

Walter Krivda (1932-2018) A Manitoba Naturalist

Walter Vladimir Krivda was born of Ukrainian parents in The Pas, Manitoba in 1932. During his youth, Walter was fascinated with Nature, and could often be found catching insects, pressing plants, picking mushrooms, and wandering through the fields and forests around his home. After graduating from high school in 1952, Walter was hired at the Entomological Research Station in Ottawa. He later pursued his education by attending United College (now the University of Winnipeg) and the University of Ottawa, where he graduated in 1954. He taught in Gillam, Hecla and Virden, Manitoba, and in 1961, became the first Park Naturalist for Riding Mountain National Park, at Wasagaming, Manitoba. In 1965, he transferred to Prince Albert National Park at Waskesiu, Saskatchewan. His next position was with the Canadian Wildlife Service in Edmonton, but he returned to teaching as Supervisor of Extension Services at the Vocational Centre in The Pas (now Keewatin Community College). In 1970, Walter was awarded a Manitoba Centennial Medal by the Manitoba Historical Society for his “contributions to Manitoba in the teaching profession and for his many years of research in natural history and work for museums”. Walter was particularly active with the Sam Waller Museum in The Pas.

Walter was particularly interested in entomology, and over the decades, accumulated vast collections of moths, butterflies, and beetles. Michael Leblanc recalls that Walter came by their house every Thursday night and over tea, crackers and preserves, he would discuss insects, life, and solutions for all of the world’s problems. Walter was always willing to share his knowledge; he loved to teach, and loved entomology and his insect collection. Even in hospital, a few weeks before his death, he was still trying to teach, regaling stories of some of the history of The Pas to Michael’s son Riley during their hospital visit. Even though Riley only met Walter shortly before his death, he knew Walter through the stories his family would tell him. Riley’s love for entomology was enhanced by the knowledge Michael gained from Walter and passed onto him. Walter passed away on 17 September 2018 at the age of 86 years. He will be missed by his many friends in The Pas, and by his natural-history colleagues down south.

(A full obituary is available in the Newsletter of the Entomological Society of Manitoba, 45, (1):7-10, 2019: http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~fields/pg/pdf/Newsletter/ESMnewsletter_V45N1.pdf).

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