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IN MEMORIAM

Robert F. Andrle, 1927–2017

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Robert Andrle, an Elective Member of the American Ornithologists’ Union (now American Ornithological Society) since 1988 whose professional career was spent primarily at the Buffalo Museum of Science, died on October 29, 2017, at the age of 90. He was born in Buffalo, New York, on October 28, 1927, and graduated from St. Joseph’s Collegiate Institute there in 1944. His lifelong interest in birds was initiated when his attention was drawn to Joc, Colette and the Birds by British children's writer Vera Barclay. This book remains in his library, annotated “sparked my interest.” He soon ventured beyond his Buffalo neighborhood to observe birds along the Niagara River from Unity Island south to the woodlands and marshes of Buffalo’s Outer Harbor, particularly Tifft Nature Preserve and Times Beach. His records of the birds as well as of other fauna and flora of Niagara Frontier wildlands form the basis of most subsequent work. For example, the designation of the Niagara River Corridor as an international Important Bird Area was achieved through reference to those records.

Bob graduated from Canisius College in 1948 with a major in English. He joined the U.S. National Guard in 1953 and served on active duty at the 7th Army Corps of Engineers Operations Headquarters in Germany from 1954 to 1956. He then returned to western New York to continue his education, obtaining a master’s degree in geography in 1960 from the University at Buffalo. Encouraged by his friend and fellow Buffalo birder, Harold Mitchell, he then went to Louisiana State University to pursue a doctorate in biogeography under the supervision of Robert C. West. He completed his doctorate in 1964 with a dissertation entitled “A Biogeographical Investigation of the Sierra de Tuxtla in Veracruz, Mexico.”

Bob joined the staff of the Buffalo Museum of Science in 1956 as assistant preparator and became curator of biogeography in 1960. Beginning in 1966, he took on administrative responsibilities, including serving as assistant director until 1973 and then as associate director until 1977, at which time he was appointed curator of vertebrate zoology. In 1969, following the death of museum director Fred T. Hall, Bob served briefly as joint acting director (1969–1970). After leaving the museum staff in 1984, Bob remained a research associate in vertebrate zoology and a fellow of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (BSNS).

Bob's major research was conducted in Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, and the West Indies, with a major...
Bob Andrle is survived by his wife of 64 years, the former Patricia Yates, four children, seven grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and three siblings. It is worth noting that Bob's first date with Pat was lunch and birding at the Tifft Street dump, present site of the Tifft Nature Preserve. His local colleagues will most miss what one of them called “his almost childlike enthusiasm for being out in the field.”

Memorials Editor: Ted Anderson, ted020@centurytel.net