William Battles Heed (b. June 9, 1926) died September 10, 2007 after a long illness, leaving his spouse of 53 years, Sarah, and three daughters, Ellen, Emily, and Anne. Perhaps best known for his long-term contributions to the ecology, genetics, distribution, and host plant relationships of desert *Drosophila*, Bill Heed was also a consummate field naturalist who came from a long tradition of “knowing” the organisms he worked with. A biography of Heed’s life was recorded as a dedication to the second symposium volume concerning ecology and genetics of *Drosophila* (Fogleman 1990), which included input from him and a complete bibliography, so much of that account will not be repeated. A perspective on Bill’s unique contributions to ecological genetics and evolution early in his career, some relevant references, his pursuit of truth, as well as his insights into science and his colleagues throughout his life, are described here.

Bill Heed was an avid field biologist from a very young age, and he exercised a passion for field ornithology for the rest of life. After graduating from high school, he joined the Navy in 1944 and served in the South Pacific. He obtained his B.S. degree in 1950 from Penn State University, and after some illumination from reading Dobzhansky’s *Genetics and the Origin of Species* (1951), began graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin, becoming John T. Patterson’s last graduate student. Along with Wilson S. Stone, Marshall Wheeler, B. Judd, M. White, and graduate students, a core of soon to be well-known scientists including F. Clayton, T. S. Hsu, J. Hubby, L. E. Mettler, M. Wasserman, M. Seiger, L. Throckmorton, T. Gregg, C. Ward, and visitors such as Th. Dobzhansky and W. Spencer, Heed began his career in the world of *Drosophila*. He immersed himself in the ecology and identification of drosophilids throughout Mexico and Central America on many field trips and developed his expertise in dipteran morphology and species identification under the tutelage of M. Wheeler. A year spent in 1953–1954 in El Salvador describing the ecology of tropical to cloud forest drosophilid communities resulted in his Ph.D. (Heed 1955).