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We Honor Binion Amerson

Arthur Binion Amerson, Jr.
January 2, 1936 – September 23, 2017



Binion Amerson was honored at the December 2018 meeting of the North Texas Lone Star STC Chapter for his contributions to the Lone Star Chapter, to STC, and to the profession of technical communication.

Binion was born January 2, 1936, in Macon, Georgia, the son of Arthur Binion Amerson, Sr. and Agnes Elizabeth Dunn. Both of his grandparents were farmers and as a child he loved the outdoors. His mother was an avid garden club volunteer, officer, and flower show judge.

Binion graduated from Mercer University in Georgia in 1958 with a degree in biology and attended graduate school for a time in the Entomology Department where he became interested in arthropods of medical significance. From there he transferred to the University of Kansas and began work toward a master's degree with specialization in acarology, the study of mites and ticks. Binion has been a leader in biological field research, ecological studies, technical writing, editing, and publishing.

During the summer of 1962, he spent two months in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico with a team of faculty and graduate students studying animals and arthropods. The field study was funded by the U. S. Department of Defense and resulted in a classified document for the U. S. Army. Castro had just invaded Cuba and the U.S. military wanted to know what harmful animals were present, in case troops had to be sent into the area. His studies at the University of Kansas were interrupted in late 1962 when he accepted a job working for the Smithsonian Institution studying the plants and animals of various islands in the Pacific. This project was also funded by the Defense Department and was a secret operation.

Over the course of seven years (1963-70), Binion and his team surveyed the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, Line and Phoenix Islands, Marshall and Gilbert Islands, and American Samoa. They banded over a million birds and tagged numerous Hawaiian Monk Seals and Green Sea Turtles. As one of the team leaders, Binion wrote the natural history summaries of the islands, which were eventually published in the scientific literature. Following the Smithsonian work, Binion returned to the University of Kansas and completed his master's degree in Ecology and Environmental Studies.

In the early 1970s, Binion went to work for Environmental Consultants, Inc. of Dallas with his initial project being a natural history study of American Samoa. He spent ten years with this company conducting ecological work in the United States, Central and South America, and several Pacific Islands.

After environmental work began to wane in the mid-1980s, Binion began work as a technical writer for computer software and hardware companies. He worked in this capacity until his retirement in 2001. During that time, he was very active in the Society for Technical Communications (STC). He held

several local and national offices and was instrumental in getting the 40th Annual STC Conference brought to Dallas. In 1999, he was honored for his significant contributions to technical communication and to the STC by electing him to the rank of Fellow. In 2006, the Lone Star Chapter of the STC established the annual Binion Amerson Leadership Award, with the first recipient being Binion Amerson.

Binion's award reads as follows:

"For being the brightest star in Lone Star's history and for your undaunted enthusiasm, your visionary leadership, and your inspiration for excellence"

The Binion Amerson Leadership Award (BALA) recognizes enthusiastic dedication, willingness to accept challenging goals, and inspiring leadership in service to the Lone Star Community. NTLSC members may nominate a community member through a written description of his or her achievements relative to the Award criteria, after which a panel of judges will identify the BALA recipient. Binion Amerson annually presented the Award to the recipient from 2007 to 2011. There were no BALA Awards given from 2012-2014.

In October 2013, at the age of 77, Binion came back to the Lone Star STC Chapter meeting to present his new book, the *Coral Carrier*, about his work on a small atoll that is part of the northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Bob Want, President of the Lone Star STC Chapter 2016-2017, asked Kathryn Poe to contact Binion Amerson to ask him if he would be willing to begin presenting the awards again annually beginning December 2015. Binion expressed an interesting meeting. Bob Want and Teresa Nguyen went to meet Binion at his apartment in Farmers Branch and Binion said enthusiastically he would like to begin presenting the awards again annually. Binion presented the BALA Award in December 2015 and December 2016. Binion passed away in September 2017.

Binion Amerson was definitely one of the brightest stars in Lone Star's history, as well as in the Society of Technical Communication's history.



Binion was also well known in Texas gardening circles. Binion's love of daylilies led him to landscape his home in Farmers Branch. It was on tour in 1998 and 2005 during the annual Region 6 Meetings when they were held in Dallas. He transformed his yard from a collection of odds and ends to an official AHS Display Garden containing more than 700 daylily cultivars. Binion had only leased the home and in December of 2009 had to move and dismantle his daylily garden. He donated all his daylilies to the city of Farmers Branch where they are growing in the Farmers Branch Public Daylily Garden. This public garden is maintained by the Daylily Growers of Dallas. The garden is located just west of the Farmers Branch City Hall.

Binion registered two daylilies, *Hemerocallis* 'Agnes Amerson' (1998), named after his mother, and *H.* 'Nina Worthy' (2007), named after a past President of the Dallas Council of Garden Clubs.

Binion died September 23, 2017. According to Melba Gordon, Binion's cousin, Binion donated his body to science. The rest of his family is buried at the Mineral Springs Baptist Church in Washington County, Georgia. The family hopes to be able to have a cenotaph erected at the church for him at a future date.

We in the Lone Star STC Chapter are fortunate to have known him and spent

time with him for two of the last years of his life. Rest in peace, colleague and friend, Binion Amerson.

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CALENDAR

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