely cited work on energy flow in ecosystems and the structure and function of tropical systems, to landscape ecology, environmental history and philosophy.

Frank's 1993 book, *A History of the Ecosystem Concept in Ecology* (Golley 1993), is a wonderful treatise on the evolution of a key area of ecology. A later book, *A Primer for Environmental Literacy* (Golley 1998), marked an attempt to present key ecological concepts at a level that was accessible to all. Frank had long standing interests in history and was an enthusiastic participant in early meetings and workshops focused on environmental history. After his retirement in 2001, he continued working on three major projects—another book on environment and philosophy, a history of the International Biological Program, and an environmental history of the Piedmont of the eastern US. He was well traveled, of course, and never lost his enthusiasm for learning the natural and cultural history of any place he visited—he had a tremendous sense of place.

Deeply committed to international collaboration within the sciences, Frank worked tirelessly with scientists from around the world to promote ecological science. As President of both INTECOL and the International Society for Tropical Biologists, he strove to enhance communication and collaboration across a wide range of cultures. He taught post-graduate students from around the Mediterranean for many years through his work with the rural development program in Zaragoza, Spain. While he had many collaborators in Europe, he also worked especially hard to assist colleagues in developing countries where access to books and journals was so difficult.

Frank had a deep commitment to the open sharing of ideas among ecologists at all levels—and not only did he “talk the talk,” he also “walked the walk.” At the University of Georgia, Frank got faculty and students to work together effectively. He was instrumental in developing the Institute of Ecology's innovative building design in which the physical space fostered informal interaction among the occupants. Those of us who spent our fledgling years at the Institute in the 1980s have fond memories of the spirited discussions that happened daily in the seminar room with its tables and couches. Whenever Frank returned from a meeting or workshop—including the early landscape ecology meetings held in Europe and the first US workshop held at

Allerton Park—he would give an informal presentation in the seminar room to report on the new directions emerging within our science. Faculty of the Institute of Ecology recently voted to name the building in honor of Frank (pending approval by the Board of Regents) as a tribute to his role in establishing this facility in 1972.

Frank was captivated by landscape ecology as it was developing in Europe, and he correctly foresaw the importance of these ideas and their potential for transforming ecology. His leadership both in the US and internationally sparked considerable progress within the discipline. Frank and Monica Turner jointly organized the first annual US-IALE meeting in January 1986 at the University of Georgia, and the US chapter of IALE was formed at that time. As founding editor of *Landscape Ecology*, he presided over the journal during a period of growth in which the field moved progressively toward mainstream science. Frank's enthusiasm and gentle persuasion effectively engaged numerous other scientists who have remained active in the field. For example, he invited Louis Iverson to run for Program Chair of US-IALE many years ago, thus ushering in Louis's long-term involvement with IALE. Frank also encouraged Bob Gardner to take the reins of *Landscape Ecology*. Frank was one of the primary links to the US during the early days of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE) and a key player in IALE. From US-IALE, Frank received the Distinguished Landscape Ecologist Award in 1990 for his contribution to landscape ecology in North America, and the Outstanding Service Award in 1998 for his service as editor of the journal from 1987 to 1996. Worldwide, we are indebted to his contributions and service.

Frank also demonstrated, through his involvements in ecological science at so many levels, the importance of service within the scientific community, of giving back and not just taking from the system. As Executive Director of the Institute of Ecology at UGA and then director, Frank helped make the Institute a premier international research organization. Frank also served as president of the Ecological Society of America, International Association for Ecology (INTECOL), and the International Society for Tropical Biologists.

As director of the biological sciences directorate at the National Science Foundation, Frank served the ecological research community during the formative years preceding establishment of the Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) network in the US.

Not only an excellent scientist, Frank was a wonderful man. He was down-to-earth, always ethical, not pretentious, and very concerned and considerate of others. He enjoyed his family, made time for others, and respected people of all abilities and all walks of life. Not everyone shares these qualities, and good scientists are not all nice people. His former students all comment (in amazement) at how he always made time, no matter how busy he was, if we wanted to talk with him. He would drop what he was doing, and make you feel as though he had all the time in the world. Frank would also take the time to teach some of the practical skills a novice ecologist might need in the field—out at his farm, he taught Monica Turner how to build a fence so that this native New Yorker would have some clue about how to do this in the salt marsh where she was conducting her PhD research. Frank was well known for being a constant source of encouragement for his students, and for his enduring enthusiasm for ecology of all sorts.

An engaging conversationalist, one never knew where dinner conversation with Frank would go, but one always knew it would be stimulating and far-reaching. Along with a love for his long-term home in the South, he retained his appreciation

for things Midwestern—and he was a fan of Garrison Keillor’s “A Prairie Home Companion” on National Public Radio well before it hit the big time. He would talk enthusiastically about his memories of the days when people really would gather in their living rooms on a Saturday evening and dance to music on the radio or Victrola. He would speak with pride about his family—he and Priscilla were married 53 years, and Frank always spoke fondly of Priscilla and their three children. He might then discuss how dulcimers were made, or the fine points of building a barn, or what Georgia was like when he first arrived and oxen were still pulling plows. Frank would also regale his companions with wonderful tales of his worldwide travels, yet he would also ask questions and listen appreciatively to others. Plainly speaking, he was fun to be around.

As a mentor and colleague, Frank touched many of us. We proudly carry his ideas and ideals forward, and we will hopefully pass them on to the next generation of ecologists. His life serves as an inspiration for us all, and he will be dearly missed. Goodbye, Frank, and thank you.

References

1. Golley FB (1993) A history of the ecosystem concept in ecology: more than the sum of the parts. Yale University Press, New Haven
2. Golley FB (1998) A primer for environmental literacy. Yale University Press, New Haven