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A Tribute to Harley WRIGHT ...

Managing Editor, the Natural Areas Journal



Sadly, we have lost one of the most talented and dedicated people the Natural Areas Journal has ever known. Harley Barbara Wright died peacefully at home on Oct. 14, 2013, after a valiant battle with cancer.

Harley started as Managing Editor with the production of the February 2004 issue, when her husband Gerry Wright was Editor, and she continued in that important role for nine years until the fall of 2013.

Gerry Wright, Harley's husband, and past Natural Areas Journal Editor:

It was a lot of fun in the first few years working together when I was Editor from 2004-2005. I would probably say I was somewhat influential in getting her to take the position initially. She took it about six months after retiring from her position as Catalog Librarian at the University of Idaho Library. Harley was an English major in college, and was a 'born editor'. I never published anything that she did not first edit, so prior to taking on the journal position, she had a fair amount of experience reviewing scientific articles. She loved the NAJ and loved working with the authors of the articles. She enjoyed learning about the various aspects of natural resource management and stewardship, species relationships, and conservation planning and many other related topics that the journal published.

Harley was a meticulous editor, giving each article far more attention than they probably deserved or needed. She usually went through each submission four times before she was satisfied it was suitable for publication. She always spent considerable time on the literature cited, making sure it fully complied with journal guidelines. One of her pet peeves was submissions whose citations did not follow journal guidelines. She really appreciated receiving articles that were well written and comprehensible, and when that occurred she never failed to acknowledge that fact to the author(s). The many email letters she received over the years from authors praising the changes she made to improve a given paper, are a testament to her skills.

Ron Hiebert, current Journal Editor:

I was privileged to know Harley casually for many years, as Gerry and I participated in many of the same National Park Service science events. And since 2010 when I joined the NAJ staff, I had the privilege of working with her on the Natural Areas Journal. She, in her own special way, quickly communicated to me our respective roles in the development and publication of the journal. She was indeed a pleasure to work with. She was always looking for better ways to do business and improve communications. While we will find someone to fill the Managing Editor position, we will never be able to replace Harley.

Pam Overholtzer, NAJ Production Manager and Technical Editor:

Harley played a huge role in welcoming, training and mentoring me when I first joined the Journal staff in 2008. I lived in the same town as Harley, and

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over the years we often got together over a latte to discuss work-related issues and Journal proofs, and we became close friends, too. Although she is gone now, she still communicates with me daily, which, when you understand publishing, isn't as strange as it might sound. That's because Harley worked on editing manuscripts a year or more in advance of a publication date, before handing them off to me for the final technical editing and production work. As she edited, she wrote a million little notes to me on items that needed to be addressed, completed or fixed prior to going to print. And because she was always working on articles slated for future issues, every day I still read new notes from her that are addressed to me; and this will continue through to the last article she edited. Harley, so dedicated, was still actively working as Managing editor until a week before she passed away, and those edited manuscripts will be included in next year's issues of the Journal. It is a fitting way for her to say goodbye to me. She guided me from the first day I began working for the NAA to the present; and now, it appears, will also do so for a little while longer via her notes. I am so lucky to have known her.

Deb Kraus, NAA Director of Operations:

I had been privileged to work with Harley since I joined the NAA in 2006. Harley actually had more tenure with the Natural Areas Journal than anyone else on its, or NAA's, staff. For that reason, and because of her dedication to the NAA, she was able to provide a unique perspective and invaluable guidance to all of the editors and staffers who came on board later. Harley gave so much of her energy to the organization, and went above and beyond the call of duty when it came to Journal matters, such as taking Pam under her wing when Pam was hired as Production Manager, and providing great insight and help (along with her husband, Gerry) when the NAA hired new lead editors. She was also my sounding board when it came to developing new procedures, strategic planning or making key decisions that affected the Journal. Unsolicited, she would sometimes call me up with a new idea for the Journal or to discuss a way to streamline operations. More than all of this, Harley was one of the sweetest, most personable and delightful people I've ever had the pleasure to know or to work with - in any arena. We shared a love of the outdoors, dogs and travel, and so we always had much to talk about beyond Journal work. I will miss her terribly, and think of her often.

Harley was inspirational and a joy to know, and she will be missed by all who had the pleasure to know and work with her ...



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