

Dignity®
MEMORIAL

OBITUARY

Boris Carl Kondratieff

APRIL 30, 1954 – AUGUST 14, 2022



IN THE CARE OF

Allnutt Funeral Service – Drake Road Chapel

April 30, 1954 – August 14, 2022

Boris Kondratieff passed away on August 14, 2022.

Boris, and his twin sister Vera, were born on April 30, 1954, in Kansas City, Missouri, a few weeks after their parents, Johanna and Boris Kondratieff, immigrated from Germany. From his earliest days, Boris had discovered what would be his life's work - the magical world of insects. Before Boris could even walk, he turned over rocks to watch the bugs crawl around.

By the time the family moved to Lawrence, Kansas, in 1964, Boris had already become a passionate butterfly and moth collector, and his childhood friends still remember the neighborhood bug-collecting expeditions he led. In 1966, the family moved to the foothills of the Smoky Mountains and Tusculum College in Greeneville, Tennessee. Those years in Tusculum established him as a future scientist. Boris turned the family's home into a science lab with many pets, aquariums, caterpillars on the kitchen windowsill, and frozen larvae in the freezer. His room was a science lab and an art studio for his beloved model airplanes that he carefully assembled and painted.

Boris graduated from Chuckey-Doak High School in 1972 and continued his studies at Tennessee Technology University, where he earned a B.S. in Wildlife Management in 1976. He then moved to Blacksburg, VA, where he pursued graduate education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI), receiving M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Entomology in 1979 and 1982, respectively. During this time, he received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award from the Eastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America. Later in his career, in 2013, he was recognized as the outstanding VPI departmental alumnus.

Upon graduation, from 1983 to 1986, he worked as an entomologist at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory near Aiken, South Carolina. In 1986 he joined the Department of Entomology at Colorado State University as an Assistant Professor, was rapidly promoted, and retired in 2021. During this period, Dr. Kondratieff had an extraordinary career, with a breadth of achievement and engagement across disciplines and functions within and outside the university that has very few, if any, parallels.

As a research scientist, Dr. Kondratieff was best known as an internationally recognized expert in the systematics of several groups of aquatic insects. He authored over 225 refereed journal articles and several books, mostly in this area. He also coordinated three national aquatic insect websites: Dragonflies and Damselflies of the United States, Mayflies of the United States, and Stoneflies of the United States. He edited the Perla Newsletter and the Bibliography of the International Association of Plecopterologists. His stonefly work was recognized with a 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society of Plecopterologists.

But what was particularly notable was the diversity of his interests, extending far beyond aquatic insects. Boris's knowledge of insects has often been described as encyclopedic, and throughout his life, he continued to take on new challenges. He published studies and described new species in a wide range of taxa, including mydas flies, owlflies, and several groups of beetles... few types of insects were outside his range

of interest. A project done early in his career, to inventory and describe the arthropods of Colorado National Monument, was of such high quality that he subsequently was asked to work on similar projects for over a half dozen other national parks and monuments, providing for all a very thorough and complete report to serve as the foundation document for arthropod biodiversity at the site. This work also extended to military lands, including Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. He consulted with local and state law enforcement on forensic entomology issues. Finally, he was an invaluable resource for faculty with Extension appointments, providing support for pest surveys and countless identifications of specimens submitted by clientele. One of his contributions to Extension was recognized in the 2014 Colorado State University Team Award.

Dr. Kondratieff had a large and diverse teaching portfolio, easily twice as demanding as the average for faculty in the College, taking on courses ranging from Advanced Systematics to Topics in Livestock Entomology. He spent enormous amounts of time in preparation, ensuring all his courses were as complete and up-to-date as he could make them. He was a demanding teacher, but his total grasp of subject matter, infectious enthusiasm, and willingness to always give full attention to every student resulted in his courses nearly always being fully enrolled, often over-enrolled, and a great many students over the years remarked that a Dr. Kondratieff course was the most memorable and valuable classroom experience they had at CSU. From the beginning, his abilities in teaching were obvious, and very early in his career, he received formal recognition, including the Charles N. Shepardson Teaching Award (1990), National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Meritorious Teaching (1991), and the 2005 North Central Branch Entomological Society of America Distinguished Achievement in Teaching award.

