

Obituary: A Remembrance of Fred H. Berry

Picture this. In 1973, you are 200 miles off the coast of Cape Hatteras (North Carolina, USA) on a steel-hulled Army tugboat converted into a research vessel. You are awakened for watch to find yourself in what will soon become the perfect storm. As you get on deck, you find this imposing chief scientist sharing the scene communing with the waves. As he turns, this deep bellowing voice, somewhat slower than normal, says, "People pay for rides like this."

A 1927 native of Pensacola, Florida, Fred Berry graduated from Alcee Fortier High School (New Orleans, Louisiana, USA) in 1944, received his B.S. degree from the University of Florida in 1954, and his M.S. degree from the same school in 1955. His education never stopped. He was always a student of life, a taxonomist par excellence, with energy and intensity to match his sizable frame. His passion for learning and study was contagious. Fred gave one or more presentations each year at scientific meetings, authored or co-authored over 136 publications, and was a member of over 15 scientific societies.

He began with fishes and fisheries, expanded into sea turtles, and concluded with tropical plants. His publications began with age and growth on gizzard shad *genus*. He received the 1961 Department of the Interior Award for Scientific Publication for his work on young jack crevalles (*Caranx*). He also published on boarfishes *Antigonia*, thread herring *Opisthonema*, bluefin tuna *Thunnus*, amberjacks *Seriola*, and lizardfishes (Synodontidae), to name a few. His published guides on techniques in ichthyoplankton were meticulous to the finest detail.

In 1982, he co-authored (with several colleagues) the first Manual of Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Techniques. Under sponsorship of IOCARIBE (a Sub-Commission of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission; Cartagena, Colombia), he helped to organize the first Western Atlantic Turtle Symposium (WATS I) in Costa Rica 1983 and WATS II in Puerto Rico in 1987. The symposia had official representation by nearly 40 states and territories throughout the region. He was honored by NMFS in 1987 for his efforts on behalf of sea turtle conservation.

His 45 publications in botany included works on floss silk trees *Chorisia*, kapok trees *Ceiba*, and, his favorite, *Heliconia*. In keeping with his world view on

science, in 1985 he founded the Heliconia Society International to foster the exchange of information. In 1991, Fred and co-author John Kress published the first book on these plants: *Heliconia - An Identification Guide*.

Fred Berry's employment record includes being a reservist with the US Navy, a teacher at Miami-Dade Community College, University of Miami, Florida International University, and the College of Charleston. He retired with 31 years in the US Civil Service in 1987. He was a master Taxonomist, Turtle Biologist, and Ichthyologist with the US Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Lab in Brunswick (Georgia), the International Indian Ocean Expedition Extension, the South Carolina Marine Resources Research Institute, and the US National Marine Fisheries Service. He also served as secretary for WATS and IOCARIBE, and owner of "Berry's Tropical Plants" in Miami. But to say that he worked somewhere gives you no information on what he really brought to each place, the love of learning, the striving for perfection, the taste for life, the wonder of creation. The grounding in taxonomy, consistent field methodology, and thirst for analyses and answers that has permeated the SC Department of Natural Resources is due in large measure to the example and foundation built by Mr. Berry, not only for the MARMAP program, but by cross-pollination, for the entire center.

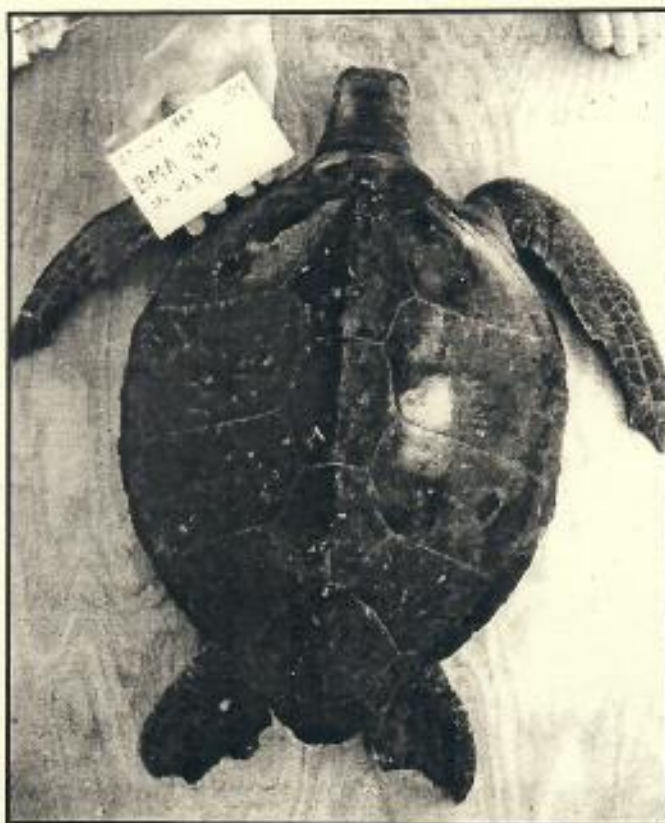
Mr. Berry's interests extend even further. The Mayan culture and especially Chichen Itza held a special place in his heart. He has a full family history with his wife Patty, son Darrell, and daughter Alicia and many adventures along this road. On January 23, 2001, his family, friends, and international scientific community in fishes, sea turtles, and plants lost one of its own as Fred H. Berry succumbed to lung cancer. What a legacy he left behind! God bless him!

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Juvenile East Pacific green turtle, Baja California Sur, Mexico (Nichols *et al.* pp.10-11).

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