



Leonard Charles Ferrington Jr.

July 28, 1948 - September 11, 2021

Esteemed University of Minnesota Professor of Entomology Dr. Leonard Charles Ferrington, Jr., 73, passed away unexpectedly on September 11, 2021, while bicycling on the Root River Trail near Lanesboro, Minnesota. Dr. Ferrington was born in 1948 in Murrysville, PA, to parents, Leonard C. Ferrington, Sr., and Agnes Martina Ferrington (nee Schwaderer). He is survived by his loving wife of 43 years, Dr. Deborah Ferrington (nee Stinner); daughter, Dr. Ashley LaBore (Beau); son, Leonard Ferrington, III (Lindsay) and granddaughter, Leah Ferrington. Siblings include Connie Paulich (Henry), Carole Lape (Zane), and James Ferrington (Debra).

Len joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1966 after graduating from Franklin Regional High School. He served in Vietnam as a Corporal in the 3rd Marine Division and was honorably discharged from service in 1972. During his time in Vietnam, he earned several medals, including a Purple Heart Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and Vietnam Campaign Medal. He went on to achieve a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Doctorate degree specializing in Entomology from the University of Pittsburgh. He held tenured academic positions at both the University of Kansas (1980 to 2000) and the University of Minnesota (2000 to 2021). During his 41-year academic career as a Professor and Scientist, Len was a prolific researcher that collaborated with colleagues in 52 countries on six continents. Len's research program consisted of five areas of emphasis: taxonomy and systematics, biodiversity studies, responses of aquatic insects

to various types of pollution, their roles in stream ecology, and sustainability. Throughout his career Len authored over 100 scientific publications and identified more than 100 previously undescribed insects. He was a long-standing member of the Society of Freshwater Science (SFS) and served as President in 1989 and 1990. In 2021, he was elected as an SFS Fellow for his sustained excellence in contributions to freshwater science research. In addition to his research, he was an active and well-liked Professor and Mentor to hundreds of undergraduate and graduate level students at the University of Kansas and the University of Minnesota. He was most recently recognized with the prestigious Fulbright Fellow award and was planning to perform research in Finland for six months.

All who had the honor to know Len recognized how he pursued excellence in life with passion and vigor. He was a loving Husband and Father, advisor and mentor, world explorer, music aficionado including a recent passion for playing the Mandolin, voracious reader, avid exercise enthusiast and cyclist, boating captain and Nationally ranked, award-winning competitive ballroom dancer. Len embodied the persona of a modern Renaissance Man. Len was loved greatly by his family and will be dearly missed. His legacy will continue through his family, contributions he made as a scientist and educator, and the countless lives he touched with his genuine, engaging, humorous personality, and kind heart.

The Visitation will be held on Wednesday, September 22nd from 4 PM to 8 PM and the Funeral Ceremony honoring his life will be on Thursday, September 23rd at 11 AM. Both events will be located at:

Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home

515 W. Highway 96 at Mackubin

Shoreview, Minnesota 55126

Directly following the Funeral Ceremony honoring his life, a burial with full Military Honors will be held on Thursday, September 23rd at 1 PM. This will be located at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Fort Snelling National Cemetery

7601 34th Ave. S.

Minneapolis, MN 55450

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the "Deborah A. and Leonard C. Ferrington Research Fund" (www.giveto.pitt.edu/ferrington). This endowment provides support for research being conducted by undergraduate or graduate students at the Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology, which is affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh.

Tribute Wall

ZH

“ As spring comes and the rivers, streams, and lakes thaw here in Minnesota, I've been thinking of Len. I remember his talks about dragonfly courtship late at the night on the Saint Paul campus as we gazed into microscopes and tried not to drift off--hearing his calming voice in the windowless room from 4-9 p.m. made this a difficult feat. When I heard of his passing I was deeply saddened. Len advocated for a different kind of life than many academics do. He promoted a fun, well-balanced life full of adventure and he taught me how to find beautiful insects under the water and understand their lifecycles. Even though I was just an undergraduate student seeking a minor in entomology, he gave me the same amount of attention as the graduate students in class, and helped us learn through subtle humor and deep engagement of the source material. Thank you, Len. I wish you could be here for this springtime. When I see a chironomid fly for the first time this year, I will think of you.

Zoë H - March 10, 2025 at 12:19 PM

SH

“ Last night (July 3rd) I walked by the Ferrington Home on Lake Owasso and saddened to see it for sale. I have health issues for the past year and have been a care giver for my wife who passed away from Breast Cancer this past March. I just have resumed walking. I just checked my computer and his sudden passing is a real tragedy

All my thoughts and prayers to his family. I will plant a tree on my Lake Owasso lot.

Scott Halstead. Former Shoreview Green Community Member

Scott Halstead - July 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ Last night (July 3rd) I walked by the Ferrington Home on Lake Owasso and saddened to see it for sale. I have health issues for the past year and have been a care giver for my wife who passed away from Breast Cancer this past March. I just have resumed walking. I just checked my computer and his sudden passing is a real tragedy

All my thoughts and prayers to his family and I will make a donation!

