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March 1999

## Ross H. Arnett, Jr. (1919-1999)

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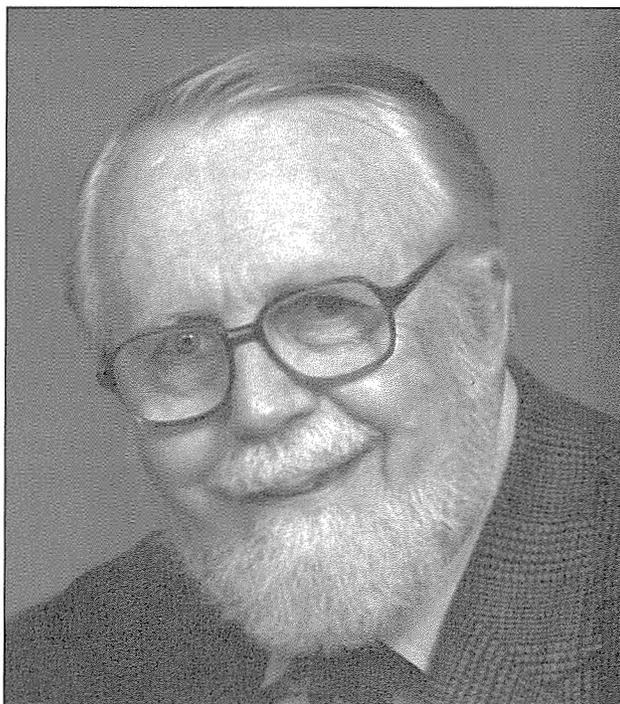
## Ross H. Arnett, Jr. 1919-1999

Ross Harold Arnett, Jr., who originated and who frequently edited *Insecta Mundi*, died July 16, 1999 in Gainesville, after a long illness. He was 80. One of the most influential coleopterists of the last 50 years, he organized the Coleopterists Society and founded *The Coleopterists Bulletin* in 1947. He was the author of more than 200 scientific papers and books. His *Beetles of the United States* has been the standard identification guide for North American Coleoptera for nearly 40 years. He was involved in the preparation of a new edition of that work when he died. The first edition of *American Insects*, likewise became a standard reference for North American insects and won the R.R. Hawkin Award from the American Association of Publishers in 1985.

Ross was born on April 13, 1919 in Medina, New York. His interest in natural history began at the Medina High School, where he graduated in 1938. He attended Cornell University at Ithaca, N.Y., and took courses from Robert Matheson, J. Chester Bradley, W. T. M. Forbes and others. During his sophomore year at Cornell he was given a work desk in one of the graduate student "labs". His interest in insects centered on beetles, and eventually he started a revision of the Nearctic Silphidae. He received his BS degree in 1942. February 16, 1942 he married Mary Ennis, a high school sweetheart. After graduation, he worked at the New York State Conservation Department, studying the stomach contents of game birds.

In July 1942, he entered the U.S. Army as a private, and was sent to Lowry Field Air Force Base, studying the Sperry bombsight. He then was sent to the Avon Park Bombing Range in Florida to survey and control mosquitoes on the range. He then was sent to Panama to teach mosquito taxonomy at the Army School of Malariology. In October 1945 he was discharged as a Technical Sergeant, and reentered Cornell as a graduate student. He majored in Medical Entomology under Robert Matheson, and minored in Aquatic Botany under Walter Muenscher. He received his Masters degree in 1946.

For his doctorate, he returned to his original interest in beetles, and started on a revision of the North American Oedemeridae. He finished his Ph.D. in 1948. In the meantime he started the *Coleopterist's Bulletin* (1947), which he edited for a number of years.



On July 1, 1948, Ross and family moved to Arlington, Virginia, and started to work as a beetle taxonomist for the USDA, assigned to the U.S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

He missed the academic life, and in August of 1954, he moved to Fairport, N.Y. where he became Head of the Department of Biology at Saint John Fisher College. By this time his family increased to eight children. In the fall of 1958, he returned to Washington, D.C. to accept a position at Catholic University of America. In 3<sup>rd</sup> years he was promoted to full professor and head of the department. He finished *Beetles of the United States* in 1963.

In 1966 he received an offer to go to Purdue University to teach insect systematics.

The family moved to Lafayette, Indiana. He took a leave of absence to take a three-year appointment as a Henry L. Beadel Fellow, at the Tall Timbers Research Station near Tallahassee, Florida. He resigned from Purdue University and in 1973 accepted a teaching position at Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y. In 1979, Ross and Mary decided to strike out on their own. From the income from the

*Guide to the Insects* that he and Richard Jacques wrote, they had enough income for a while.

Working at his home in Kinderhook, N.Y., he published *The Naturalists' Directory*. A short while after, he moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where he worked on his new book *American Insects*.

In 1982, the family moved to Gainesville, Florida, where he formed a company called Flora and Fauna Publications, which was later purchased by E. J. Brill Publishers, and Ross was retained as an editor. In 1985, Ross and Bob Woodruff organized and incorporated a not-for-profit foundation, "The Center for Systematic Entomology". A new journal "Insecta Mundi" became the official journal for CSE. In 1989, Ross formed Sandhill Crane Press and was back in

publishing. In 1994 he sold his stock of books to St. Lucie Press. He then devoted his time, along with Norville Downie to writing *The Beetles of Northeastern North America*. Before his illness, he was working on *American Beetles*.

Ross was a prolific writer, a superb taxonomist, a good travel companion, and a great friend.

Ross is survived by his wife Mary and eight children and numerous grandchildren.

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