Dr. Kondratieff also was very active in graduate education, serving as an advisor to nearly 50 M.S. and Ph.D. students. Always in great demand as a graduate student committee member, he commonly served on 20 or more committees at any one time over the span of his career at Colorado State University. This extraordinary amount of graduate committee service is a testimony not only to the respect other faculty and students had for him but also to his dedication to his profession. His advising achievements were recognized by the Jack E. Cermak Outstanding Adviser Award, College of Agricultural Sciences in 1992, and a Certificate of Merit in Academic Advising, ACT/NACADA, 1992, awards he received within the first decade of his career at Colorado State University.

Dr. Kondratieff also was very active in university, professional, and community service. His academic service included membership in the Arthropod-Borne and Infectious

Disease Laboratory and the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology, Director of the C. P. Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity, Faculty Adviser to the Saudi Student House, departmental Undergraduate Education Committee, and departmental liaison to the Morgan Library. Professionally, he was a member of four entomological societies and associate editor for three scientific journals. In the community, he was in constant demand and annually would give scores of presentations to K-12 students, Scouts, and groups such as the Master Naturalists. He was a member of the Fort Collins West Nile Virus Technical Advisory Committee, Technical Advisor to the Poudre River Trust, an original scientific advisor to the Butterfly Pavilion, and a member of the Committee to Improve Search Methods and Techniques for Locating Clandestine Graves, among others.

Throughout his career, perhaps his greatest passion was the department's insect collection. When he took over as curator, the collection's holdings were relatively small, focused on the few insect groups that had been developed by a series of predecessors. Under the direction of Dr. Kondratieff, the holdings expanded spectacularly, morphing into what is now known as the C. P. Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity. While Boris oversaw the Museum, an average of about 100,000 new specimens were added annually. A great many of these were collected personally by Dr. Kondratieff during the scores of tornadic collecting trips he took each year, including those that repeatedly reached every corner of the state. In time, the Museum became increasingly recognized as a major resource of regional and national importance, which attracted numerous donations. Particularly valuable was not only the breadth of material encompassed but also that almost all of it was identified to the species level, a remarkable accomplishment that Dr. Kondratieff achieved through his huge network of friends and colleagues around the world that were experts in the taxonomy of various groups, constantly exchanging specimens and expertise. Furthermore, given that so much was of recent acquisition, it lent itself to myriad studies, including DNA barcoding of insects. Under Dr. Kondratieff's oversight, the Museum was a hive of activity, with a constant stream of visiting scientists from around the world benefitting from the resources it provided.

Boris Kondratieff was deeply admired for his character by students and colleagues here and around the world. His work ethic and dedication to the science of entomology were on constant display, but this was always mixed with generosity, humility, honesty, and good humor. No student on his collecting trips ever paid for a meal. "Sweeeet!" his standard response to a new specimen is a fond memory of anyone who had the privilege of working with him. He had great empathy for those around him and was always willing to drop everything to help another when needed. Although he rarely mentioned it, he

spent many hours with elderly and ailing faculty. Throughout his life, Boris maintained the highest moral standards, providing a role model from which many draw.

Boris Kondratieff was a remarkable “one-off” individual who inspired and deeply touched the lives of scores of friends, students, colleagues, and members of the broader public. Boris will be dearly missed by so many, including his surviving relatives: younger sister, Kyra (Tom Hudson); nieces and nephews, Julian, Kiki, Sveva; and daughter, Maiya. Boris’s family is comforted by the fact that he will be joining his parents Johanna and Boris Kondratieff, twin sister Vera, nephew Yuri, and beloved dogs Vodka, Alex, and Caesar, in a place hopefully brimming with new insect species for him to identify and learn about.

Auf Wiedersehen, Dr. Boris Carl Kondratieff (April 30, 1954 - August 14, 2022).

Services

No services are scheduled at this time. Receive a notification when services are updated.

RECEIVE UPDATES

In Memory Of Boris Carl Kondratieff





Boris
Kondratieff

Entomologist
Scientist
Curator
A good man



VIEW



Click to light a candle

19 CANDLES HAVE BEEN LIT

ADD A MEMORY

ALL MEMORIES FROM THE FAMILY

Mark Martin
Friend

12/08/2023

Was trying to find old friends and found this announcement. Makes me sad. Boris and I roomed across the hall from each other at Tennessee Tech our freshman year. My major was Wildlife Management as well. Because of the later, we were constantly studying together. We competed on every test to see who got the better grade. Sad to say, he usually beat me. We both pledged ATO fraternity together the following fall. The last two years studied like crazy. You could always find him watching the news at 5:30, then at the cafeteria at 6:00. He was a great guy and a great friend.



