

Dear Oregon AFS Family,

Many of you may already know, but it is with great sadness that we note the passing of one our great voices in fisheries, Dr. David Noakes. David passed away late last week while in hospice. While David's professional legacy will endure, most important to the many of us who were touched by him, his legacy will live in who he was as a person. It is easy to do David by the numbers and be awed by his incredible career -internationally acclaimed scientist, Professor at Oregon State University, Director of the Oregon Hatchery Research Center, visiting professor at a dozen different international universities, Editor-in-Chief of Environmental Biology of Fishes, Fellow of The American Fisheries Society, recipient of the AFS Award of Excellence, author on over 200 publications, etc., etc. But those incredible professional accolades pale in comparison to the David Noakes we knew as person -the dry-witted, kind, compassionate person who would just as easily stop by your office to give you the original vinyl of *How to Roast a Pig* (it's still in my office, David) as to share the latest wisdom on the ecology and evolution of fishes.

We all have memories of David that make us smile, if not outright laugh. He had a way of taking the serious and making us at ease when we needed it. When I was officially hired as a tenure-track assistant professor at OSU, David was assigned as my faculty mentor. This is a professionally stressful period of one's life (for me, not for David), filled with angst and hard work. But I was lucky to have the vast experience and insight of *the* Dr. David Noakes to help guide me through the process, right? During our first annual review, I asked David, in all seriousness, what's the biggest key to tenure success? Is it publications? Grants? Mentored students? Teaching? University service? All of that? None of that? What is it? In that gruff, baritone voice David boomed "Be Canadian, obviously!". He said he was Canadian, and he got tenure, so that must be the trick. We want David to be remembered for the marvelous person he was, not just what he did. It is with this spirit that a few of us would like to share our David with you and to celebrate a life well lived that touched so many of us in so many kind ways.

With peace,

Scott Heppell and the Oregon AFS Executive Committee

### **Maryam Kamran**

When I first met David, a dignified gentleman with kind eyes and gruff voice, he was interviewing me to be a postdoc that would lead a multi-institution, collaborative project in Applied Fisheries Science. I came from a background in Animal Behavior and Neuroscience (with little experience in fisheries) and had prepared to demonstrate how someone like me could be a good fit for the position. I would be the first to admit that I would not have been the obvious choice. However, meeting with David immediately put me at ease. What could've been a very stressful interview was made to be quite relaxed and enjoyable. Afterwards, I was telling a colleague about how the interview with David went. They stopped me and asked, "THE DAVID NOAKES?" I was taken back and said oh you know David? He looked at me a little alarmed and informed me how "Dr. Noakes was kind of a big deal" and

proceeded to list a few of David's accomplishments. I immediately felt horrified that I was unaware and felt I should've treated David in some special way. Sometime after being selected for the position I told David this little anecdote and he was wryly amused. He joked that I must tell his wife Pat what a big deal people thought he was. In retrospect, I realize that was who David was - he could strike a conversation with anyone and could put even the most anxious of individuals (like myself) at ease. No matter how 'big of a deal' he was he never made us feel small in his presence. He would encourage us to take a leadership role within the projects we were working on, whether it was developing the research, presenting it at a variety of conferences, or facilitating meetings with local stakeholders.

As a person of color, I was apprehensive to work in rural areas of Oregon at a time when there was so much racial and political divisiveness in the U.S. There were times when I didn't have the words to articulate my apprehension, but David was sensitive to this and always said to me "I can't say I can understand but I recognize that your experiences here may be different". That to me was monumental. He always made sure I was comfortable, and I knew that I had his support no matter what. Whenever I would meet with David, he would say "how can I help?", "what do you need from me to do what you need to?" and "thank you". Again, these are reflective to some level of the thoughtfulness of David as an individual and mentor.

David was uniquely gifted in not only recognizing what someone was capable of but also was able to cultivate their talents. His unwavering support for those that he mentored amazes me. At a conference overseas I lost track of how many people stopped by to speak to me only because they had seen David's name on my abstract. Each and every one of them mentioned how they had been mentored by David in some way and what an impact he had on them. These were individuals whose careers spanned the last thirty years and now they worked from pathogens to ungulates to bats. For those of us that had the privilege of knowing David and had been mentored by him we know that his kindness and generosity knew no bounds. I am so grateful to have worked with David and have benefited from his holistic mentorship, where he nurtured us not only as scientists but as individuals.

When David Noakes discussed the process of science, he often likened it to putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Working at the edges and with pieces where colors transition tends to be most efficient, as those parts of the puzzle have high information content and allow you to quickly get a sense of the image being assembled. Thus, a good scientist will often labor at the edges and intersections of traditional disciplines. One of the strategies that David employed to achieve this was seeking out students and postdocs who were a step or two off of the expected path. Perhaps David was willing to take the risk of bringing sea turtle or crayfish biologists into his lab because he thought the diversity of thought and perspective would buoy the intellectual avenues of exploration; perhaps he was simply confident that he knew more than enough about fish to go around and so ichthyological novices were unlikely to be a hindrance. Whatever the case, it was clear that David saw the unique potential in every person he brought into his research group, treating us as colleagues and working to hone the skills we started with and grow into areas where we were still immature. Among the most inspirational aspects of David's legacy is the way in which he prepared new generations of scientists to effectively tackle important questions. It is a way of interacting with others we would all do well to emulate.

