

## MEMORIAL LECTURE

### WILLIAM EMERY HAZELTINE II: REBEL WITH A CAUSE<sup>1</sup>

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Today we honor a man who made a difference. He was a medical entomologist who had a varied career in the field of mosquito biology and control, but he will forever be remembered as a man who fought in the trenches of the pesticide controversy from roughly 1960 until the end of his life, and who made the safe and efficient use of pesticides in public health a personal crusade. Some of you may wonder why I was selected to give this lecture. I certainly have very little background in the chemical control of mosquitoes. Actually, Bill and I had much in common. We were both born and raised in San Jose, California, and both graduated from San Jose State University and Purdue University. At Purdue, we had the same major professor, Leland Chandler. Because Bill was a few years older than me, we were never classmates. We first met when I arrived at Purdue in 1963, and Bill was in Lafayette, Indiana, to put the finishing touches on his Ph.D. dissertation.

The annual meeting of the Entomological Society of America was held in Philadelphia that year, and Leland Chandler, known to all as “Chan,” offered the two of us, plus another student, a ride from Lafayette to Philadelphia for the meeting. The trip started off quietly enough, until one of us brought up the subject of evolution. That launched a vigorous debate that lasted until we were to the Philadelphia city limits. The other student that rode along refused to ride back with us to Lafayette.

After I joined the University of California faculty in 1986, Bill and I had frequent interactions, and although I didn’t always agree with him, I grew to have considerable respect for his professional accomplishments and for his honesty and conviction. Mosquito abatement agencies in California benefited from his work, and so did members of the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA).

I also valued Bill’s friendship. I think that to Bill, family and friends were at the top of his priorities.

Bill Hazeltine spent the majority of his professional career in the field of mosquito abatement in California. He was an advocate for the use of mosquito control to protect people from mosquitoes and the disease agents they transmit, and he believed chemical control to be a necessary part of the

means to accomplish this. He also considered himself an environmentalist, and billed himself as such on his business cards and on his signature block. He had a vast knowledge of pesticides and pesticide legislation, and a strong belief in the scientific basis for public policy issues related to the safe and effective use of pesticides. Because the federal Endangered Species Act influenced mosquito control, he became an authority on this as well.

Bill Hazeltine did not fit the mold of the typical successful scientist. He had a very successful career, but because he did not go out of his way to be agreeable, most of the accolades that less controversial scientists receive did not come his way. Bill was a rebel. He rocked the boat during the height of the ecological movement. At times he became the last person in the world people wanted to see enter a meeting of certain groups of scientists and administrators. He had an incredible sense of right and wrong, and was definitely the kind of person you wanted on your side. Bill had one characteristic that was particularly irritating to those who disagreed with his views. When he arrived at meetings, conferences, or other forums of debate, he invariably came thoroughly prepared with facts and data, and often brought with him large bundles of reprints of published papers and reports. His views carried with them considerable credibility because he thoroughly researched issues that impacted mosquito control.

When Bill retired, he left behind an extraordinary collection of books, pamphlets, papers, and articles. All were carefully sorted by subject and stored at the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District (MVCD). I recently looked at his collection of technical books on the shelves of the Butte County MVCD Board Room. Most mosquito control professionals would be envious.

William Emery Hazeltine II was born in San Jose, California, on September 4, 1926. His parents were Karl Snyder Hazeltine and Rachel Josephine Crawford (Fig. 1). Bill was the youngest of 6 children. Bill’s father was a graduate of the University of California, and served on the faculty of San Jose State University, where he taught agricultural and natural science subjects. Bill’s mother was a graduate of San Jose State, and also was a teacher. All Bill’s early years were spent in San Jose or at his parent’s summer home in Mount Hermon, in Santa Cruz County, California, except for two years when

<sup>1</sup> This Memorial Lecture was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Mosquito Control Association in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada on April 4, 2005.