

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM J. CALVERT

1901-1987

The academic and ornithological worlds lost one of their most beloved and respected members on 7 April 1987 with the passing of William J. Calvert, former Professor of English Literature at Jacksonville State University and charter member of the AOS. He is survived by his wife, Palmer, and a son, Donnie, who now resides in New York.

Dr. Calvert was born in Pittsboro, N.C., on 3 July 1901, received his B.S. degree from Virginia Military Institute in 1920, and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University in 1922 and 1927. While working on his Ph.D. he taught at Washington and Lee University and U.C.L.A. After graduating from Harvard, he was employed by Williams College in Massachusetts.

While at Williams College, Dr. Calvert became ill with tuberculosis and was sent to a sanitarium in Gadsden, AL, where he spent two years recovering. After returning home to North Carolina during the depression years, he learned of a job opening at Jacksonville State Teacher's College and in 1933 accepted the position, sight unseen.

Dr. Calvert arrived in Jacksonville equipped with a Harvard education and a lively and enthusiastic interest in birds. He soon began keeping records of his observations on local birds and by the time of his death he had accumulated 12 volumes of notes on species in the Jacksonville area. These records served as the basis for an eventual survey of the Birds of Calhoun Co.

Over the years Dr. Calvert's home became the meeting place for people with a wide assortment of interests. Birders gathered before dawn in the warmth of his dining room for hot coffee, donuts, and conversation before heading out to brave the elements on cold, wintry mornings. Nights were frequently spent with friends listening to music or recordings of bird songs or discussing the status of various species such as Orchard Orioles, Bewick's Wrens or Bachman's Sparrows.

Bird song was one of Dr. Calvert's greatest pleasures in life. Among his favorites was the Veery. He also liked the closely related Wood Thrush, which he said lifted his spirits and helped him through the dark

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Calvert, Cont.

days following the start of World War II. He was particularly fond of the campus Mockingbirds, which he referred to as "marvelous" singers because their songs were amplified by the buildings on campus. The Brown Thrasher was another of his favorites, which he considered overlooked because of the vociferous Mockingbird.

In 1945, Dr. Calvert was named Head of the English Department at JSU and in 1972 was selected as the first Dean of the newly formed School of Humanities. He retired in 1973 after 40 years of service to the university and community. During those 40 years, Dr. Calvert saw the school grow from a dozen faculty members in 1933 to over 300 by the time he retired. The student enrollment increased from around 300 to 7,000.

During his lifetime, Dr. Calvert touched the lives of many people. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have shared with him his enthusiasm for life and his interest in nature will carry with us many fond memories. His company and contribution to the knowledge of birds in Alabama will be missed.



IN MEMORIAM

WALTER F. COXE

1898-1987

Walter F. Coxe, formerly of 3923 Eighth Court, South Birmingham, passed away 12 August 1987. He was 89. One of Alabama's leading conservationists, Mr. Coxe devoted a lifetime of efforts to preserving a higher quality environment for Alabama and Birmingham, including preservation of wilderness areas, protection of parks, improvement of air and water quality, and bringing an increased awareness and appreciation of the natural resources of the state to people of all ages. He was widely known through his many appearances on radio and other public programs. Walter Coxe produced, directed and narrated a full-color motion picture, *The Bankhead Forest - An Alabama Adventure*, and was commended by Congressmen on his testimony in support of the initial Sipsey Wilderness in the Bankhead Forest. He was honored by the City of Birmingham in 1976 for "his numerous civic and community services and his dedicated and untiring efforts to preserve our streams, rivers, trees, and wildlife...", and in 1984 received one of the prestigious Sol Feinstone Environmental Awards, given nationwide to a few citizens "who, by their voluntary action, and on an unpaid basis, have made an outstanding contribution to improving the physical environment."

Mr. Coxe was President and longtime Board member of the Birmingham Audubon Society, Director for many years of its Audubon Wildlife Film Series, President of Alabama Ornithological Society, member of the first Board of Directors of the Alabama Conservancy, and for many years participated in ornithological surveys for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Audubon Society. He initiated a program to purchase natural history films for placement in the Birmingham Board of Education Film Library to be seen by school classes and other groups, and published Blanche Dean's *Trees and Shrubs in the Heart of Dixie* (still in authoritative text on trees in Alabama). The Audubon Society's fund for scientific research in various fields of biology is named for him. He was also very active in the scouting program, having been scoutmaster for many years of a Boy Scout troop in Elyton Village that was distinguished by its high percentage of Eagle Scouts.

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

Coxe, cont.

Walter Coxe was named an alumnus of Georgia Tech and served on its National Alumni Board of Directors. He began his career in advertising and public relations in New Orleans where he had many famous clients and was a member of the Sugar Bowl Committee. On moving to Birmingham, almost 50 years ago, he became a member of the Presbyterian Church City Sales Club, served as officer of Civitan International for many years and was a founding member of the Downtown Club. In addition, he was a recognized authority on the life of George Washington and the American Revolution and gave many programs on those subjects.

Mr. Coxe is survived by his son, Walter F. Coxe, Jr., and granddaughter, Barrie Coxe, both of Jacksonville, Fla.



IN MEMORIAM

M. WILSON GAILLARD

1898 - 1986

Alabama lost one of its outstanding conservationists and ornithologists with the passing last year in Mobile of Dr. M. Wilson Gaillard. A long-time prominent conservationist, he was a founding member of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society, the Mobile County Wildlife Association and the Mobile Bird Club. He had been an officer and director of AOS for a number of years and was a member of the Alabama Wildlife Federation, having served as an officer, director and editor of its newsletter. In 1967, he received the Governor's Award as State Conservationist of the Year. He was also a member of the National Audubon Society and had been compiler of the Mobile and Dauphin Island Christmas Bird Counts and a participant in surveys of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for many years.

Also an author, he wrote *Moving the Earth - For a Song*, a widely-acclaimed book on the need for conservation practices to protect birdlife and what an individual can do to foster conservation. By profession a dentist, he practiced dentistry in Mobile for over 58 years and had been Past President of the Alabama Dental Association.

Dr. Gaillard was especially active in developing land preservation projects for wildlife. His was the leading force in establishing, out of an abandoned golf course and through much negotiation and personal effort, the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary, which provides a resing place on that barrier island for Trans-Gulf migrants in their journeys across the Gulf. Gaillard Lake in the sanctuary is named for him. He also developed the bird sanctuary at nearby Bellingrath Gardens. From spoil materials dredged from Mobile Bay, he convinced the government agencies to create an island near the Mobile Ship Channel, which is now used as a nesting and resting place for thousands of seabirds, including the formerly (and still in part of its range) endangered Brown Pelican, and he was instrumental in having marsh grass planted off part of the island to create feeding and breeding grounds for shrimp and other sea life, the base of the marine food chain and our seafood industry. In 1983, the Alabama Legislature, in recognition of his efforts, named the island

Gaillard, cont.

Wilson Gaillard Island. It is hoped that this island will continue to be managed for wildlife—both of the air and water—as a natural resource for the Mobile Bay area as Dr. Gaillard wished it to be.

Dr. Gaillard was a student of Alabama's avifauna throughout his life, as is attested by the numerous records reported under his name, and he was always interested in ornithological research and wildlife preservation in all its forms. For his work, he received tributes from many eminent officials, and a major oil company commented in one of its public messages, "Next time you hear a bird sing, it could be through the courtesy of Dr. Gaillard and his friends."

He will long be remembered for his many accomplishments and his contributions in making our natural world a better place in which to live. AOS extends its deepest sympathy to his sister, Mary, a long-time member of AOS, and to the other members of his family.