View 2 comments



Boris
Kondratieff

Entomologist
Scientist
Curator
A good man



Kyra Hudson
Family

08/15/2023

Thinking of my brother everyday.



[View 2 comments](#)



Kyra Hudson
Family

06/28/2023

Some childhood photos of Boris with his twin sister, Vera, my mother, and me, Kyra.



[View 1 comment](#)

Ed DeWalt
Colleague

05/24/2023

I want to thank of Boris's family and friends/colleagues who helped to build this memorial. It helps me to grieve for his loss and remember him for the wonderful person he was.

I have had the privilege of collaborating with Boris on several stonefly related projects. He has a great help to me, hard to keep up with, and help to make me a better entomologist.

I will push my mayfly and stonefly colleagues to fund and administer a scholarship program in Boris's name.



6

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Express your sympathy with flowers

Flowers express sympathy and respect. They can be delivered to the funeral home, the family's home, a place of worship or elsewhere.



[SEND FLOWERS](#)

Kenneth Carver Friend

05/24/2023

5-23-2023

Just discovered Boris's death. So sorry and condolences to his family. Boris and I were classmates at Tennessee Tech and became pledge brothers at ATO in 1973. He was a hoot.

Smarter than the rest of us, his IQ was more than the sum of the rest of his pledge brothers!
We all knew he would accomplish much in life, and he did. A good man for sure, RIP

Kenny Carver



 ADD A COMMENT



Everybody has their favorite "Boris Flex" picture.

Laurence Hallas
Friend

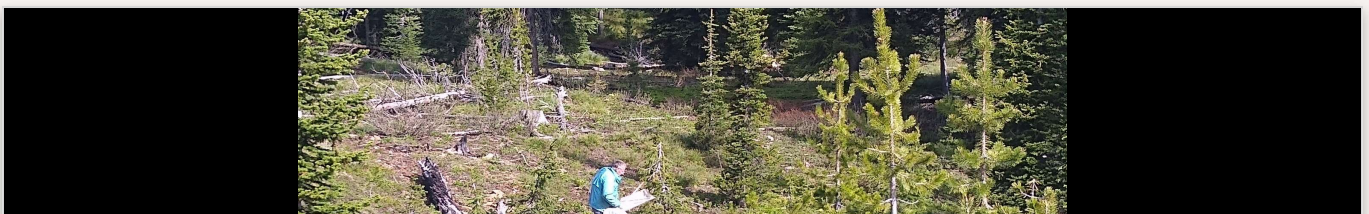
03/16/2023

We had known each other since 4th grade, began collecting insects when all the rest of our friends watched TV all day (must have paid off - he became a world-famous entomologist at CSU. I went 'smaller' - environmental microbiologist cleaning up the rivers and streams for "Boris' Bugs".

Both of us trying to save The World!



 ADD A COMMENT





Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

Skalkaho Pass MT, June 2020

♡ 5

+ ADD A COMMENT

Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

Skalkaho Pass MT, June 2020

♡ 2

+ ADD A COMMENT



Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

December 2009, Laurel Hall.

♡ 5

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Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

June 2020, Skalkaho Pass Montana. This was a collecting trip where Boris, his student and Rich Durfee were looking for stone flies. This is how I will always remember him, with a net in his hand.

