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IN MEMORIAM

John William Hardy, 1930–2012

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John William Hardy, Elective Member of the AOU since 1964 and Fellow since 1971, died in Gainesville, Florida, on October 1, 2012, at 82 years of age. Like many ornithologists, Bill Hardy was a boy birdwatcher, collecting Fuertes cards from his mother's Arm & Hammer baking soda packages, finding a Summer Tanager nest in the backyard when he was four years old, and at seven helping his uncle install a Purple Martin house in the yard. He would go on to pioneer the creation, collection, and distribution of sound recordings that are now considered as important as study skins and skeletons in many museums' bird collections.



JOHN WILLIAM HARDY in Florida in 1985. Photo credit: Thomas A. Webber

Bill was born on January 12, 1930, in Murphysboro, Illinois, a small town 50 miles north of the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. His biology teacher at Murphysboro Township High School, E. Esther Smith, was an important influence. She had a strong interest in natural history, and *The Auk* was among the journals and books available in her laboratory. She joined the AOU in 1949 and remained a member at least until 1985.

Through the school's Audubon Biology Club, which Ms. Smith began, students were encouraged to prepare projects for yearly state science fairs sponsored by the Illinois Academy of Science. These were often small research projects based on original data. One of Bill's projects, with two other students, was a study of the seasonal occurrence of birds in the state's seven southernmost counties. Although not publicly distributed, this was the first checklist of the birds of southern Illinois.

While in high school, Bill spent a few hours a day closely observing martins, putting into practice the outline for a life-history study in Joseph J. Hickey's (1943) *Guide to Bird Watching*. Years later, in 1962, Bill and Richard Johnston, his graduate advisor at the University of Kansas, coauthored a paper based mainly on a Kansas martin colony but including Bill's Illinois observations from the 1946 season, when a few pairs had double brooded.

From 1948 to 1952, Bill continued his education at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, less than 10 miles from home. He majored in zoology, worked part-time in the Cooperative Fisheries laboratory, and founded the Southern Illinois Bird Club, which held a few meetings but did not survive his graduation.

For graduate work, Bill moved out of state, taking a teaching assistantship at Michigan State College (soon, University) in East Lansing. His advisor was George W. Wallace, a fine ornithologist who was at that time working on the first college ornithology textbook, *An Introduction to Ornithology* (Macmillan 1955). When Bill wrote Wallace's memorial for *The Auk*, he noted that Wallace had "nurtured my qualities and gently began the process of sharpening me for the tough road ahead."

The two years in Michigan provided good experiences beyond the connections with Wallace and fellow MSU

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graduate students. All the universities and colleges in the state included faculty and students whose primary interest was bird study. State and federal agencies had ornithologists on their staffs, and so did several small natural history museums. A remarkably professional bunch of amateur ornithologists had coalesced around the Michigan Audubon Society and its journal, the *Jack-Pine Warbler*. Lawrence Walkinshaw and Harold Mayfield (an Ohioan who spent a lot of time in Michigan) were notable, but not atypical, examples of the accomplished amateurs.

The 1953 annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society (WOS), held in mid-June at the University of Michigan Biological Station at Douglas Lake, brought together 350 ornithologists from around the country—though 123 of them were from the State of Michigan. I was among the attendees. An undergraduate at Southern Illinois University, I attended the meeting because of interest, of course, but also at Bill's instigation. Promoting worthy activities for friends and colleagues was a prominent feature of Bill's character.

After the WOS meeting, Bill spent the rest of the summer of 1953 camping on a large island in the Ohio River near Shawneetown, Illinois, studying the nesting of a colony of Least Terns (the interior subspecies, *Sternula albifrons athalassos*). Something of the interest and pleasure that Bill took in language is shown by his reaction to the subspecific epithet *athalassos* that T. D. Burleigh and G. Lowery, Jr., had chosen. "*Not by the sea*," Bill said—"It's perfect." Although it was a short-term study, his master's research yielded several important insights, such as the connection between the breeding distribution of the inland populations and the geological and climatic factors that provided the conditions for colony establishment. Bill's thesis was published in 1957 as *The Least Tern in the Mississippi Valley*.

In 1954, Bill moved to the Museum of Natural History at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, to begin work on a doctorate. He found a congenial and stimulating group—his advisor, Harrison B. Tordoff; Robert M. Mengel; their wives; several other faculty, including Rollin Baker; and graduate students, including Glen Woolfenden. Three years after Bill arrived, Tordoff returned to the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, where he had spent his graduate years. His replacement, Richard F. Johnston, a University of California (Berkeley) product, arrived at Kansas the next year, 1958. Bill's Ph.D. research benefited from his interactions with both men. His study of behavior and phylogeny of certain New World jays was completed in 1959 and published in 1961.

After short-term appointments at Kansas and the University of California (Los Angeles), Bill joined the faculty of Occidental College in Los Angeles as director and curator of the Moore Laboratory of Zoology, established by Robert T. Moore to house his collection of about 65,000 vertebrate specimens, mostly Mexican birds. Bill also taught avian biology and other courses in the biology program.

Probably Bill's two main interests, in addition to the study of birds, were trout fishing and jazz. A serious jazz fan since high school, in Los Angeles he frequented clubs, getting to know musicians and record-company executives and writing about the music. He also began recording jazz performances, and in 1966 he started a record company, Revelation Records, that in the 20 years of its existence released 48 long-playing records.

