

Resolution of Respect

Shelby G. Gerking 1918–1998

Shelby D. Gerking passed away on 11 January 1998 in Tempe, Arizona after a prolonged illness. Born in Elkhart, Indiana on 16 November 1918, Shelby received his A.B. degree in Zoology from DePauw University in 1940 and his Ph.D in Zoology, under the direction of W. E. Ricker, from Indiana University in 1944. He then spent two and a half years engaged in a war research project for the U.S. Army on the effects of heat stress on men working in extreme environments. Upon returning to Indiana University as an Assistant Professor, he rose through the ranks to Professor in 1959. In the same year he became the Director of the Indiana Aquatic Research Unit, as well as the Director of the Indiana University Biological Station. Shelby moved to Arizona State University in 1967, as Professor and Chair of the Department of Zoology, serving as Chair until 1974. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 1983.

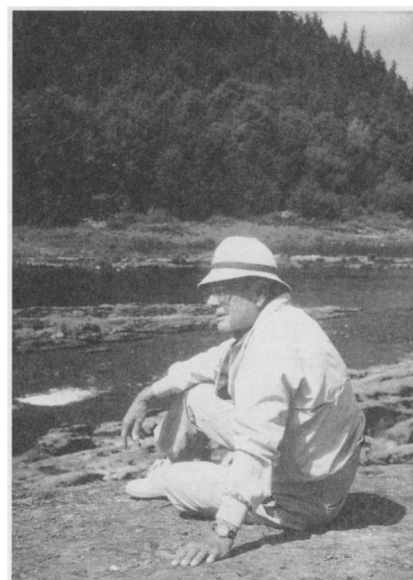
As an ecologist and ichthyologist, Shelby's career centered on basic and applied aspects of fish production and physiological responses to extreme environments. He started with field studies of fish movement and homing in streams, population dynamics, food supply and consumption, and nitrogen budgets, many of which are classic studies combining careful laboratory analyses of sunfish (*Lepomis*) with field observations. At the same time, he also published several papers on human physiology that derived from his World War II-related research. Later in his career he worked with his graduate students on desert pupfish (*Cyprinodon*), damselfishes (*Microspathodon* and *Stegastes*), and topminnows (*Poeciliopsis*). The studies of pupfish examined temperature tolerances, effects of temperature, salinity, and acidity on reproduction, and production dynamics as related to food supplies.

The damselfish investigations emphasized grazing rates on benthic algae, and the topminnow studies examined size-based feeding on zooplankton.

Shelby always stressed quality and completeness in publications rather than numbers, and this philosophy is exemplified in his own career. Over nearly a half-century, he wrote and edited three books (two with multiple editions), authored a laboratory manual, produced four movies, and published 70 research articles. Shelby served as Associate Editor of three international journals in fish biology and marine ecology (*Journal of Fish Biology*, *Environmental Biology of Fishes*, *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*). His most recent book, *Feeding Ecology of Fishes* (Academic Press 1994) was a real labor of love that occupied his retirement years. His dedication to this project reflected a true scholar who loved his profession, as well as that of a master who conveyed this enthusiasm to students and colleagues with the care and understanding that can only be found in a true gentleman. As a measure of this broad respect, he served as President of the American Fisheries Society in 1986-1987, as well as Treasurer of the Ecological Society of America from 1969 to 1972.

In 1955 Shelby received the Mercer Award from the Ecological Society of America for his work on food turnover in a bluegill sunfish population. (Shelby noted in his annual report that the cash prize that year was \$100!) Nearly 40 years later (1994) he received the prestigious Award of Excellence from the American Fisheries Society for outstanding achievement in fisheries science and management. Shelby was especially proud of this award, not only because it recognized his considerable achievements, but also because his mentor, W. E. Ricker, was the first recipient in 1969.

Those of us who were his students remember him with incredible



warmth and respect. He taught us the profession of fish ecology with the integrity, the leadership, and the assumption of responsibility that one only experiences from a true master. His lessons were always administered with care and respect for us as individuals. Those of us who were his colleagues remember him for his insights into academic life, which were valued long after he stepped down as Chair. We enjoyed his company, benefited from his advice, and admired his role in making the Department of Zoology (now Biology) a success in a modern university. Much of the success of the Department can be attributed to traditions and values established by Shelby and his contemporary colleagues, and then passed to junior faculty members. Shelby left his imprint on all of us, and for that we are proud and grateful.

Robert J. Naiman
School of Fisheries
University of Washington

James P. Collins
Department of Biology
Arizona State University