♡ 4

[+](#) ADD A COMMENT



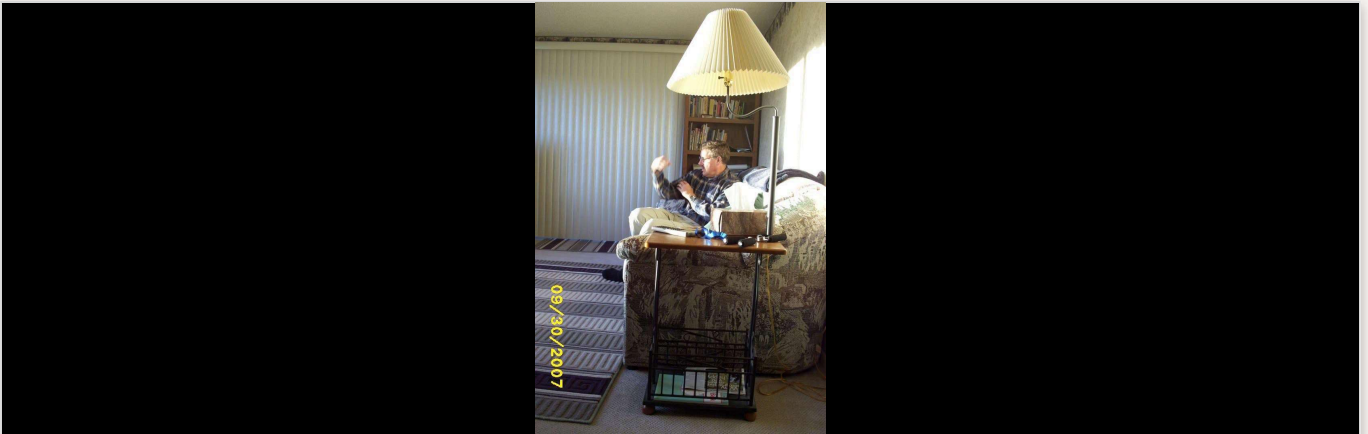
Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

September 2007, Hamilton MT with the Durf.

♡ 4

+ ADD A COMMENT



Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

September 2007, Hamilton Montana. Rich Durfee's house. Boris flexing again!



+ ADD A COMMENT



Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

January 2011, Laurel Hall. I was always amazed that Boris knew where most things were in that office...

♡ 5

+ ADD A COMMENT



Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

January 2011 on one more visit to Laurel Hall.

♡ 4

+ ADD A COMMENT



Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

January 2009, Laurel Hall museum. As my folks still lived in Colorado at the time, we would visit CSU and check out what was new at the museum.

♡ 5

+ ADD A COMMENT



Tom Eckberg
Colleague

03/16/2023

Boris was on my committee from 1990-1993. I got my first job in June 1994 in Georgia working with ornamental insect management. I was always amazed at the breadth of his knowledge of all insects. He was always supportive, and we kept in touch over the years. This pic was taken in Boris' lab in the Plant Science basement in May 1994. I would leave for GA in a day or two. He was likely saying "Eckberg, I'm taking you DOWN!" or something similar.

♡ 7

+ ADD A COMMENT

John Mollica
Other

02/01/2023

Of all my years in higher education, my attendance in an Entomology course with Boris was most memorable - he was, by far, my favorite professor. It was the Fall of 1987, he was only

in his second year at CSU, and the class was small (only 7 of us). I was immediately taken by his quirky personality and absolute love of his new profession (he spent the previous summer counting all the insects in the collection!). While I excelled in the lab portion of the course, I won't deny I struggled with the lecture portion (so much memorization!). Boris didn't have the heart to give me less than a 'B' grade; however, and after he posted everyone's grade outside his office at the end of the semester we all stood and had a nice laugh. Boris taped two lengthwise 8.5" X 11" sheets of paper side-by-side so he could post my grade as: "B - - - - -" ...all the way across his door! That remains my fondest college memory. One I often share with my students!



 ADD A COMMENT

Chris Tennant
Colleague

11/22/2022

Reading some of these memories brought back another thing I'd almost forgotten. While teaching a guest lecture in Paul Ode's insect course around 2014, Boris described how a student once brought a pubic louse, a type of arthropod found only in a very specific area, to him for her student collection. The tale went something like:

"So I asked her where she got the pubic louse from and she said 'Oh I just found it walking down the street!' and then I said 'NOPE!'"



 ADD A COMMENT

Chris Tennant
Colleague

11/22/2022

I worked with Boris as an undergraduate in several ways, but in particular on an insect museum display I built as an independant study. Boris singlehandedly identified almost all 200 of the specimens I'd taken out of the student-caught material just by looking at them.

His entomology classes were legendary, and the way he inspired other people was something I'll always remember. As a teacher, probably 35% of the techniques and little quips I use to connect with my students came directly from Boris's seemingly unquenchable energy. The way he'd just spin little webs in his massive voice with such gusto and animation just never got old.

Boris's class was one of the only college courses I took which had field trips, and he had two. While taking us out into a Fort Collins natural area, the whole class watched him catch a moving honeybee off a bush with soft forceps and pop it into a kill-jar like it was nothing. I'm not sure if I'll ever have the dexterity for that, but Boris certainly did!



