

## In Memoriam: Dwain Willard Warner 1917–2005

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Dwain W. Warner was born in Cottonwood County, near Revere, Minnesota, on 1 September 1917. In 1924, the family moved to a farm near Northfield, where Dwain completed elementary and high school. He and his siblings grew up close to the land, becoming avid hunters, and it is no surprise that Dwain went on to become a biologist. He graduated from Carleton College in 1939, majoring in botany, and wrestled in the 145-lb weight class (a fact that later students found hard to square with his robust physique). From Carleton, he went on to Cornell for his Ph.D. In 1941, Dwain was one of four members on an expedition to northeastern Mexico led by George M. Sutton and Olin S. Pettingill, Jr. This field experience, later described by Sutton in his book *At a Bend in a Mexican River* began Dwain's lifelong dedication to the ornithology of Mexico. He started dissertation research on the birds of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas under Arthur A. Allen at Cornell, but this was interrupted by World War II. Dwain spent nearly three years in Army service, primarily in the South Pacific on the islands of New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, and New Zealand. He returned to Cornell in March 1946 with tales of rat control, wonderful natives, bird collecting, and shooting sambar deer for food. Based on his field experiences during the war, and with the guidance of both Allen and Sutton, he completed his dissertation on *The Ornithology of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands* in August 1947.

Dwain's first scientific publication appeared in the *Wilson Bulletin* in 1939; co-authored with Olin Pettingill, Jr, it was about a Glossy Ibis in Minnesota. His third publication was his debut in *The Flicker*, the predecessor to *The Loon*, and



it appeared in 1948. He published over 100 papers during his long career, and some 19 of these were in *The Flicker* and *The Loon*.

Upon completion of his Ph.D. at Cornell, Dwain returned to Minnesota and began a 40-year career as faculty member and Curator of Ornithology at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus, which later became the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History. Teaching duties were a high priority in the early part of Dwain's career, before curation and research were gradually given their due by university administration. He was only able to do field research during the summers, when he usually would

try to go to Mexico. In later years, especially during the latter half of his career, he was able to get free of teaching for whole quarters and could effectively begin research in Mexico when nonbreeding migrants were present there.

In addition to teaching during the school year, Dwain often taught Field Ornithology at the Lake Itasca Field Biology Station. Field trips were an integral part of his spring Introductory Ornithology course in Minneapolis and of his summer course at Itasca. As part of the ornithology course each spring, Dwain would lead a group out to Cheyenne National Grasslands and Sand Lake, South Dakota, to see booming grouse and migrating geese. At Itasca, field trips would typically begin at dawn in a bog somewhere and end at dark watching Woodcock display from positions as close as the birds would allow. For many students, these trips were important introductions not just to birds and the natural world, but to a Warneresque lifestyle. Dwain knew intimately a host of diverse facts about the biology, geology, and history of the areas through which he traveled, and as he drove he would be talking, pointing, and waving his hands as he described aspects of the area that enthralled him.

I (Robert Dickerman) met Dwain in 1953 in Mexico City, where he was on sabbatical with his first wife Dorothy and family. We had passed without realizing it when I entered Cornell as Dwain was leaving for Minnesota. We talked into the night; I was starved for ornithological chatter and Dwain was the one to supply it. He offered me a curatorial fellowship he had just received if I would apply to the U of M, and ornithology has regretted it ever since. I will never forget the casual suppers at Dwain's house, with Dwain eating on a counter because his bustling family was too large for the kitchen table. Nor will I forget our wonderful frigid winter trips to northern Minnesota, when we would take a case of wine and have to open every bottle and drink off a portion to leave expansion room for the wine to freeze! Dwain was an incredible racon-

teur; perched on the corner of a desk or table, he would hold everyone spellbound by his stories. As an instructor, he created a wonderfully productive environment, allowing students to explore and grow. I published 36 notes or short articles while there, several coauthored with Dwain.

