

Obituary Notice International Marine Science Leader: Warren S. Wooster

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Former Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego Professor Warren S. Wooster, a distinguished scientist and international marine science leader, died on Oct. 29, 2008, in Seattle, Wash. Wooster, who was 87, died in his sleep.

A chemical and physical oceanographer who earned his doctoral degree from Scripps in 1953, Wooster spent decades fostering collaborative partnerships in oceanography across national and international borders. He worked to bring the disciplines of oceanography and fisheries sciences closer together and published more than 50 papers on oceanography and more than 40 on marine affairs.

After earning his Ph.D., Wooster participated in the early stages of the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI), the highly regarded, long-running marine monitoring program based at Scripps. With his expertise in ocean chemistry, Wooster operated the program by teaming with Scripps physical oceanographer Joe Reid and biologist Ed Brinton.

His Scripps leadership included direction of expeditions such as the Transpac Expedition to Japan in 1953 and Step-1 to South America in 1960.

"Warren S. Wooster turned his expertise on the currents of the deep ocean toward international solutions to sticky problems, especially in fisheries and cooperative researches," wrote Elizabeth Noble Shor in her book: "Scripps Institution of Oceanography: Probing the Oceans 1936 to 1976."

"Warren loved the adventure and camaraderie of doing research at sea and he was dedicated to understanding the ocean and its resources, and using that knowledge to contribute to a better Earth," said Kevin Bailey, a former Ph.D. student of Wooster's and now a senior scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Born in Westfield, Mass., on Feb. 20, 1921, Wooster received a bachelor's degree from Brown University in 1943 and a master's degree from the California Institute of Technology in 1947.

He was chairman of the Scripps Graduate Department from 1967 to 1969. In 1973 Wooster left Scripps to become the director of the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. From 1976 to 1991 he was a professor of marine studies and fisheries at the School of Marine Affairs of the University of Washington, where he retired as an emeritus professor.

"He was an efficient but tactful, persuasive and patient negotiator on many planes, not easily discouraged by adversity, and trusted by students and colleagues at home and abroad," said Karl Banse, an emeritus professor at the University of Washington and former colleague of Wooster's. "Warren was a great teacher, wonderful friend and admirable human being."

Wooster distinguished himself in many facets of ocean science and held a multitude of science leadership positions, including: Director de Investigacion, Consejo de Investigaciones Hidrobiologicas of Peru (1957-58); first Secretary of UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) Intergovernmental Office of Oceanography (1961-63); first secretary (1963-67) and president (1968-73) of the Scientific Committee for Oceanic Research (SCOR) of the International Council for Scientific Unions; Chairman of the Ocean Sciences Board of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council (1978-81); President of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea of 1901 (ICES, 1982-85); and Director of the Institute of Marine Studies, University of Washington (1979-82).

Wooster was the principal founder of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization of 1992 (PICES, for Pacific ICES) and served as its first chairman (1992-96).

He was a fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the American Meteorological Society.

Wooster is survived by Polly, his wife of 60 years, and their three children, Sue, Dana and Dan, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild (and another on the way). A memorial service has been scheduled for Nov. 16 at the University of Washington Club on the University of Washington campus.

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