During his time at Occidental (1961–1973), Bill published more than 20 papers in ornithological journals. In the early 1960s, he started to build up files of original field recordings of bird voices and to analyze them using sound spectrographic equipment. Probably his first publication making use of these techniques was a 1963 study in *The Condor* on reproductive behavior of the Orange-fronted Parakeet. An increasing fraction of his research effort came to be based on this approach. The fall of 1970 was spent on sabbatical studying avian ethology with Niko Tinbergen's research group at Oxford University in England.

Bill continued to serve the ornithological community as editor of the Recent Literature and Book Reviews sections of *The Auk* and as editor of *Ornithological Monographs* (the latter until 1978). He served as AOU vice president from 1979 to 1980 and held several offices in the Cooper Ornithological Society.

In 1973, Bill moved from Los Angeles to the University of Florida, Gainesville, taking Oliver L. Austin's place as curator in ornithology at the Museum of Natural History. Although Bill's job at Florida was primarily curatorial, he taught avian biology from 1980 to 1985. Just after his death, one former student offered her assessment of his teaching in an entry in the Guest Book at the *Gainesville Sun* website: "The best instructor I ever had at the University of Florida. . . . He instilled in me a love and passion for birds that has only strengthened over the years. . . . Dr. Hardy was truly an inspiration."

At the museum, Bill began the Bioacoustic Archives, applying museum techniques of dealing with specimens (in this case, sound recordings). The tapes took their place alongside the collections of study skins, skeletons, and eggs. To the nucleus of duplicates from the collection he had built at Occidental were added new recordings from expeditions to appropriately exotic locales. He also aggregated voice specimens from other sources, notably cooperators engaged in recording avian vocalizations in the southern United States and the Neotropics. By 1995, when Bill retired, the collection contained more than 14,000 recordings of more than 2,500 bird species. Currently (late 2013), it comprises more than 28,000 recordings representing about 3,200 species.

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In addition to his academic work, Bill did his civic duty for the people of Gainesville. He served as host of a popular call-in show, *The Birdwatcher*, on the university's public radio station. For a time, Oliver Austin joined him at the microphone. On the same station, Bill also hosted a music program, *Jazz on the Quiet Side*. In 1983, along with several other enthusiasts, he formed the Gainesville Friends of Jazz, which brought live concert performances to the city and still does so.

Bill's first published scientific paper dealt with Swainson's Warbler observations made in southern Illinois from 1951 to 1954. His total publication list includes more than 70 titles, including discs and cassettes of bird voices. Taxonomically, Bill focused on the Corvidae. After trips to Mexico while in graduate school at Kansas, his geographic concentration became the Neotropics. Most of his publications deal with some aspect of bird behavior. The early papers tended to look at behavior for its own sake or for clues to taxonomic relatedness. Later, the emphasis became more ecological. Illustrative of this phase is a paper coauthored with Bertram G. Murray, "Behavior and ecology of four syntopic species of finches in Mexico (*Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie*, 1981), which reported on the interactions (or mainly their absence) among two towhees and two brush-finches.

Although Bill did not consider himself a good writer, he wrote a great deal over the years and in many forms, from popular to scholarly. Whatever his prose skills, he was a highly effective speaker. He was a gifted storyteller, always with a new stock of anecdotes, usually funny.

Beginning in 1977, his mode of publication increasingly became discs or cassettes of bird voices, accompanied by some form of commentary. In cooperation with the Museum, he started ARA Records to make available compilations of bird voices from the Bioacoustic Archives. The enterprise drew on his experience and technical contacts from years of producing jazz records. The first ARA record was a 12-inch long-playing disc, *Voices of Neotropical Birds*, released in 1975. Twenty-four other compilations released as audio cassettes followed, not counting revised or expanded versions.

The ARA compilations allow aesthetic appreciation of calls and songs and can be used in species identification, but compilations from other sources have also served those functions. The ARA products also set the vocalizations in biological context, exploring (and providing a basis for further exploration of) the connections between the vocalizations of a species and the rest of its behavior and its evolutionary and ecological relationships.

One example of this approach is the use of vocalizations of pygmy owls as clues to a hitherto unidentified species. In successive editions of ARA cassettes containing the New World owls, Bill suggested that recordings from the Amazon rainforest represented a species different from the one assumed to occupy the region, the Least Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium minutissimum*). By 1989, Bill's written commentary noted that Jacques Vielliard of Brazil was studying the situation. Later that same year, Vielliard described a new species, *Glaucidium hardyi* (the Amazonian Pygmy Owl), honoring Bill's insights.

In late August of 1990, Bill suffered a severe stroke. Over the following months, working hard on rehabilitation, he made a substantial recovery. He returned to work at the museum and produced four new or revised ARA cassettes before retiring, as curator emeritus, early in 1995. In retirement, he brought out nine new or revised ARA productions. The last was number 25 (troupials, blackbirds, and allies) in 1998.

Bill is survived by his daughter Claudia Hardy and her husband Henry Bireline, his son Matthew, and his younger brother Robert. After a Unitarian service, Bill's ashes were returned to southern Illinois. Robert, following Bill's request, scattered them over the headwaters of one of the clear, fast-running streams where Bill had fished, long ago.

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