

IN MEMORIAM



Austin J. MacInnis 1931–2009

Austin MacInnis was an extraordinary parasitologist who had a great influence on the profession. He joined the faculty of the Biology Department at UCLA after completing his doctoral studies with Bob Short (Florida State University) and a post-doc with Clark Read (Rice Institute). He rose rapidly through the ranks and was appointed full professor in 1973. His academic career was dedicated to research and teaching, with service to the American Society of Parasitologists. He did this with compassion and humility, receiving many accolades from his colleagues and friends in the process.

I first met Austin, in print, way back in 1965. Working in Rhodesia on host–parasite interactions, I had realized that schistosome miracidia must respond to some stimuli in the process of detecting intermediate host snails and, thus, completed a manuscript and sent it off to the *Journal of Parasitology* for consideration. To my interest and surprise, I received a letter of acceptance with the note that Dr. A. J. MacInnis had submitted a paper on a similar topic, and the two papers were published back to back. Soon after that, on a visit to a parasitology conference in Washington, D.C., I made a point to meet Austin, and this was the start of a friendship that continued. Working in the middle of Africa, one needed exposure to the creative minds of fellow parasitologists, those interested in the same area and aspect of research—and certainly his extreme generosity with ideas and his critical approach was of considerable importance to me and my work. On moving from Africa to the United States in 1978, I was able to establish a close relationship with Austin, Ginny, and their family,

and only then did I realize the extent of his relationship with students and the pivotal role he played for parasitologists here and abroad.

It was rather traumatic moving from southern Africa to southern California, from a somewhat laid-back government service position to the intense environment and high-pressure, grant-orientated existence required to remain a scientist in this environment. At that time, Austin was editor of the *Journal of Parasitology* and an active professor in the Department of Biology at UCLA. He had a bevy of students, was involved in teaching classes, and was managing all the work buzzing around the department; yet, he had time to assist me, to introduce me to colleagues at the university, and, thus, to aid in the transition needed for personal success. I was welcomed into the fold and even had a niche in the lab from which I was able to do some research. Austin had time for all, and through him I met Marietta Voge, Larry Ash, and so many friends and later colleagues in the School of Public Health. His casual and pleasant personality was like an aura; even his cigar, which he chewed more than smoked, was part of the psyche. I recall a huge bus-like vehicle that was parked outside the house on Military Ave. at a time when gas was in short supply, and expensive, so I asked him, “Why do you need this truck?” He responded, “How else can I take the students to meetings, go fishing etc., etc. . . .” Everything revolved around the lab and students, and they appreciated it. A barbecue at the MacInnis house, when he had caught some massive fish and dismembered it for the grill, was a chance to meet his latest intake of students, to see the more mature ones, and reminisce about those that had recently graduated. This was the hallmark of a contented person, completely at ease with his teaching and students, at home with a delightful family, and