

Dr. Archie Carr

Upon Whose Shoulders We All Stand

In the world of sea turtle research and conservation, it is Archie Carr who stands alone. He has been called the father of sea turtle research, and rightly so. Even beyond his field, his name is recognized for his commitment to the protection of these reptiles.

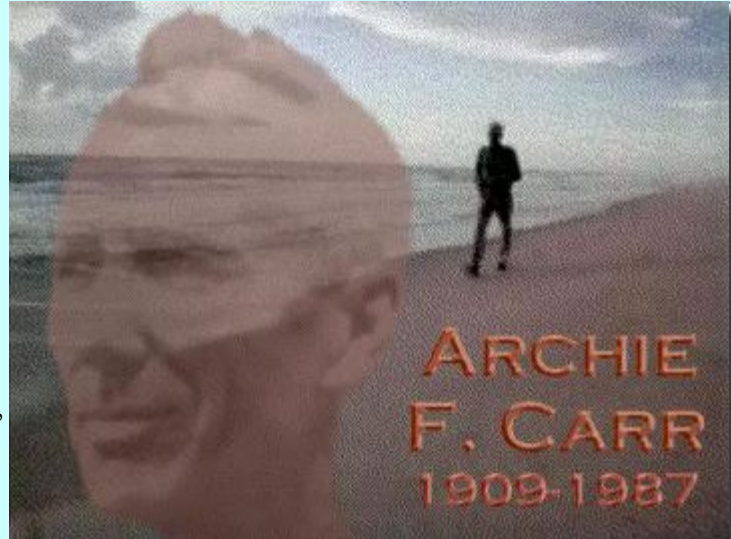
When Dr. Carr died in 1987, sea turtles lost their greatest champion and friend.

Sea turtles held a fascination for Archie Carr throughout his entire life. He was a Biology professor at the University of Florida, the author of numerous papers and books, a lecturer, and an expert on sea turtles, especially the green turtle.



Dr. Archie Carr at Tortugera, Costa Rica

*Photo courtesy of G.H. Balazs/S. Murakawa
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Those who knew him describe his infectious enthusiasm. Read his book *The Sea Turtle--So Excellente a Fishe* and you will feel it too--but there is more. Through his words, you will understand the fascination and puzzlement he felt as he tried to unlock some of these creatures' secrets. Above all, in his writing you can see his profound affection and respect for the sea turtle.

Dr. Carr helped found the Caribbean Conservation Corporation, and tagged turtles in order to understand better their migratory habits. He also initiated a program called "Operation Green Turtle" in an attempt to re-establish rookeries in places known to have had nesting activity.

John Lehrer, in his book about turtles, had this to say about Dr. Carr:

Archie Carr's conservation efforts over a period of thirty years not only saved the green turtle in the western Caribbean from destruction, it inspired others--

largely local people, government officials, and university students--to follow his example in other areas as well, such as at Escobilla Beach in Oaxaca, the principal nesting site of the olive ridley. There, Mexican university students volunteer to tag and count hatchlings emerging from the sand.

Basically, all successful attempts to conserve and protect turtles--whether at the governmental or independent level--will require the elements Archie Carr brought to the endeavor: intelligence, knowledge, passion, purpose, perspective, and the capacity to inspire others to share a vision of what might be and to act on that vision.

*Turtles and Tortoises,
1990, Michael Friedman Publishing Group Inc.*

Although we never had the chance to meet Archie Carr, we feel that we have come to know a little of him from his writing. It displays a generous mix of humour and sobriety. That's what we're striving for here, so we like to think that he would have enjoyed *Turtle Trax*. We felt that a place like this would be flawed if it did not honour him.

Archie Carr did more than save Caribbean green sea turtles. He left a legacy that gave them and all marine turtles a much better chance than they would have had otherwise. In his lifetime, Archie Carr must have started thousands of turtle hatchlings down the beach and on to life's journey. Whether he thought of it in these terms or not, he also released another batch of hatchlings: the students he taught and inspired to go on and lead the world's research and conservation efforts for these magnificent animals.

That's how we like to think of him, anyway.



Dr. Archie Carr & Friends

Drawing by UKB
[90K.JPEG](#)

Postscript

Right after *Turtle Trax* was launched on May 21, 1995, we were informed that May 21 was also the anniversary of Archie Carr's death. We did not plan it this way; in fact, *Turtle Trax* was a day behind schedule. Learning this coincidence gave us both an eerie feeling. We considered this to be a Good Omen--and it has been.



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