

Mentors who helped along the way

I received good parental guidance, and support from family relatives as well. This document describes the support that came from the actual education process, mainly from teachers but other people as well. I write this in chronological sequence.

Lake Wenatchee YMCA Camp

The camp is located about 100 miles west of my home town, on a mountain lake and source of the Wenatchee River. I went to camp from about 9 years of age until the early teenage years, the last year or so on staff. It was my first extended experience of the mountain forests deep in the Cascade Mountains, with lots of opportunities for nature study. The mentor for many of us was its Director during all of those years: Harold “Kirk” Kirpatrick. He was finishing his Ph.D. in history and directing the camp during the summers, and he brought some younger graduate students with him, as camp counselors. They all embodied a love for nature, respect for learning, and a general spiritual outlook on life. It was at this camp that I first learned how to use a microscope.

Kirk



School teachers.

Although I had many good teachers all the way through school. These three stand out. **Leo McIntee** was my science teacher for general chemistry and general physics. He also taught a senior pre-calculus course. He was an outstanding chemistry teacher. When I arrived in college, I took a chemistry aptitude test, and was placed in a special honors chemistry course that emphasized experimentation. He had to put up with a bunch of bright and obstreperous bunch of students of which I was one. **Bob Atkinson** taught a senior social science course, in which he taught Marxist theory. This was a time just after the McCarthy hearings when the atmosphere was conservative in these small towns. He was also our basketball coach, although we were not a very successful team. **Miss Gerhardstein** was a temporary English teacher (and writing her dissertation for an English Ph.D. at the University of Washington. She made me a better writer, so much so that I receive the writing award for graduation.



Gerhardstein



Atkinson



McIntee

I was also inspired by close friends in my class. We took courses together and argued about innumerable subjects, and hiked in the mountains together: Curtis Amo, Jim Arnold, John Freer, Kirk Hall, Allan Lindh, George Moyer, Larry Reeker and Bill Roberts.

Pacific Lutheran University

Although I had many good professors in a variety of disciplines, by far the most influential was **Jens Knudsen**. He was a young biology professor, with a broad knowledge about and enthusiasm towards all things biological. After my second year, I signed up for field ecology and plant ID courses taught by Jens and a colleague Harold Leraas, and held at Holden Village, deep in the north Cascades and above Lake Chelan. It was the first experience of doing research, led by Jens, with enthusiasm and a sense of humor. It was also my first experience of a biologist who was also an artist. He did scientific illustration (wrote a book about it) and also helped design and construct dioramas for local museums.

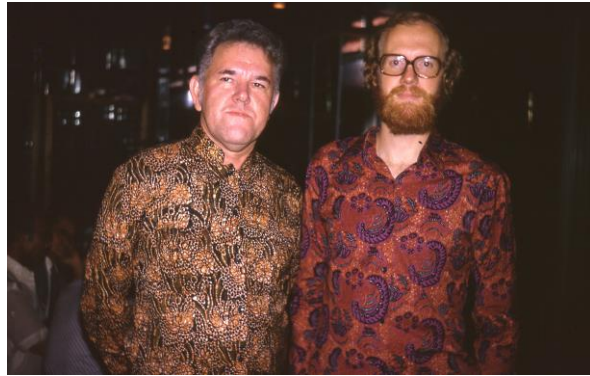
Jens Knudsen



Rutgers University

My major professor, David Fairbrothers, became my mentor both during graduate studies and later in life. There were other influential professors and fellow graduate students. David was an advisor, scientist, friend, cheerleader, who embodied a deep love for nature and respect for life. Those 4.5 years as a graduate

student (in the shadow of the great city of New York, and yet with many beautiful natural places in New Jersey and the Adirondacks and White Mountains to the north) profoundly influenced my future development as a botanist and person.



David and I in our finest batik shorts at the Rimba Ilmu inauguration banquet in Malaysia in 1974. Marge and David at Frazer's Hill during the same trip

The Ohio State University



Rod Sharp at Rutgers

I was a post-doc and then instructor at Ohio State from 1970-72. I was very much on my own and, after a little stumbling, made a good thing of my time there. I was able to explore the arts in the teaching of biology through the help of the Instructional Media Lab in producing multi-media presentations in botany and other subjects. My biggest steadying influence and supporter during that time was Rod Sharp. I first knew Rod as a graduate student at Rutgers, and he went on to become one of the founders of plant biotechnology.

In later years, Rod got many of us to think more about mentorship which led to the autobiographical essay included in this website.

The University of Malaya

Working at Ohio State in a brand new building with no windows, spending much of my time washing and sterilizing scientific glassware, stimulated thinking about what being a botanist should be: much more time studying plants in their natural environments, especially in the tropics. Some correspondence with a future mentor, Ben Stone, led to obtaining a position there, from 1973-1976. Being in such a place with access to a most amazing collection of plants and animals led to a dramatic transformation in research interests, really to the research paths that I followed for the rest of my scientific career. Three people were most influential in that transformation.



Peter Ashton Benjamin Stone

Brian Lowry

Peter was a professor at the University of Aberdeen, with long experience in the Asian tropics, initially in Sarawak and Brunei. However, he visited the University of Malaya often, running a collaborative research of which I was a part. He was a source of enthusiasm and great knowledge of the ecology of Asian tropical forests (and much more recently I helped him write a more general account of them). Ben was an expert on the floristics of Malayan forests, a musician, and my supporter in the department. He shared his knowledge of plants and forests on numerous field trips. Brian was a professor in chemistry, an expert on plant natural products, but also with a wide scientific perspective on the biology of rainforest plants. We collaborated on a number of projects. These were a bit more mature in years and wisdom, and my ways may have been amusing to them at times. This photograph was taken during a search for specimens of a newly discovered wild citrus, on the Gunung Ulu Kali ridge.

The University of Montpellier

After working in Malaysia and then travelling mostly overland for many months back to the United States, we visited with family for a time and then moved to Montpellier France to work with Francis Hallé. I had met Francis during his visits to the University of Malaya, had participated on many walks with him, and we become personal friends. He was (is!) a remarkably creative scientist, the discoverer and developer of the system of tree architecture. This system has not only influenced botanists and ecologists, but also architects, physicists and computer scientists. His remarkable approach was to observe the salient architectural details of trees by drawing them. His notebooks have become an important scientific source of data about trees. Thus, he combined science and art like no other person

I've encountered. Later, I accompanied him on an expedition in Gabon (one of his inventions was the Canopy Raft, or le Radeau des Cimes) studying the forest canopy.



Left, Francis with collaborators in Gabon, 1999. Right, Francis and Odile, and Carol and I, at St. Guilhelm Le Desert, near Montpellier, in 2015.

Returning to the United States in late 1978, with our son Sylvan, we lived for a couple of years in an intentional community (Gurdjieff) in upstate New York. Then we moved to Miami where I began working at Florida International University. I was 38 years old, influenced by my mentors of those previous years, and ready to become a mentor myself, to my students at this new University.