As the son of a conservation officer for the state of New Jersey and a high school teacher, John Kraeuter learned much about the outside world while growing up. His parents moved to Florida in the 1950s, where he spent his high school years in Daytona Beach watching the birth of NASCAR, but summers were spent along the coast of Maine where his family built and then managed summer cottages. Exploring the rocky coastline, beaches, and inlet mud flats in Maine during summer and the distinctly different habitats in Florida the rest of the year fueled John’s fascination with science and the natural world. This led him to Florida State University where he earned a BS in Biology in 1964 with minors in geology and chemistry creating a well-rounded foundation. His curiosity nowhere near satiation, he continued by attending graduate school at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA, where he completed a master’s degree under Dexter Haven—a former National Shellfisheries Association (NSA) president and Honored Life Member. John’s thesis (Fecal pellets of some common invertebrates in the lower York River and lower Chesapeake Bay, VA) gave him the chance to study all kinds of ‘stuff’. And he did. Moving to the University of Delaware, he wrote a 235-page dissertation on “A taxonomic and distributional study of the Western North Atlantic Dentaliidae.” It might not have made the best seller list, but it was a fine piece of work that catapulted him into the thriving metropolis of Sapelo Island—a beautiful, isolated barrier island research station operated by the University of Georgia. There, John matured into an outstanding estuarine ecologist working on invertebrates and nutrient cycles in salt marsh ecosystems. He is perhaps best known for his work with another NSA past president and Honored Life Member, Mike Castagna, at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science Eastern Shore Laboratory in Wachapreague, VA. Together, John and Mike perfected hard clam aquaculture methods and produced the “Manual for growing the hard clam, Mercenaria,” a publication that has yet to be replaced as the basic bible for hard clam aquaculturists from Maine to Florida. During this time at the Eastern Shore Laboratory, John worked his way up becoming an associate professor at the College of William & Mary before moving on to be the senior aquaculturist and manager for Baltimore Gas and Electric where he designed a hatchery and developed innovative methods for culturing striped bass and its hybrids using thermal effluents from power plants. Although working on fish culture, John remained tied to his ecological background and served for eight years in the U.S. Department of Interior Minerals Management Service Outer Continental Shelf Scientific Advisory Committee. Personally, John and his accomplished wife Carol were raising two young boys while continuing to make trips to Maine every summer to help open, maintain, and close the family-owned summer maritime cottages.

In 1987, Rich Lutz, another former NSA president and Honored Life Member, convinced John to move back to New Jersey and help run the recently completed Rutgers Shellfish Research Laboratory (now the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory). Rich envisioned establishing a multispecies aquaculture demonstration facility as part of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. It would be an experimental aquaculture farm, and John was just the person to get it going. New Jersey is a complicated, highly regulated state. Where many would have given up the fight, John persisted and, in 2007, the Rutgers Multispecies Aquaculture Demonstration Facility began operations. It quickly ramped up oyster seed production to more than 10 million annually and is now beginning development of several other species as the New Jersey Aquaculture Innovation Center, a component of the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory. As part of this effort, John became heavily involved with state efforts to develop aquaculture as a viable economic sector and was the lead author for the New Jersey Aquaculture Development Plan.

John retired from Rutgers in 2013 and moved to Maine to manage the cottages full time, but he is still active in shellfish research and education with a continuing visiting scientist position at the Haskin Laboratory and as an adjunct faculty member in the

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