IN MEMORIAM: DANNIE HENSLEY (1944-2008)

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On May 8, 2008, the academic community of the Department of Marine Sciences (DMS), University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez (UPRM), lost one of its accomplished academic researchers. Dannie Hensley was born in Upland, California on October 24, 1944. As the son of a military family, he traveled frequently throughout the Pacific region, spending time as a young man at Wake Island and Hawaii among other locations. Living next to the sea and becoming active in SCUBA diving was influential in developing his interest in marine biology and in publishing his first article at the age of 21 in Skin Diver Magazine. As an undergraduate student, he was strongly influenced by his mentor, Dr. David Greenfield, at California State University, Fullerton and his interest in ichthyology began at an early stage in his professional development. Dannie completed his B.A. degree in 1968. Shortly thereafter he entered the Ph.D. program at the University of South Florida at Tampa under the mentorship of Dr. John Briggs, a noted ichthyologist and biogeographer. Dannie often talked with some pride of his professional “pedigree” which could be traced from Dr. Briggs through several generations of prominent ichthyologists to David Starr Jordan.

Following completion of his Ph.D. in 1978, Dannie held positions as a research associate and ichthyologist at Florida Atlantic University and the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Marine Research Laboratory in St. Petersburg, Florida. It was while working in the latter capacity that Dannie met and subsequently married Valentine Moore in 1977. Dannie joined the DMS of the UPRM in 1980, and has been a Full Professor since 1991. While a faculty member of the UPRM (Fig. 1), Dannie was extremely active in research, being recognized as a world expert in the systematics and biogeography of marine fishes of the Pacific and Indian Oceans in addition to the Caribbean. His principal systematic focus for the last 20 years has been on Pleuronectiformes or flat fishes. Nevertheless, Dannie has worked on a variety of other fishes including damselfish, hagfish, and even coelocanths in Madagascar. Dannie has collaborated with a large number of prominent ichthyologists including Walter Courtney, Jack Randall, Phil Heemstra and Kunio Amaoka. During his career, Dannie made several extended trips to Hakodate, Japan where he worked with Dr. Amaoka on Pacific flounders. One of the highlights of Dannie’s career was in receiving the prestigious award of a Fulbright Fellowship, allowing him to spend a nine month sabbatical at Rhodes University at the J. L. B. Smith Institute of Ichthyology at Grahamstown, South Africa. Dannie’s global, mostly museum oriented research, was supported by dozens of travel grants that also allowed him to examine specimens throughout the United States and Europe, Israel, Japan, Philippines and Australia. Additionally, Dannie presented an

Fig. 1. Dannie examining a fish specimen in his laboratory at Magueyes Island of the Department of Marine Sciences, Univ. Puerto Rico