## **Carl and Jacque Schreck, Hiram and Judy Li**

David Noakes was clearly a giant in many disciplines of biology and academics. Many of us got to know personally how extraordinary he was as a friend and colleague as well. He gave of himself, unselfishly to all who crossed his path. Many, probably even most, people never knew that he was helping them; he never looked for or needed to take credit. He was like a fairy godfather in so many ways. He was totally supportive of everyone, from freshmen students to senior colleagues, all walks of life, and ethnic backgrounds. A student may have mentioned they needed a book, and he'd show up with one. He wrote first drafts of manuscripts and made grad students senior authors (because they needed it more than he did). Often, he'd find places for students and his staff to live. David and Pat's home always seemed to have guests, sometimes for prolonged stays - friends, students, and colleagues from all corners of the world. David kept an impressive collection of national flags so he could fly appropriate ones to greet his guests or celebrate holidays. We were very lucky to meet many of his innumerable international colleagues during these visits. Together Pat and David made everyone feel at home and welcome.

David enjoyed traveling, frequently associated with professional activities. Pick any foreign country and there was a good chance of bumping into David. Collaborations and friendships with colleagues from all over the world provided special destinations for his travels. He studied in Edinburgh for a year, and in Japan a couple of times; several of his graduate students were from Iceland and he travelled there for many research expeditions. Occasionally friends enjoyed the fun of travelling with him and Pat, checking out not only research sites, but funny byways, like notable cemeteries or out-of-the way museums that he'd scouted out.

Going to estate sales was quite an adventure with David. From old books, LP records to cookbooks and Hawaiian shirts, he was always on the lookout for treasures he could share with others. He loved collecting – and many friends can testify to his passion for typewriters by the ones passed along to them!

Another dimension of what made David, David was his delight in chatting with people. He started our department's Friday morning coffee and cake time to which everyone was welcome. Besides creating a nice social environment, his intention was to create the opportunity for people to bump into each other, where students could informally meet faculty. He loved to bake, something going back to his childhood experiences, and he ensured that there were always yummy eats at these gatherings. How David kept track of everyone's birthdays is beyond us. He helped celebrate these often with singing cards, be it with a student, David Attenborough, the former President of Iceland, or the Emperor of Japan.

David was a prolific reader. His knowledge of not only the scientific literature but also history, sport, biographies and a wide range of minutia, was encyclopedic. There appeared to be no trivia that David didn't know, from lyrics and composers of bluegrass music to stats of ball players and everything in between. Watching basketball or football, listening to LP recordings or catching live performances were truly more entertaining when shared with him.

His dry sense of humor often caught people by surprise, instantly creating a friendship. We will miss his great sense of humor, disarming smile and the ways in which he could bring out the best in us. He was greatly loved by so many. We were very fortunate to have David as part of our lives, immeasurably enriched in so many ways.

## **Bruce McIntosh**

On behalf of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife family, we honor our dear colleague Dr. David Noakes and offer Pat and the rest of the Noakes clan our condolences.

Dr. David Noakes and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have been inextricably linked for these past 15 years in the search for the science to manage hatchery fish consistent with the conservation of wild fish. As the first and only Director of the Oregon Hatchery Research Center (OHRC), a joint venture between ODFW and OSU, David leaves his personal signature on all that we have accomplished together. I have had the pleasure of overseeing the OHRC with him over the past decade. We endured and thrived together through some very challenging times. He was my colleague, confidant and friend and I am blessed for the time we had together.

As most of you know, the conflicts and challenges around the hatchery-wild issue has been with Oregon and the region for decades now. OHRC was built to ensure that world class scientists bring the best science to bear on how to manage and minimize the impacts of hatchery fish on wild fish. After an international search, David was chosen as the first Director in October 2005. He threw himself into these questions and issues with that dogged determination that kept him at the top of his game right to the very end. He made countless presentations to anyone who wanted to listen and became a bit of a star with the Oregon Legislature as he made the complexities of these issues much simpler and put them into terms the layperson could understand. While David was not of this region or an expert on the issues, he did his homework and quickly became the go-to scientist on these critical issues. When David spoke, he commanded the room in his understated and charming way, engendering trust and confidence in the OHRC and the man in charge. And he was a darn entertaining speaker, who knew his stuff and could spin a good story with the best of them.

David also invested fully in ODFW and worked hard to connect with hatchery staff, agency scientists and managers, along with agency leadership to ensure the Center was focused on the issues most relevant to ODFW. He was always in attendance at Agency Fish Bio and Hatchery Manager meetings, giving updates, listening intently to what was happening within the agency and being available to all comers. He has also mentored a whole generation of staff as we dealt with the challenges at hand. He shared not only his skills as a scientist with myself, Ryan Couture, Shaun Clements, Joseph O'Neil, Jen Krajcik, Marc Johnson, Scott Patterson and countless others, but also his ability to be the calm in the storm around battles that raged around hatchery and wild fish. He was also really fun to be around.

While David was a world class scientist with a storied and multi-faceted career, he brought such kindness and humanity to his work, looking out for all of us as we went about our work. He loved to bake and always provided goodies for OHRC Board meetings. When we were on the road together, he would often quietly pick up the bill - "it was nothing." His wit and charm, along with his uncanny knowledge about common things as well as the obscure was just so darn endearing. We were all part of his extended family, who I believe sustained him and kept him so vital as a scientist and a human being. In recent years he talked to me on occasion about retiring, but within months of those discussions he would call me and talk profusely about the new graduate student he was taking on. I'd remind him that it was hard to retire if he kept taking on students, and he'd move past that as if I had never spoken. He was at his life's calling and joy to his last day. While it may sound cliché, David was a true gentleman and a scholar, the likes of which we will not see for a long time. Bravo on a life well-lived, you have left an indelible mark on so many of us and we will miss you. Your friend, Bruce McIntosh.

We all miss you, David.