

William Arnold Nelson (1918 - 2002)

William Arnold (Bill) Nelson died on October 12, 2002 after a short illness with cancer. He was born in Lethbridge, Alberta on June 24, 1918 where he completed his secondary education. He received his BSc. in chemistry and biological sciences at the University of Alberta in 1944 and MSc and PhD at McGill University in Medical Entomology in 1948 and 1957 respectively. Bill joined the Experimental Farm Service, Canada Department of Agriculture, at Lethbridge in 1941 as a summer student and served in this capacity for two summers. Through 1943 to 1947, Bill was as Agricultural Assistant with The Dominion Entomological Laboratory working on a project on wheat stem sawfly resistance in wheat. In 1948, he transferred to the Livestock Insects Laboratory, which later changed names to Veterinary-Medical Entomology Section and then to Animal Parasitology Section, to conduct research on pests of sheep and cattle. He demonstrated that sheep acquire resistance to keds, this being mediated locally in the skin, and that this resistance response caused economic losses in mutton wool, indicating the necessity for control of the pests. He demonstrated that cattle acquire a similar resistance to sucking lice. Bill's research on host-parasite relationship in livestock pests has been widely recognized and the results have been published in about 30 scientific papers. He co-authored an internationally recognized review of literature on host-parasite relationships. He was invited to lecture at symposiums in Australia, Washington, D. C. and in Canada.



Bill was an avid photographer and loved to travel. He took great interest in the cultural life in Lethbridge. He was a strong supporter of the Lethbridge Symphony and served on the Lethbridge Allied Arts Council. Bill was an active member of the Entomological Society of Alberta and the American Society of Parasitologists and he served as Associate Editor of the Journal of Medical Entomology. He was an Honorary Life Member of the Entomological Society of Alberta, and Honorary Life Member of the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta and a member of the Regional Mental Health Advisory committee. Bill was a lay reader with Anglican Church active in giving communion to residents of nursing homes.

Besides his loving wife Margaret, Bill is survived by his children Kathryn, Murray, and Mark and four grandchildren. Bill will be missed by his family and many friends and colleagues.

— Joe Shemanchuk