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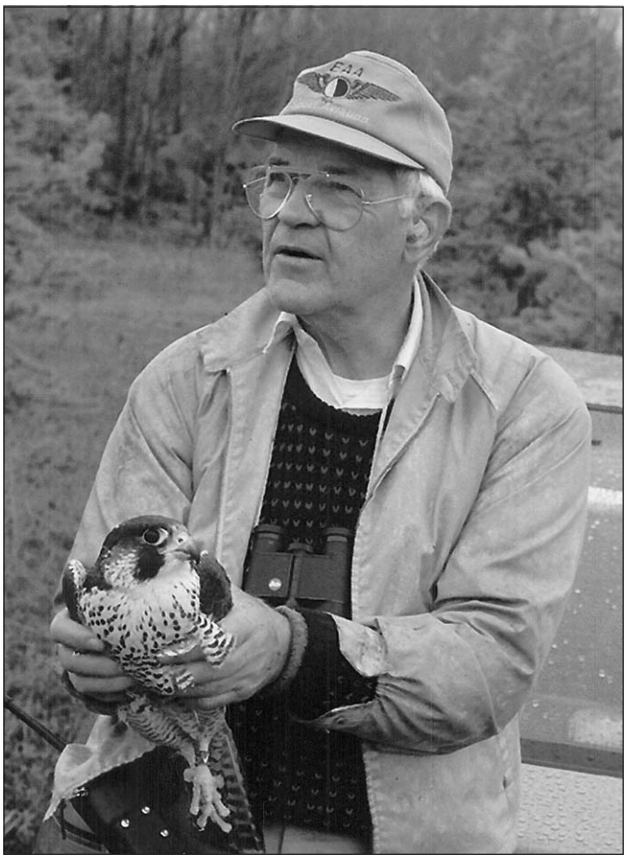
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IN MEMORIAM: HARRISON BRUCE TORDOFF, 1923–2008

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Harrison Bruce Tordoff, 1923–2008
(Holding a female Peregrine Falcon caught in a nest box at Virginia, Minnesota.
Photograph courtesy of Douglas Mock and Jean Tordoff.)

Harrison (Bud) Bruce Tordoff, Past President and Fellow of the AOU, died 23 July 2008 at age 85 in St. Paul, Minnesota. One of his many admirers, Donal O'Brien, observed that "This is a real case of a giant tree falling in the woods. Of course, when Bud fell, many wonderful things heard the crash, including the Ruffed Grouse and the Woodcock."

All who knew Bud Tordoff will remember him as a special friend and extraordinary person. A natural and charismatic leader, he excelled in each of his many roles, as a fighter pilot in World War II, an ornithologist, a conservationist, and a sportsman. His good humor and enthusiasm were infectious. He was larger than life, and served many of us as a mentor or, more accurately, as a big brother. He was firm, independent, and humble. He treated everyone with respect and never with an unkind word, just good-natured appreciation of each individual's foibles. He lived by two simple rules: "Never be late," and "Have a setter by your side." And he had a weakness for McDonald's French fries, which he always shared with the hunting dogs—labs, Brittanies, and the English setters that were a central part of his life.

Bud was born on 8 February 1923 in Mechanicville, New York, the youngest of six children and the only son. As a teenager he chose to be called "Bud" rather than Harrison or "Harry." He

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grew up hunting and fishing in the Adirondacks with his father, a skilled mason. They raised pheasants for release and studied wildlife management, which Bud thought would be his chosen career until a freshly shot Black-throated Blue Warbler changed his world view. Encouragement from Arthur A. Allen and his best friend Robert M. Mengel in his initial years at Cornell University (1940–1942) widened Bud's interest in birds and directed his career toward ornithology.

World War II interrupted Bud's training at Cornell but opened a major chapter of his life. He joined the U.S. Army Air Force, and earned his wings in 1943. He served two tours of duty in the European theater (1944–1945), where he flew 85 missions in support of daylight bombing raids against Germany and in support of missions for the Allied ground forces during the liberation of mainland Europe. He piloted with distinction and become a fighter ace in his P51D Mustang, which he named *Upupa epops*, the Hoopoe. Now fully restored, his plane is on display in Paul Allen's Flying Heritage Collection in Everett, Washington. Allen invited Captain Tordoff to see the completely restored *Upupa epops* in 2003. It was a thrilling and nostalgic event for Bud, who wrote on a plaque of his restored plane, "I flew this plane in combat, March & April 1945. It always brought me home." This chapter of Bud's life is documented online (www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjMn7QwMjQk and www.flyingheritage.com/TemplateHomeNoFlash.aspx?planeId=11#).

Bud returned from Europe to finish his undergraduate studies at Cornell University (1945–1946), married Jean Van Nostrand in 1947, and then completed his Ph.D. under Josselyn Van Tyne at the University of Michigan (1947–1950). His dissertation, *A Systematic Study of the Avian Family Fringillidae, Based on the Structure of the Skull*, launched a life-long research interest in carduelline finches and museum-based ornithology.

Bud held faculty positions at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History (KUNHM; 1950–1957), the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (UMMZ; 1957–1970), and the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum of Natural History (1970–1983). He retired from the department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior at the University of Minnesota in 1991. In addition to his research and teaching contributions, his legacies at each of these institutions included remarkable specimens, great personal friendships, inspired students, and strong academic programs. He shunned formality—especially neckties.

