On December 31, 2013 Richard Eugene Petit passed away, and with his passing the field of malacology lost a unique, highly valued colleague and contributor. He was one of those rare individuals who, as a successful businessman in insurance and real estate, turned an abundance of curiosity and energy into a parallel universe of fascination with shells, then shell books and subsequently delving ever deeper into the global malacological literature.

Charles Sturm remarked: “In 1965, he purchased a shell and book dealership, with which he would ultimately become the foremost used shell book dealer in the United States. Dick became an accomplished avocational paleontologist and malacologist. He was author or co-author of over 100 peer-reviewed publications on Recent and fossil mollusks, beginning in 1964 and continuing to the present. He was a recognized world expert on the gastropod family Cancellariidae.”

But his truly unique passion was for nomenclature – determining when and where a taxon was first published. He learned early on that the encyclopedia of information for any species is based not only on the name of a species but also on the author and valid date of publication. His last published note on this all-consuming concern was published on the day he died, in the latest issue of Malacologia, 2013, 56(1/2): 357, Richard E. Petit & The Editors: “Literature citations: authors of taxa with date of publication should be mandatory.”

Sturm further recognized that “Dick’s knowledge of the malacological literature was legendary. He amassed one of the more significant private libraries and helped many others find the works they needed to prosecute their work. Dick also possessed an in-depth knowledge of the history of malacology. Many will remember some of his recent monographs on malacologists of the 19th Century, including Lovell Reeve, William Wood, and the Sowerby family. Many of us would have been proud to have produced any one of these monographs, let alone all of them and others.”

And Dick was a real team player, a strong supporter of the American Malacological Society of which he was President (1987–1988), Secretary/Treasurer (1991–1993), and Honorary Life Member. For many years he served with me on the society’s Endowment Commit-