



## Donald Whitehead

September 14, 1932 - February 6, 2018

Donald Whitehead, 85, passed away at Stonecroft Health Campus on February 6, 2018. He was born in Quincy, Massachusetts on September 14, 1932, the son of Arthur and Olive Whitehead. For the last 51 years, he had made his home in Bloomington, Indiana. He is predeceased by his wife of 33 years, Elizabeth Pleasants Whitehead. He is survived by his children, Peter Whitehead (June) of Woodstock, GA and Pamela Whitehead (Paul Almond) of Sacramento, CA, and grandchildren Jaclyn Whitehead Kroll (Brendan Kroll) and Colin Whitehead, as well as many Fuller family cousins on the east coast.

Don graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University in 1954 and continued at Harvard with his doctoral work. He received a Fulbright Scholarship, enabling him to continue with post-doctoral work focused on paleobotany and paleoecology in Denmark and Norway. After teaching at Williams College in Massachusetts for 7 years, Don began his Indiana University career in 1967. In addition to teaching within the Biology Department at both the undergraduate and graduate level, Don headed up a lab. One of his most significant research projects was the PIRLA project ((Paleolimnological Investigations of Recent Lake Acidification), a multi-million, multi-university, multi-investigator project looking into lake acidification that linked the rise in the use of fossil fuels to lake acidification in the 1980's.

In the latter part of his career, he shifted his focus to combine his research

with his first passion – birds. He and his lab concentrated on the effects of forest fragmentation on migrant songbirds. The Whitehead lab, often in collaboration with researchers from other universities, published many important papers, including a seminal paper in Science.

As a young boy, he began his love affair with the natural environment, making frequent trips to the White Mountains in New Hampshire with his father, and birding along the shores of the Atlantic in New England. In the Bloomington area, he was a member of the Sassafras Audubon Society, leading their annual Christmas Bird Count for 25 years. In 2008, Don was presented the Lifetime Conservationist Award by Sassafras Audubon Society (SAS), and a new annual award was named in his honor. He also served on the Advisory Board of the Sycamore Land Trust for many years and was actively involved in land conservation.

Don was a passionate gourmet cook and a lover of food of all kinds, owning 100's of cookbooks from which he would create unforgettable feasts for his guests. He and Betsy were the consummate entertainers and were famous for the parties hosted at their home. His children lovingly referred to him as the "Mad Canner" as each year he would reap a bountiful harvest from his garden to can salsas, sauces, and jellies to give to his friends and family.

His passions also extended to sports. He loved IU basketball, the Red Sox, track and field, and most other sports. And he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of statistical data for all. His family and friends who knew him best will remember him for his quick wit, bear hugs, and the twinkle in his eye. His children are grateful that Don imparted in them the same love for the environment. Every new bird sighting or wildflower discovery will forever remind them of their dad.

The Whitehead Family would like to acknowledge the wonderful network of

friends in Bloomington who enriched Don's life over the years and made the past 8 months so enjoyable for him. A special thank you to the folks at Stonecroft Health Campus for making him feel so at home, especially Stephanie.

In lieu of flowers, the Whitehead family has established two funds. The first is in honor of Don & Betsy Whitehead at the Sycamore Land Trust, an organization they supported for many years. A nature trail will be dedicated in their names in the Fall. <https://sycamorelandtrust.org/donate> . Select the "Donation Reason" and select "In Honor of" and note that the donation is for Don Whitehead.

The second is a fund through the Indiana University Foundation. Each year a graduate student will be selected to receive funds for field research expenses. Gifts should be made to the memory of Professor Donald Whitehead to the Indiana University Foundation.

A Celebration of Life gathering, along with the nature trail dedication is planned for the weekend of September 29th to be sure that all of Don's friends and colleagues from near and far can attend. Details will be posted on the Caringbridge website established for Don & Betsy Whitehead when they are formalized.

For now, the family asks that you raise your glass to a life well-lived by Don Whitehead!

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory 4155 South Old State Road 37 is handling the arrangements and online condolences, photos, and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com).

# Tribute Wall

JB

“ I do remember Dr Donald Whitehead he made a great impression on me I remember going to his house and we had a party there he was my first science teacher when I was a freshman at Indiana University Bloomington Indiana my roommate also had him at the same time I also remembered Doctor James weigand my science teacher for teachers at Indiana University Bloomington I even kept pictures of Doctor James weigand an outstanding librarian at Indiana University sent doctor weigand link of his obituary I am so happy that these professors made wonderful memories for me I also remembered Dr Susan M Klein and Nancy J Dalrymple I myself have my undergraduate years at Indiana University Bloomington and did my undergrad years at iub studying special ed and also early childhood at elementary Ball. State University Indiana and Doctor Mildred Ballou & Dr Joseph Strain all made positive impressions for me May their memories Be for a blessing Jane Barron also Shirley A Fitzgibons for library school at iub

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**Jane Barron** - November 15, 2024 at 11:24 AM

KI

“ You get to be with your dear wife. We would share hugs when you would come into my former place of business. We both had been care takers of our dearest soul mates. I am so glad you get to join your wife. We both know how hard it was and how much we loved them to the end of time. I lost my hero in June. I am so happy you get to see her again. You are a sweet soul. Good Morning Sunshine. Sorry we could not have shared a last hug. Your former banker. K

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**Kim** - February 25, 2018 at 08:12 PM