



Richard "Skeeter" Allen Werner

February 20, 1936 - July 8, 2017

Dr. Richard "Skeeter" Werner (81) transcended to the spirit world on Saturday, July 8, 2017. He was at home, surrounded by his beloved family and the natural world he so loved. He was born in Mohnton, PA in 1936 to Roy and Hazel (Rightmeyer) Werner. With a love of nature and the outdoors, he was active in scouting and earned the rank of Eagle Scout. He enrolled at the Mont Alto School of Forestry, a branch of Penn State University and graduated with a B.S. degree in Forestry in 1958. Skeeter went on to earn advanced degrees in Forest Entomology, Secondary Education, Entomology/Insect Physiology and a Ph.D. in Entomology/Insect Toxicology.

A summer job doing forest inventory on the Umpqua National Forest in south-central Oregon exposed him to the grandeur of the PNW. He later discovered a love of research and began his research career at the Alaska Forest Research Institute in Juneau, Alaska.

He met his wife, Pat Thomas, while at the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station at Research Triangle Park, NC. Promising her Alaska, they married on August 25, 1973 at Dawes Arboretum, Newark, OH. The following year, they embarked on a 23-year adventure in Fairbanks, Alaska. The arrival of their children, Sarah and Luke, enhanced the experience. As a family, they involved with youth and community activities and enjoyed many year-round outdoor activities with friends and family including gardening, camping, fishing

and snow sports.

Skeeter was a pioneer in entomology, he would be confronted with a problem and seek to understand as much as he could. This led him to become an expert on the spear-marked black moth during an outbreak in Alaska in 1974. His research also led him to become a world authority on the spruce beetle and other boreal forest insects. Skeeter took pride in international collaborations, cross-jurisdictional work and continued friendships. After 37 years with the USDA Forest Service, he retired and moved his family to Corvallis, Oregon. He has authored 125 scientific publications including two books.

After retirement, Skeeter's passion and dedication to bark beetle research in Alaska was evident by sixteen additional years of volunteer field work. His family became quite used to seeing bugs in vials and tubes of beetles in the freezer, waiting to be counted. In addition, he became involved in Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) at the Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska conducting research on the effects of climate change on forest insects.

Among the honors he has received are a Certificate of Merit in 1989 for research following the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound, AK; a Centennial Fellows Award in 2004 from Penn State Mont Alto for scientific contributions to the field of forestry; and for his lifetime accomplishments, he was recognized with the Founders Award from the Western Forest Insect Work Conference. An achievement he proudly shared with one of his closest friends. In 2014, he was selected as an outstanding alumnus of the Pennsylvania State School of Forestry.

His friends and family will remember him for his constant drumming, infectious smile, stories and wildlife encounters and his longing to be outdoors.

Skeeter's compassion for the earth and eagerness to help others was surpassed only by his unconditional love of family and his many lifelong

friends.

He is survived by his wife Pat, daughter Sarah (Chris) Bates, son Luke (Katie) Werner; and grandchildren Payton and Amelia Bates, and Maxwell Werner; sisters Dorothy (Roger) Houck, Audrey (Phil) Gum and brother John (Kathy) Werner, as well as many beloved nieces and nephews.

Skeeter would encourage you to take the time to enjoy life and the natural world around you. A celebration of life is planned for September. Donations in Skeeter's name can be made to the Corvallis Community Band, Georgeson Botanical Garden (Fairbanks) www.georgesonbotanicalgarden.org or any cause that strives to enhance our world.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Philomath Boy Scout Lodge on Wednesday September 13.

The time TBD later.

Tribute Wall

JD

“ Doris and I offer our sympathy to you Pat and your family on the passing of our good, and long time friend Skeeter. Skeeter and I were from the "Dutch Country" of Pennsylvania and knew each other prior to going to Mont Alto for our freshman year of forestry school. Skeeter and I roomed together during our freshman year of 1954-55. During our career in the Forest Service, we would see each other at our forestry class reunions and later at the periodic Forest Service reunions. Skeeter was always up-beat and smiling. We always enjoyed Skeeter's stories whether they be about home-made peach brandy or being treed by a bear in the wilds of Alaska. He was a great guy and will be missed.
Jim and Doris

Jim Durdan - July 25, 2017 at 04:02 PM

WK

“ Pat, we were sad to read of Skeeter's passing. I miss seeing both of you at Fitness Over Fifty. I know that the last few years have been difficult for both of you, but pray that you will be at peace as you remember happier times. Hope to see you soon when you are ready to venture out into your past activities.

Wayne and Carolyn Kradjan

Wayne and Carolyn Kradjan - July 23, 2017 at 06:57 PM

BE

“ I first met Skeeter about 1980, when he was a Forest Service researcher in Fairbanks, and I was a newcomer to the management of that program. Since I was in Portland and he was in Fairbanks we did not see a lot of each other. But I learned that he was a dedicated, and incredibly productive and respected scientist, at that time focused on major bug damage to southern Alaska forests. During the few years that we crossed paths, he became the leader of the entire interior Alaska program at Fairbanks.

Our paths merged again when we both retired to Corvallis, and so it remains today. I feel fortunate to know him. Pat, you and your family have my deepest sympathies.

Bob Ethington - July 22, 2017 at 09:23 PM

TB

“ Richard was best known to me s a "Skeeter" a friend and fraternity brother at Penn State where we attended Forestry School. I was pleased to be invited to share with the family when his 80th birthday was celebrated. The love of his family was cherished by Skeeter.

Tom Breslin - July 16, 2017 at 09:54 PM