

ARCTIC

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FRANCIS HOLLIS FAY (1927–1994)

Francis H. Fay ('Bud') was a distinguished marine mammalogist, a dedicated scholar, and a man of unwavering integrity who inspired colleagues, students, and friends. Bud died of a heart attack on 9 June 1994 at his home in Fairbanks.

Bud was born in 1927 in Melrose, Massachusetts, the last of three children. He received his B.S. degree from the University of New Hampshire in 1950 and his M.S. from the University of Massachusetts in 1952. His early interests were focused on lagomorphs, and his M.S. thesis was on the ecology of cottontail rabbits. A summer job manning a fire lookout in Oregon introduced him to pikas, and Bud was determined to investigate their ecology for his doctoral studies. At the University of British Columbia, however, Ian McTaggart-Cowan had a different idea; he sent Bud north to investigate the life history of the Pacific walrus. In the spring of 1952, Bud hitched a ride on a military ship to the village of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island. He had little money, but he possessed a wealth of interest in the natural environment and respect for the islanders' knowledge. The patience and skills he learned from the people of the island proved more valuable than money in feeding himself over the five months he spent on the island. His teachers on the island, especially Charles and Vernon Sliwooko, taught him a great deal about walrus ecology, and they provided him with specimens he used to describe the reproduction, growth, and anatomy of Pacific walruses.

In 1953, Bud returned to the island with his young bride, Barbara, and they spent seven months collecting specimens and data on walruses, terrestrial mammals, and birds of the island. Barbara and Bud were a formidable team, and they continued to work well together for the rest of Bud's life.

On St. Lawrence Island, Bud developed a reputation as a great walker, for he traveled many miles over the tundra on foot. Stories of his exploits in that era are still told today on the island. His efforts on St. Lawrence Island from 1952 to 1954 culminated in his doctoral thesis on the spatial ecology, life history, and population biology of Pacific walruses.

In 1955, Bud was hired by Robert L. Rausch as a medical biologist at the Arctic Health Research Laboratory in Anchorage. In that position, he studied zoonotic diseases and the helminth fauna of Alaska as well as continuing his investigations of marine mammal biology and ecology. His passion remained walrus biology, however, and he continued to study and publish on that subject.

Bud and Barbara's two children, Holly and Jeff, were born in Anchorage. The family moved to Fairbanks with the Arctic Health Research Laboratory in 1967. When the laboratory closed in 1974, Bud received a joint appointment to the Institute of Marine Science and the Institute of Arctic Biology at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. In 1982, Bud published his monograph on walruses, *Ecology and Biology of the Pacific Walrus, *Odobenus rosmarus divergens* Illiger*, in the North American Fauna Series. The book was a masterful piece of scholarship and reflected not only years of hard work but also Bud's painstaking attention to detail. He did not stop there, however, and he continued to investigate walrus



Francis H. (Bud) Fay in 1981. UAF photo by Sabra McCracken.

taxonomy, population biology, and ecology right up until the time of his death. His relentless search for knowledge of walruses led him to the Russian literature. He learned the Russian language in order to read that literature, and over the years he and Barbara carefully translated over 120 scientific articles from Russian into English. One year before Bud's death, they completed a monumental translation of Konstantin Chapskii's 111-page monograph entitled *The Walrus of the Kara Sea*.

Bud was dedicated to international cooperation in research and management, as demonstrated by the enthusiasm with which he shared his translations of Russian literature and by his early and continuous activity as a member of the Steering-Planning Committee of the Marine Mammal Project under the U.S.–U.S.S.R. Agreement on Environmental Protection. He participated in numerous research cruises aboard Russian vessels and studied pinniped phylogeny and taxonomy in museums around the world. In 1990, he organized and chaired the first international workshop on walruses and prepared the report, "The Ecology and Management of Walrus Populations."

Bud was deeply interested in the evolution and taxonomy of pinnipeds, and he contributed to that field in publications

and by collecting specimens. His contributions to the University of Alaska Museum helped make theirs one of the foremost pinniped collections. His views were widely sought and reflected in many of the major works on pinniped phylogeny.

Bud's selflessness was notable to all who crossed his path and remains evident in the ubiquity of his name in the acknowledgement sections of a diverse literature. On more than one occasion, Bud was ill-treated by a colleague, but he never retaliated. Instead, he continued to treat everyone as he wanted to be treated. As a consequence, no one could ever doubt the sincerity of his every utterance or the consideration that went into all of his ideas and opinions. Indeed, his counsel was sought by many, and he reluctantly served on a long list of scientific advisory boards (the Marine Mammal Commission, the Seal Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the Science Advisory Committee to the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, to name a few). He served reluctantly because those duties took time away from the research that was his passion.

Bud took great care in his use of both the Russian and English languages. His students were treated regularly to floods of red ink, which temporarily devastated egos but ultimately honed their writing skills. He always admonished them to speak and write as though English were not the listener or reader's first language. Editors, translators, and non-native speakers always appreciated his efforts.

To complete his walrus monograph, Bud was forced to turn over a smaller writing assignment to me. As he laboured to meet deadlines and produce clear, precise prose, he became uncharacteristically short with his students. We decided that, for everyone's sake, he and I would trade offices during the day. Every morning, we would roll carts containing our writing materials past each other in the hall as we went to one another's desk. He would write in the relative quiet of my office, and I would write at his desk between visits by students seeking his advice. Finding me at his desk, they would depart, disappointed not to have his thoughts and relieved not to have

been growled at. In the evenings, Bud and I would roll our carts back to our own offices, trading our writing efforts for the day. At home, we would edit each other's work, returning it in the hall the next morning. It was much easier to find fault with my prose than with his, so I was somewhat pleased to discover that many of his sentences began with the conjunction, "however." I smugly reworked his sentences, moving the conjunction to a place within a sentence or removing it altogether. The next day, I gave the "improved" text to Bud, and he gave me my reworked piece. Reading it over, I was horrified to see that he had inserted "however" into the beginning of a startling number of my sentences. For several nights, I pulled "howevers" from his text while he liberally inserted them into mine. We stubbornly argued in the hallway each morning, but could not convince one another. I resorted to Strunk and White, who backed me up, but Bud was little impressed. Then, quite by accident, I came across an argumentative correspondence between Lord Rutherford and Niels Bohr. At the end of a letter reviewing one of Bohr's first manuscripts, Rutherford sniped, "It would be better not to start every sentence with 'however'." In the morning, in the hallway, I gave Bud a copy of the exchange and commented that at least we were in good company. Bud changed his use of the conjunction, and we laughed often over the word in subsequent years. However, it never was clear whether he deferred to me or to Lord Rutherford.

We miss his passion for research, his editing, and his humor. We were indeed in good company.

Bud's family has established a memorial scholarship fund to support promising students in marine science. Tax-free contributions may be made to the Francis (Bud) Fay Memorial through the University of Alaska Foundation, P.O. Box 755080, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-5080, U.S.A.

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