



Obituary
Edward B. Cutler (1935–2006)

Edward B. Cutler passed away peacefully on September 2, 2006, at the age of 71 after a long battle with prostate cancer. His energy and enjoyment of life continued almost to the very end as did his interest in the biology and systematics of the Sipuncula and other worms.

Ed was born in Michigan, far away from salt water, but he joined the U. S. Navy right out of high school and served four years in the Navy as an instrument flight instructor. During this time he became interested in marine organisms and decided to study biology. He received his bachelor's degree in Biology from Wayne State University and his Master's degree from the University of Michigan in Zoology. He was on the faculty at Lynchburg College in Virginia for two years as an Assistant Professor of Biology and during that time spent an enjoyable summer at Friday Harbor where he deepened his interests in the marine invertebrates.

Ed entered the doctoral program at the University of Rhode Island with the intent to study what was then a fashionable group of worms, the Pogonophora (currently part of the annelid family Siboglinidae). To that end he took part in the International Indian Ocean Expedition of the R/V

Anton Bruun with the intent to collect material for his doctoral thesis but collected only one or two specimens of pogonophorans. They did, however, collect many sipunculans on this cruise and, with the guidance of A.C. Stephen, Ed switched his allegiance to the Sipuncula.

As Ed worked with his chosen phylum at the University of Rhode Island he noticed his vision was somewhat blurry and went to an optometrist who determined that Ed had retinitis pigmentosa, a congenital disease, and would gradually lose his eyesight. Ed forthrightly decided that he would not allow that to interfere with his studies and completed his doctoral degree in four years, writing his dissertation on the Sipuncula of the western North Atlantic. In 1967 Ed joined the faculty of Utica College in New York state and served as a Professor of Biology and later as an Associate Dean. In 1989, as his eyesight continued to fail, he had to go on disability leave.

During Ed's career at Utica College he continued his work with the Sipuncula and, with the help of his first wife Norma, published a series of papers reviewing each genus within the phylum. Ed cleared up many problems in the taxonomy of the Sipuncula and reduced the total number of described species from about 300 to 149. His collecting trips and visits to major collections took him and his family to many parts of the globe including Europe, Japan, Russia, and Venezuela.

After going on disability leave Ed was able to continue his study of the Sipuncula. He moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and became a Research Associate at the Department of Invertebrate Zoology in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University. During this time his work was culminated by publication of his 1994 book *The Sipuncula: Their systematics, biology, and evolution*, which summarized all that was known of this group at that time. Ed continued to work on smaller projects concerned with faunistic distribution, taxonomy, systematics, and evolution of the sipunculans (using his knowledge and the eyes of his friends) continuing to publish until the end of his life. Throughout his life he did as much as he was able given his circumstances to further our knowledge of the Sipuncula.

In addition to his own work with his animals, Ed actively promoted the study of the Sipuncula by others. He and his wife Anne Covert generously funded two post-doctoral positions at Harvard devoted to the study of the Sipuncula, particularly their phylogeny and systematics, and together with Gonzalo Giribet served as mentor of this new generation of sipunculan biologists. Ed's last collecting trip, which included Iñaki Saiz-Salinas (Spain), Teruaki Nishikawa (Japan), Gisele Kawauchi (Brazil) and Anja Schulze (Germany), was a 2002 field trip to Barbados organized and partly funded by Ed. Even as his own abilities to work with the animals diminished he endeavored to ensure that others would carry on his work.

Ed was always enthusiastic about his studies of the Sipuncula and was a very generous mentor to others working with "his" animals. He accepted any limitations placed upon him and worked up to the boundaries of those limitations. He was a courageous man who will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Ed's honesty and strength of character will be long remembered and his contributions to the study of marine invertebrates are well appreciated.

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