Scott Halstead. Former Shoreview Green Community Member

Scott Halstead - July 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Dear Len:

Thanks for being kind to me and thanks for all the laughter.

Big hugs,

Jorge

Dr. Jorge A. Santiago-Blay - January 03, 2022 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ Len was one of my favourite tutors in crenobiology. I was happy to meet him at JASM 2014. And it was very exciting to know personally a person who read and cited a lot before. I will always be grateful to him for his help in saving of department of Ichthyology and Hydrobiology in St. Petersburg State University (Russia). He was a great person and all spring specialists will miss him.
Rest in peace, the Teacher.



Tata Chuzhekova - October 02, 2021 at 12:00 AM

VR

“ I have known Len since the mid-1970s and I stayed with he and Debbie when he was at the University of Kansas. They were both wonderful hosts. Len's contributions to freshwater science will live on as will the memories of him among those of us who were lucky enough to know him,
Vince Resh

Vincent Resh - September 28, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JZ

“ I am very sorry to hear of Len's passing. Please accept my deepest condolences. Lenny and I were cousins, although we didn't know each other well. My Dad, Bill (Regina), was Martina's brother.

Jean Schwaderer Zak - September 25, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ I danced with Len at Cinema many years ago. He could lead a molinete like no other. When asked how he was the response was always, "Reasonable." When his wife would come to events, Len would look at her with such adoration.

Alicia Guild - September 24, 2021 at 12:00 AM

PK

“ Dear Deb and family, my deepest sympathies on this unexpected loss. I recount memories of Len when I was a graduate student in your lab fondly. May he Rest In Peace and my thoughts and prayers are with your family.



Pabalu Karunadharma - September 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ I met Len at the NABS conference through a mutual friend, Lew Osborne. Stories of their experiences at the Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology were a common topic at NABS socials, and it is fitting that his legacy be remembered through an endowment to students. Freshwater ecology has lost a very important scientist who has contributed much to the field.

Joseph Culp - September 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ Oh, Len. Your life was cut short, but what a legacy you've left -- across the globe! You were always the perfect person, in the perfect places, at the perfect times. You will always remain in the hearts of the countless people whose lives you've touched.

The Restaurant Club/Sunset and Full Moon Cruise Crew will miss you terribly.

Deb, Ashley, Len - Dave's and my hearts go out to you during this difficult time. May time help you heal you heal and bring you peace.



Lynn Maier-Belair and Dave Belair - September 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

YZ

“ Len and I joined Cinema Ballroom as students around the same time. He was one of a few early members whom I felt connected. We witnessed each other's growth and shared much joyfulness in dancing. His passion about life, family, and things he liked to do inspired me and ever one who had luck to be around him. Most of all, he was one of the last gentleman who ever lived. The floor, as well as the world, had become a better place for his smile, calmness, and humbleness. Dr. Len Ferrington will be missed as long as music go on. p.s. The photo above of him and his good friend, Dan Browning, was what I took at the last comp, Heart of America in August. Haven't had chance to show him and hope he would like it.



YUPING ZHENG - September 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AT

“ Len Ferrington was kind and enthusiastic entomologist, and I frequently looked forward to our chats in the hallways when I was a student at University of Minnesota. Everyday was a beautiful, spectacular, and marvelous day for Len. From our conversations it was clear he was passionate and cared deeply for his students and furthering their curiosity for the natural world. Len has made a difference in so many lives and I'm grateful to have known him. We are celebrating the life and legacy of Len and mourning his passing with you.



Anh Tran - September 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ My condolences to Len's wife and family. Len was a pleasure to know. His quiet manner did not reveal the depth and extent of his many accomplishments, honors, and talents. I had the pleasure of knowing him as a 'ballroom dancer', and last talked with him at the Heart of America Competition in Kansas City, MO, a few weeks ago. It was shocking to hear of his sudden passing. It was an honor to know him. He will be missed by many, but forgotten by no one. Jan Dobies-Hein

Janice (Jan) Dobies-Hein, Ph.D. - September 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ The power of one. Len Ferrington was a power of one for me. He accepted me into his lab as a graduate student. Taught me, advised me, and mentored me throughout my graduate career. We did field work together and attended meetings. He showed me how to be a scientist and more importantly how to balance my research and teaching with my family life (It helps if you like to work early in the morning and can stay up late at night!). Len provided me with opportunities to travel the world from Mongolia and Tasmania to Panama and Germany. He also taught me how to be a colleague and collaborator. We have collaborated over twenty years since I earned my Ph.D. In fact, we were working on a paper with Will just this past summer and I felt that we would collaborate for years to come. He taught me to tango. He taught me some yoga. He taught me to live. He is gone too soon and I will miss him deeply.



Barbara Hayford - September 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DR

“ So sorry for your loss Debbie. What great hosts you and Len were in Lawrence when I made my first visit to the USA on a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship in 1985. Since then we have collaborated on other research and met at NABS meetings and Chironomid Symposia. Len has contributed so much to our field of study and has tragically been prevented from contributing even more. I keep thinking of Len as I go about my work and realise I first learned about this or that through Len.

