

# This issue of *Marine Mammal Science* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Michael F. Tillman

Over the 15 years that I have served as Editor of *Marine Mammal Science*, I have only once used my prerogative in that position to dedicate an issue of the journal to a fellow colleague. However, I recently learned that Dr. Michael F. Tillman passed away in July after a long battle with an illness that he was not able to beat. I believe it is important to let those who might not have known him to be aware of the high-quality individual he was and to know the effort he made in advancing marine mammal conservation and science. To acknowledge him, I wish to dedicate this issue of *Marine Mammal Science* to him.

I got to know Mike late in life and at the tail end of both of our professional careers. Although I met him briefly while I was at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, and he was at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, it was only after we were both nominated in 2010 by President Barack Obama to serve as Commissioners on the US Marine Mammal Commission that I really had a chance to get to know him.

I remember the week before we were due to go before the Senate for our hearing to determine if we would be recommended for approval, we were at the Commission office in Bethesda, MD, being prepared for the hearing by Commission staff. I felt incredibly uptight about the upcoming hearing as this was a novel experience for me—these were not other scientists but politicians. Mike on the other hand was “cool hand Luke” having been on the Hill many times in several previous positions for which he served. He was extremely helpful in providing perspective and a calming influence.

In the 12 years we served together on the Commission, I came to realize how astute and on top of issues Mike was. He had the ability to sit back and listen at meetings and at the right moment ask questions that drilled down to the heart of the matter. He also did not pull punches in speaking his mind as to who might be responsible for something or for what was needed to address the problem. I admired his ability to pull out his notebook and look back through his voluminous notes from various past meetings—sometimes a year or two or more before—and refer to a comment he made or that someone else made that was relevant to the immediate point under discussion.

Mike was well known in the world of marine mammal management and conservation, both domestically and internationally. The latter was primarily a result of his long tenure with the US delegation to the International Whaling Commission. It seemed he was the “go to guy” for all things IWC, especially when dealing with historical matters.

He once confided in me that he recognized he did not have a long list of publications resulting from his career as a scientist, as was the case for many others in such senior positions of influence. I was not sure if he was just acknowledging a fact or suggesting this was somehow a shortcoming. What I do know is that the respect he garnered from those with such records and from many others clearly indicated no one else was concerned about this fact. I always looked forward to hearing Mike's view on matters before the Commission. They were usually filled with wisdom from his many experiences and long tenure with marine mammal science and conservation.

I raise a glass to you Mike Tillman, Slàinte mhath (Slan-ge var)!

Daryl J. Boness, Editor-in-Chief

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