
Resolution of Respect

Frank B. Golley

1930–2006

Frank Benjamin Golley III was born on 24 September 1930 in Chicago, Illinois, to Frank Benjamin and Katharine Baird Golley, and spent his early years there. In January 1958 he took a position as assistant professor of zoology at the University of North Carolina. However, he was convinced by Eugene Odum to come to the University of Georgia in September of that year to work with him on Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) contract research at the recently established site of the Savannah River Plant in South Carolina. For Golley, this was the end of an academic odyssey, beginning with a B.S. in agriculture from Purdue University, followed by a M.S. in wildlife management from Washington State University, and a Ph.D. in zoology from Michigan State University. Golley embraced the ecosystem ecology of the Odum brothers, and this was the start of a long and productive collaboration that involved wide-ranging ecological research and the development of the ecology program at the University of Georgia.

Much of the research carried out for the AEC at the Savannah River Plant was from the very start basic in character. The philosophy behind this decision, which the AEC endorsed, was that in order to be prepared to deal with undefined future environmental problems with radionuclides, it was first necessary to understand the basic principles of ecosystem science and to develop a cadre of experienced scientists upon whom the AEC could call when needed (J. Wolfe, *personal communication*). Golley was insistent that the research be independent, and that it be published in the open literature without prior review by the plant management. Although this raised security issues and created friction with managers, Golley stood his ground. It proved to be the best policy for all parties, because it gave the work credibility. With expansion of the AEC contract and a move into larger quarters on the Savannah River site in 1961, Golley became the first Director of the Savannah River Radiation Ecology Laboratory (“radiation” was later officially dropped from the name), where he remained until 1962. He then moved to the Athens campus in 1967 to become Executive Director of the newly established Institute of Ecology. Shortly thereafter, the University received matching funds from NSF for construction of a building for the Institute. Golley took a strong interest in the design of that building, creating an aesthetically appealing structure that organically fostered interaction of the scientists. He especially wanted to involve graduate students and make them feel that they were an important, valued part of the Institute. It is typical of his vision for the Institute that each graduate student’s cubicle had a glass wall looking out on an attractive courtyard.

In 1979 Golley took leave from the University to serve as Director of the Division of Environmental Biology at the National Science Foundation. After returning to Athens, he served as director of the Institute of Ecology from 1984 to 1987. Throughout his life, his was a multifarious career of administration, research, and teaching. As the first Director of SREL and again as the first Executive Director of the Institute, Golley took up the challenge of creating a viable, successful organization from rather meager beginnings. The success of both organizations owes as much to Golley’s dedicated leadership and vision as to Odum’s initiative.



Golley served as President of ESA, the International Association for Ecology, and the International Society of Tropical Ecology. He served on the Advisory Council of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Institute of Ecology, and the Organization for Tropical Studies. He served on the editorial board of the journal *Ethics and the Environment*, and was the founder and first editor of the journal *Landscape Ecology*. He was a member of the committee to establish the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, and served as its interim director. In the course of his career, Golley was author or editor of 17 books and more than 170 technical articles and book chapters spanning ecology, biology, social sciences, the philosophy of science, and history.

Although originally trained in mammalogy, Golley's interests and professional activities spanned much of ecology, even the history of ecology, and went beyond ecology as such to include environmental ethics.

This range of professional interests was backed up by a remarkable fund of information. He could discourse extemporaneously on any of those subjects. In practice, his research spanned much of the world. In Puerto Rico, he helped assess the impact of a copper mine. In Greece, he assisted with planning a school of natural resources. He had cooperative research projects in Panama, Poland, Costa Rica, and Venezuela, and projects and a lecture series in Japan on city greenness and environmental conservation. Fluent in Spanish, he helped to coordinate and teach a postgraduate course on rural planning and the environment at the Instituto Agronomico Mediterraneo de Zaragoza over a period of 30 years. After retirement in 2000, he continued to be a constant presence and influence at the Institute of Ecology, remaining enthusiastically involved in graduate-level teaching.

Beyond his professional interests, Golley followed in the footsteps of one of his boat-building ancestors and crafted a small sailboat. He was an avid gardener and a skilled leatherworker. He enjoyed playing the guitar and dulcimer, and had recently taken up icon painting. His thirst for learning went far beyond ecology and his role in it. In conversation, he would often casually display detailed knowledge of some unusual subject, such as 20th century Japanese printmaking. Last year, he enrolled in a university class to learn more about one of his favorite authors, Vladimir Nabokov.

He is survived by his wife, Priscilla McKinzie Golley, to whom he was married for 53 years; his son, Frank Benjamin Golley IV and wife, Ruth, of Decatur Georgia; his daughter Dr. Priscilla Sue Golley and husband Milton Carlson of Sacramento, California; his daughter, Kathleen Annette Anderson of Athens, Georgia; and four grandchildren, Stuart B. Golley and Peter M. Golley of Decatur, and Zachary R. Anderson and Ashley A. Anderson of Athens.

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