 ADD A COMMENT



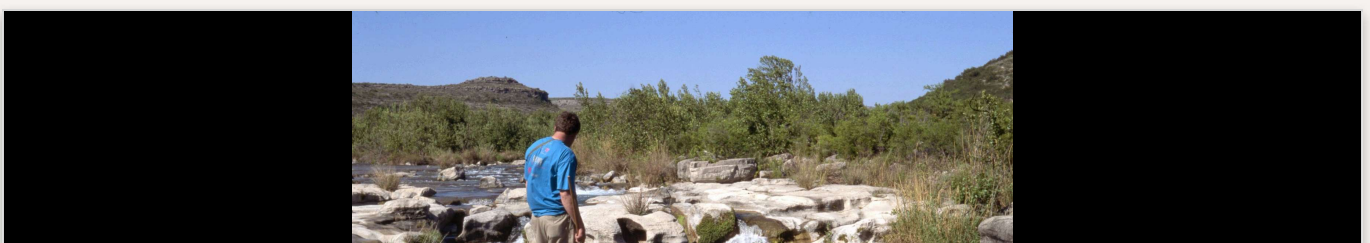
Woody Fitzgerald
Colleague

11/10/2022

Devils River, TX (1998). Boris, Dave Leatherman, Riley Nelson (left to right).



 ADD A COMMENT





Woody Fitzgerald
Colleague

11/10/2022

Boris. Devils River, TX (1998).



 ADD A COMMENT



Woody Fitzgerald
Colleague

11/10/2022

Trip to Devils River, TX (1998). Me, Dave Leatherman, Boris (left to right). Something happened to the van (maybe a flat tire... can't recall) and we were in the queue at an auto shop to get the issue fixed. Boris kept saying "let's roll ba-by" as he was anxious to get on the road again. The phrase started to feel like the trip mantra and I ended up writing it in the dust on the back window of the van.



 ADD A COMMENT

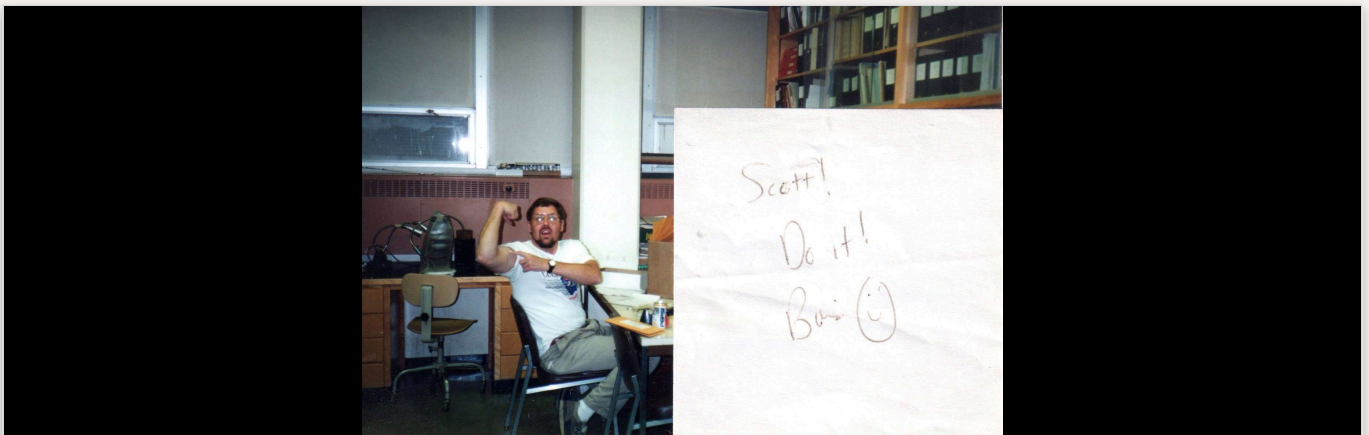
Woody Fitzgerald
Colleague

11/10/2022

Boris. Devils River, TX (1998).

♡ 0

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Woody Fitzgerald
Colleague

11/10/2022

This image and post-it-note has been next to my microscope to inspire productivity since I left Colorado in 1998. As Boris's graduate student the point-at-bicep and point-at-calf-muscle gestures meant many things depending on the context, but I often still associate it with: "I want that manuscript on my desk, yesterday!" Photo (circa mid-90s) was taken in the old old museum space in the bottom of the Plant Sciences Building. I used to spend long days and longer nights at the scope right behind Boris.

♡ 7

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MEMORIAL

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