Bud's years at Kansas fostered life-long friendships with R. M. Mengel, Glen E. Woolfenden, and Norman A. Ford, among others. Together, they set new standards for museum field work, as well as finding time for creative projects like hiding symbols of 1950s Kansas culture as time capsules in selected bird specimens. One of Bud's proud accomplishments in Kansas was convincing Arly Allen, a local printer, to publish *The Wilson Bulletin*, which Bud edited (1952–1954). From that beginning, Allen Press grew into a leading publisher of ornithological and other scientific journals. Bud's gifted hands produced study skins of over 320 bird specimens for the museum collections at Kansas. He considered his specimen of the Lark Sparrow (KUNHM # 31995) to be his very best; Mark Robbins agrees that it "is truly mind-blowing in that every feather is in place."

Bud moved to the UMMZ in 1957 to replace his former professor Josselyn Van Tyne, who had died the previous fall. He then played a signature role in UMMZ's extraordinary graduate programs of the 1960s. Fueled by the flush of new federal support of science education and guided by a young faculty that integrated cell biology, physiology, and systematics into a powerful curriculum, Bud and his colleagues fledged a cohort of avian biologists. Together with Robert W. Storer, Bud opened doors and opportunities, taught us how to write (he was a terrific editor), nurtured us as teaching or research assistants, and engaged us as peers in the twice-daily Bird Department coffee-break discussions. He tutored our skinning skills, included us in his research on crossbills with William R. Dawson, and taught us how to divert undergraduates from patches of morel mushrooms spotted on class field trips.

It was at the University of Minnesota, however, that Bud reached his professional zenith. In the summer of 1970, Bud moved to the Twin Cities to become Director of the Bell Museum. While grieving over the untimely death of his beloved daughter Judy that fall, Bud distinguished himself in the museum directorship and, later, as a Professor. His commitments to academic excellence and to student development combined with his leadership skills to ignite the growth of a strong new Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior. He raised a substantial endowment for the Dayton-Wilkie Fund that now supports graduate student research. Bud always led with clear thinking and common sense. He was also visionary and progressive. As AOU President, he sponsored the first poster presentation session at the annual meeting (1980) in Fort Collins, Colorado. He championed the *Birds of North America* project from beginning to end and raised funds to sustain it.

Bud reveled in outdoor activities, including hunting, hiking, fishing, canoeing, tennis, and ice hockey. With his long, easy stride he could cover vast distances on foot all day and often walked the legs off his less able companions. In time, his own knees gave out, so he had them replaced and kept walking. His tolerance of cold weather was enviable, but once when we were on a hunt he confided to me that he had just discovered flannel-lined chinos, which became a standard part of his hunting outfit. Above all, Bud loved to hunt upland gamebirds—grouse, woodcock, sharp-tails, partridge, pheasant, and quail—he loved them all. Being afield in the fall with a shotgun and a setter was perhaps his greatest joy. A terrific wing shot, he ranked high among Michigan and Minnesota grouse hunters. In the springtime he turned his skilled bird dogs to finding broods of woodcock to band the chicks. He yearned to hunt Montezuma Quail and, after several years of looking for them, he dropped two from his first covey rise. Admiring a magnificent cock bird in his hand, he paused deeply, and he said quietly, "This is the best moment of my [hunting] life since I killed my first Ring-necked Pheasant as a young boy." North Dakota sharptails also mesmerized Bud each fall. His favorite pilgrimage in his later years was to walk with his son Jeff and other friends the scenic hills of Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge, to move in on Penny's (his last dog's) distant point, and then to hear the gobbling of rising sharptails. His dogs, especially his setters, evoked awe from the most expert gun-dog colleagues. Among other feats, Molly learned to point Yellow Rails in the marshes of northern Minnesota, providing the captured birds to graduate student Scott Stalheim for his dissertation research. After Penny died, Bud confessed that he was lonely without a dog beside him on long drives, which was his favorite way to travel.

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Beyond his accomplishments as a professor and sportsman, above all Bud was a dedicated and effective conservationist. Blending ornithology and wildlife conservation, he engaged the birding and sportsman communities with his academic world, or perhaps it was the other way around. He worked closely with Harold F. Mayfield and the Michigan Audubon Society on behalf of the endangered Kirtland's Warbler. He served as the first Chairman of the Board of the Minnesota Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (1975–1977) and collaborated with Carroll Henderson of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to build the state's pioneering nongame program. At the top of the list of his many contributions was the restoration of Peregrine Falcons in the Upper Mississippi region. Bud had a passion for Peregrine Falcons, which he thought stemmed from his own experiences as a fighter pilot. He devoted most of his retirement years to them, and his colleagues enjoyed watching him enjoy "his" peregrines. Bud raised substantial funds to support the Midwest Peregrine Restoration Project, banded hundreds of nestlings with his gentle hands while telling them to "be good," built a huge network of collaborators, and monitored the status of individual birds on city buildings and river cliffs until the day he died. Season after season, he tracked the fledging success, returns, and productivity of his falcons and then tended a large database that tracked the growth statistics of this restored population. From 1981 to present, Bud and his collaborators hacked 1,286 peregrine chicks at $2,500 each for a total cost of $3,215,000, one-fifth the cost of a modern F-16 fighter plane. They established a fully sustainable population of 128 breeding pairs in the Upper Mississippi region. The future of the program as a research initiative is now the mission of the Midwest Peregrine Society (www.midwestperegrine.org), which is supported in part by donations to Bud's memory, at his family's request.

Bud's rich life was shortened by Alzheimer's disease. When he left us, we all looked skyward with appreciation and good memories, and the peregrines certainly said "thanks" in their own way. Paul Allen saluted him with a special event over Everett, Washington, with a "missing plane" formation of P51 Mustangs. In September 2008, at the University of Minnesota, his family and friends organized a touching celebration of his life that ended with his favorite song, "Wagon Wheels." Bud is survived by Jean, his wife of 62 years, and by sons Jeffrey Paul and James Scott of Minneapolis–St. Paul.

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