

OBITUARY

IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR GORDON FRASER BENNETT (1930-1995)

Professor Gordon Fraser Bennett was Indian by birth. He was born in South India in 1930 to Missionary parents. His father, Rev. Reginald Bennett, was a clergyman and his mother, Dr. Ila Bennett, a physician. Professor Bennett had his early schooling in India, but he received his high school education in Ontario. After graduating from Sandwich collegiate Institute in 1949, he elected to study honours zoology and graduated in 1953. He did his masters (1954) and doctorate degrees (1957) under the supervision of Professor A. M. Fallis. During 1957-1962 he was a Research Fellow in the Department of Parasitology at the Ontario Research Foundation where he carried out important studies on the development and transmission of avian blood parasites in collaboration with Professor Fallis. Between 1963-1965 he joined the US National Institute of Health and conducted studies on transmission, development and systematics of simian malaria parasite with Dr. McWilson Warren and others in Malaysia. In 1965, Professor Bennett along with Professors P.C.C. Garnham and A.M. Fallis redefined the genera *Leucocytozoon* and *Haemoproteus*. During 1966-1968, he was Senior Scientist with CSIRO in Brisbane, Australia. In 1969, Professor Bennett returned to Canada to join the Department of Biology, Memorial University of Newfoundland as Associate Professor and in 1974 he became Professor and Head of the World Health Organization's International Reference Centre for Avian Haematozoa (IRCAH). He was the Deputy Head of the Department from 1986 to 1988, and in 1991, he became University Research Professor for 1991-1996. He retired in August 1995.

Professor Gordon F. Bennett authored and co-authored more than 250 research publication in reputed journals. In 1976, he published "Bibliography of the avian blood inhabiting protozoa" with a supplement in 1981. In 1982, his monographic account entitled "A host-parasite catalogue of the avian haematozoa" listed a total of 3,816 bird species representing 152 (84%) of the 175 avian families. It was published as an Occasional Paper in Biology Series No. 5 by the Memorial University and was supplemented in 1992 with bibliography of the group as Occasional paper No. 15 with additional records and references. In 1989, he was awarded the Wardle Medal by the parasitology section of the Canadian Society of Zoologists for his outstanding contributions.

During his professoriate he supervised two Ph. D. students, 17 M.Sc. Students and 12 senior undergraduates, He was editor of the Occasional Papers in Biology Series of the Memorial University. He also shared administrative responsibility on various committees in different capacities. Apart from his academic duties, he was voluntary coach of a gymnastics club and was admitted to the Newfoundland and Labrador Gymnastics Sports Hall of Fame in 1988.

Professor Bennett died on Christmas Eve, 1995, after having had a severe mycoplasma infection in April, 1995, which had left him with only 10% lung capacity and a 30 second

oxygen reserve. He leaves behind his wife and two children. Shortly before his death he was relieved to see his collection of type slides, literature, etc., associated with IRCAH shifted safely to the Queensland Museum, Brisbane where Dr. Robert D. Adlard is looking after his great collection and catering information to the interested researchers in the field of avian haematozoa.

He conducted collaborative research with colleagues in about 15 countries around the world on taxonomy and distribution of avian blood parasites and had planned :

- To prepare a monograph on the distribution of avian haematozoa with respect to breeding, nesting etc. habits of birds including their distribution Wallacean life zone-wise;
- To make illustrations of every blood parasite, described or re-described (about 300 species), on computer, and put them on international internet (some 140,000 records) as well as listing of the bibliography;
- To Publish a book giving standardised description of every species of genera *Haemoproteus* and *Leucocytozoon*, based on the original descriptions.

We, his collaborating colleagues all over the world, deeply mourn the death of Prof. Gordon F. Bennett and pray to God that his soul may rest in peace.

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