I (John Rappole) met Dwain in January of 1968, while canvassing graduate schools with my wife, Bonnie. Cedar Creek radio-tracking, a Warner creation, was going full-bore at that time, and he had many individuals of outstanding talent working in his lab. Warner's enthusiasm was electric, and when I joined the program in the summer of 1968, projects and funding were plentiful. Unfortunately, the war intervened and I was drafted. When I returned to graduate school in January of 1972, drastic changes had taken place administratively and programmatically. But, with a lot of help from his wife at that time, Gloria, Dwain was rebuilding, establishing a program on the birds of the southern Veracruz rainforest that he maintained for over two decades.

During the years I was at Minnesota, I found Dwain always busy, and yet always available. There was no time when I would stop by his office that he was not talking to someone in person or on the phone. He would motion for me to have a seat and, eventually, I would get my turn. Once I finally got to speak to him, I could be certain that he would give me his entire attention, and his insights would be well worth the wait. To those of us who had the privilege of working with him, it is surprising how little known he is in the larger intellectual community of ecology and ornithology. Dwain had a combination of extensive experience, vast eclectic reading, and the ability to express complex concepts both intelligently and often, entertainingly. He could think "outside the box" better than any other person I have known, and he asked brilliant questions. The world is certainly a dimmer and duller place without him.

I (Kevin Winker) met Dwain in the autumn of 1979 at the University of Minnesota. As a volunteer in his lab skinning

birds, I was exposed to his enthusiasm for birds and for life itself. An important part of Dwain was his gift for imparting his enthusiasm and insights to students. Hearing Dwain's stories of birds, people, and places was always stimulating, and after I left Minnesota I would call him every few months for invariably rejuvenating conversations.

Dwain was someone who welcomed people of all kinds. One of my favorites of his expressions ("Warnerisms") was "Pump 'em full of sunshine!" He gave a lift to me every time I spoke with him, effortlessly imparting his own enthusiasm for life and the exciting things we were working on as scientists. All of my ornithology students know some "Warnerisms". The "cloacal kiss" remains a very vivid way to describe avian copulation; and "Drive fast with your lights out" is certainly an eyebrow-raising concept for obtaining meat or specimens.

In 1984, Dwain and a group of us began the Belwin migration study near Afton, Minnesota, which wound up forming the core of my dissertation research. Dwain and his wife Marie Ward let us invade their home twice each year to catch and band thousands of migratory birds. Living with such great company, and with our agenda dictated by the weather and the movement of migratory birds, was incredibly inspiring.

Dwain had a strong influence on students, both graduate and undergraduate. And under his curatorship, the bird collection of the Bell Museum grew to become one of national importance. Scientifically, Dwain was a pioneer with lasting influence in several areas: Mexican ornithology, radio tracking, migrant ecology, and the diversity and ecology of Neotropical resident birds. Many of his students carry on research in these areas today. His enthusiasm inspired people and helped direct them to a productive course. In addition to his teaching, curation, and research at the university, Dwain also consulted for government and private agencies on biological diversity, the routing of power lines and highways, airport



planning, bird-aircraft strikes, identification of biological material, landfill, real estate evaluation, and other environmental issues. He served on the board of trustees for the Science Museum of Minnesota from 1950 through his retirement, and was environmental director at the Belwin Outdoor Education Laboratory (1983–1989). After retiring in 1987, he began visiting Kenya and led approximately 20 safaris to that country to observe its wildlife and people. Throughout his life, Dwain was also a dedicated hunter. Dinner guests were often treated to tasty venison or other choice treats, as Dwain was a gourmet both as a chef and as a diner.

Dwain's death on 30 September 2005 followed those of his first wife, Dorothy Warner (Holway), and his son Robert. He is survived by his wife Marie Ward, daughters Betsy and Bonnie, sons Bill, Richard, and David, 11 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. A wonderful memorial service was held at the Belwin Outdoor Education Laboratory on a fine autumn day on 29 October 2005. As those

attending met, re-met, and reminisced, it became clear that such a large and diverse group was a tribute to the broad, positive influence that Dwain had had on so many. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

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