

## **Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award, 2004: C. Stuart Houston**

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### MARION JENKINSON AOU SERVICE AWARD, 2004:

C. STUART HOUSTON

Many members of the AOU provide essential services to the organization through the roles they play on various committees. In some cases, like the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature ("Check-list Committee"), those roles are high-profile and may attract the attention (and sometimes the wrath) of both members and nonmembers. More frequently, however, such individuals toil in relative anonymity. Their contributions go largely unrecognized, and unappreciated, by members of the AOU. The Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award provides a mechanism for recognizing such members.

In 1983, AOU President Thomas R. Howell invited Stuart Houston to serve as the first chair of the new AOU Committee on Memorials, with a mandate to "seek out appropriate authors for memorial articles for deceased Fellows and obituary notices for other prominent ornithologists." That committee was established to address the embarrassing facts that no memorials had been published in *The Auk* in the previous two years and that no memorials for Honorary or Corresponding Fellows had been published since 1976. Before the committee was established, the AOU Council sometimes devoted hours at its annual meeting discussing how to find appropriate authors for memorials.

Because of his lifelong interest in the history of ornithology, Stuart accepted the challenge. At the conclusion of the 122nd Stated Meeting in 2004, he completed his 21st, and final, year as the chair of this committee. During those two decades, he was responsible for the publication of memorials for 190 individuals, including 72 Fellows, 46 Honorary or Corresponding Fellows, 69 Elective Members, and 3 Patrons or Guarantors of the AOU. Those memorials are a significant contribution to the history of the AOU and of ornithology. Stuart has been assisted by various committee members over the years, but all will affirm his key role in tracking down knowledgeable memorialists, convincing them to accept the task, and ensuring that they

delivered their material to the Editor of *The Auk* in a timely manner.

Stuart Houston is unusual in today's AOU, because he is not an ornithologist by profession. He followed a family tradition and trained in medicine. He earned an international reputation as a radiologist and served as Professor and Head of Diagnostic Radiology at the University of Saskatchewan. His *curriculum vitae* lists 274 publications in medicine and medical history, including five books.

However, Stuart's ongoing passions are for birds, natural history, and conservation. As a teenager, he was instrumental in the founding of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. He has maintained his interest in that organization, and in birds, for his entire life. His *curriculum vitae* also lists a staggering total of 563 "nonmedical" publications, most of them dealing with ornithology. He has special interests in the history of ornithology and natural-history exploration in western Canada, and has published four books and dozens of papers on those topics. He has also been an avid bird-bander throughout his life; aided by his wife, Mary, he has banded almost 126,000 birds in 61 years. Those efforts have produced numerous important publications on movements and migration of Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*; 7,271 banded), Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*; 4,445 banded), and other species.

Stuart Houston's contributions to both medicine and ornithology have been widely recognized. In the areas of ornithology and natural history, his list of awards includes the Roland Michener Conservation Award from the Canadian Wildlife Federation (1986), the Douglas H. Pimlott Conservation Award (jointly with Mary Houston) from the Canadian Nature Federation (1988), the Doris Huestis Speirs Award from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (1989), the Eugene Eisenmann Medal from the New York Linnaean Society (1990), and the Frances Hamerstrom Award from the Raptor Research Foundation (2002). He



C. Stuart Houston: 13 March 2002. Photo by Glen Grambo.

is also the recipient of one of the Government of Canada's highest civilian honors, having been inducted as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1993.

Stuart has also served ornithology and the AOU in other ways. He was a member (1982–1984) and Chair (1977–1981) of the Committee on Membership and served as an Elective Councilor (1978–1980) and as Vice-President (1990–1991). However, one of his most significant influences has been as a role model and mentor. Throughout his career, Stuart has encouraged young men and women to follow their interests in natural history and birds and supported them in their efforts. Among many others, both the current Editor of *The Auk* and the current Secretary of the AOU are, in part, products of his mentorship. His career exemplifies the kind of contributions to ornithology that

can be made by individuals who are not trained as professionals in the discipline.

For these and other contributions to the organization and to ornithology, the Executive Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union takes great pride in presenting the Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award for 2004 to C. Stuart Houston.

*Award criteria.*—The Marion Jenkinson AOU Service Award was created by the Council in 1996 in honor of Marion Jenkinson Mengel, who served the AOU as Treasurer and in other capacities for many years. It is awarded to an individual who has performed continued, extensive service to the AOU, including service in elected offices but emphasizing volunteered contributions and committee participation. Recipients are selected by the AOU Executive Committee. The award consists of a framed certificate.