Dr Les Ruse - September 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ Dr. Ferrington was an esteemed member of the Department of Entomology at the University of MN and his contributions will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.



Michelle Boone - September 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

VL

“ To Len, esteemed colleague and friend, a genuine gentleman, who left a great scientific legacy. Thank you Len for sharing your knowledge, passion for studying chironomids, and passion for dancing and music. Valeria.



Valeria Lencioni - September 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

NM

“ On behalf of the entire Marquis Association Management team, please accept our deepest sympathies. Our thoughts are with the Ferrington family during this time of mourning. Wishing the family courage, peace and comfort in the days ahead.



Nathalie Zabala- Marquis - September 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CR

“ My deepest sympathy to the family and friends during this most difficult time.
Carlos and Claudia de la Rosa

Carlos L. de la Rosa - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

GG

“ Thank you for the collaboration throughout the years



Gísli Már Gíslason - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ I remember taking Len's Aquatic Entomology class, he would teach each lesson like he was telling the most fascinating story. I would sit listening in the front row of each class with rapt attention. He helped me get my first science jobs (at Isle Royale National Park and in the lab). I am so grateful, and think of his teachings often. I will admire you forever Len, you will be So very missed.



Jenna McCullough - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AA

“ *My heartfelt condolences to the family.*

I just met professor Ferrington during the Symposium of Chironomidae in 2003 in Minneapolis. He was a extraordinary kind person with all the attendees but specially to people like me, a foreign student with a scarce command of English.

Sincerely,

Alberto Araneda

Alberto Araneda - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM



SH

“ *Len was a great researcher and really rather a beautiful person all round. I know he will be missed.*

Samantha Hughes - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM



NZ

“ *On behalf of the entire Marquis Association Management team, please accept our deepest sympathies. Our thoughts are with Len and the entire Ferrington family during this time of mourning. We wish you all courage, peace and comfort in the days ahead.*

Nathalie Zabala - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM



MS

“ Our deepest condolences on your loss. Lenny was and always will be a special cousin to me, a true gentleman and a scholar. You all are in my prayers. Memory Eternal. Joanne



Michael and Joanne Shelby-Klein - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ So sorry for your loss. He was a great guy. I have fond memories of him and your family.



Mary M Barnes - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ Seu bom humor, sua alegria de viver e o seu compromisso com o conhecimento sempre foram algumas de suas qualidades admiráveis!



Maria Conceição Messias - September 19, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Lenny's Dad and my Dad were best friends and skilled musicians for many years. I enjoyed watching his ballroom dancing grow from a beginner to pro from emails from his father and lately his sister Connie. It was super to see that he took up the mandolin in recent years. My condolences to all his family. He is a loss to the world as well.

Joan Marshall - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ I first met Len in the early 80's. We shared an interest in the ecology and systematics of Chironomidae. He was a gentleman, a scholar, and a delightful fellow. I always enjoyed socializing with him at meetings. I was amazed by his range of interests and experiences. I loved his ballroom dancing posts on Facebook. I once told him, only half-jokingly, that he was "The Most Interesting Man in the World". I will miss him.

Charles Watson - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ So sorry to the rest of the family on "Lenny's" passing. Way to soon. I was always so proud of him and his accomplishments. Rest easy Cuz.

Dan Beatty - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

FS

“ So sad to learn. Len was a good man, a wonderfully peaceful man, and a big force in my growth as a person. I have an enthusiasm for life today that I attribute in no small part to Len.



Franz Schmidt - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ I knew Len for probably 20 years as a fellow member of the Society for Freshwater Science and as a prof at the University of Minnesota. He was truly a renaissance man!

Michael C Swift - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

HS

“ I'm so sorry to hear this news. Len was a sweet guy. I'll miss seeing him at the dance studio and competitions. I even got to be around him in Missouri and California for comps twice! I'll miss our talks about his travels, his fish research, and even Tai Chi! This last year and a half didn't allow me to see him due to COVID isolating, which makes me sad knowing all my memories of him aren't recent, so I'll hold on to those memories as best as I can. I send you all hugs during this time.

Heather Severance - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

John CSchwarzel Schwarzel - September 18, 2021 at 12:00 AM

EN

“ During the Entomology Department holiday parties Len would dress up as Santa and hand out presents to all of the staff children. I appreciated the effort he made to make the event fun for the kids, including my daughter. He was a kind person, and well-liked by the graduate student body.



Erica Nystrom - September 17, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ Len was able to squeeze more into, and squeeze more out of, his 73 years on earth than many could do in several lifetimes. An extraordinary man, an extraordinary life lived so fully. It was an honor to have known him and to have been able to share ideas and experiences about aquatic insects. My sincere condolences to Deb, Len, Ashley, and all members of his family. Len will be deeply missed by all who knew him.



Dean Hansen - September 17, 2021 at 12:00 AM

LW

“ So sorry to hear of Len's passing. He was one of the great ones.

Lisa Wiley - September 17, 2021 at 12:00 AM