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# Distinguished Hawaii insect expert Jack Beardsley dies at 74

By HELEN ALTONN  
Star-Bulletin

John W. "Jack" Beardsley, 74, died Feb. 5 at the Bishop Museum while in town to do the work he loved — studying insects.

The world-renowned Hawaii entomologist was distinguished as a researcher, teacher, mentor and author who contributed his expertise and assistance to the state and other countries.

Colleagues at the museum, University of Hawaii and state Department of Agriculture said his death leaves a "giant" hole in Hawaiian entomology.

"He took a lot of information with him," said museum entomologist Frank Howarth. "It takes a lifetime to become a world authority on a group of insects, then you hope to have a few years to write it all up." He said Beardsley, a specialist on parasitic wasps and scab insects, was working on several manuscripts about Hawaiian fauna.

"We're really going to miss him,

not only those of us here at the museum, but the entire state has depended on him so much," said Gordon Nishida, collections manager for natural sciences at the museum.



John W. "Jack" Beardsley  
RETIRED PROFESSOR

"As far as knowledge of Hawaiian insects, he was the best," said Dick Tsuda, UH entomology researcher who was one of Beardsley's students, then a longtime associate on the faculty.

Beardsley joined the UH in 1963 as an assistant entomologist and professor. He chaired the Department of Entomology in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources from 1981 until shortly before retiring in December 1991.

He had been a Bishop Museum research associate since 1955.

After retiring, he moved to Arca-

dia, Calif., where he built a laboratory and continued to identify and describe insects. He loved Hawaii and returned often to work on projects, his colleagues said.

He had been working with Howarth and the agriculture department on an alien pest species risk assessment at Maui Airport and with Nishida on identifications for many insect groups in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands.

"He was quite an encyclopedia, not only on insects for also on plants," said Lyle Wong, state Plant Industry Division administrator. He was lead consultant on the Maui Airport study and arrived Feb. 4 to work on the project. He and Howarth spent the morning of Feb. 5 at the agriculture department. They then went to the museum's entomology department where Beardsley planned to eat a brown bag lunch and work.

"I had a long talk with him while he was getting ready for lunch and left to go back to the Department of Agriculture," Howarth said. "He was in wonderful spirits when

I left. He apparently passed away moments after I left."

Beardsley studied insect pests in many countries and was internationally known for his research on pineapple and sugarcane mealybugs and natural enemies.

He was from California and came to Hawaii in the U.S. Navy from 1944-46. While doing graduate work at UH, he served as entomologist for the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific (Micronesia), Kroror, Belau and Caroline Islands. Returning to Hawaii, he worked as an entomologist for the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association.

"He was an exceptional entomologist and one of the old-time naturalists," said Larry Nakahara, another of Beardsley's students, now chief of the agriculture department's Plant Pest Control Branch. "They are few and far between."

He was a prolific author, with more than 650 scientific articles and published notes on new immigrant insects and records.

He received the society's first Award for Outstanding Service in 1991 and its Lifetime Excellence in Entomology Award in 1995.

Survivors include his wife, Peg-

gy; sons, John of Hawaii and Steven of Utah; daughters Laurel Breault of Utah, and Claire Leary of Hawaii; sister Nancy, and brother Edward, both of the Morrow Bay area, California.

Memorial services will be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday in the Bishop Museum's Athertoe Halau, 1525 Bernice St. Casual attire. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made to the John W. Beardsley Fund to be established at the University of Hawaii Foundation, 2444 Doie St., and the Bishop Museum to advance his efforts in entomology.