

**D**r Michael J. Smirle passed away on 27 July 2014, at his home in Summerland while working in what he affectionately referred to as his Mother's garden. Born in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on 18 June 1954, Mike grew up on the family farm in the nearby village of Bradner. Mike was the only child of Jim and Joan Smirle. While growing up, Mike excelled at piano, academics and basketball. After graduating top all-round student in 1972 from Abbotsford Senior Secondary, Mike began his academic career in the faculty of music at the University of British Columbia (UBC). With the passing of his father in January 1974, Mike took the year to travel extensively with his mother. He returned to UBC in the fall of 1974, this time in the Faculty of Science. It was at UBC, on 5 October 1974, that Mike met Mary-Anne, his wife to be, and they began their journey in life together. Mike graduated from UBC in 1979 with a BSc in Biochemistry, following which he returned to his daffodil farm in Bradner where he worked part time as a lumber grader in the local mill. Tiring of shift work, Mike returned to university, this time at Simon Fraser University (SFU), where he pursued a Masters in Pest Management. While studying under Dr Mark Winston, Mike combined an interest in biochemistry with a love for honey bees cultivated as a child on the family farm. His Master's Thesis "Development of a Sensitive Bioassay for Evaluating Sub-lethal Pesticide Effects on the Honey Bee" was followed by doctoral studies, also at SFU, on the "Insecticide Resistance Mechanisms in the Honey Bee". His doctoral studies earned him a prestigious J.H. Comstock Award, from the Pacific Branch of the Entomological Society of America. Upon completion of his PhD in 1989, Mike worked as a sessional instructor at SFU while undertaking a post-doctoral research fellowship at UBC with Dr Murray Isman. Mike's post-doctoral research focused on the metabolism of secondary plant compounds in phytophagous insects and he examined the mode of action of natural-product insecticides, especially neem oil and other allelochemicals. While working 2 years in the Isman laboratory, Mike published three scientific papers and a significant book chapter "Allomonens in Insect-Plant Interactions", but more importantly he became close friends with Dr Tom Lowery, with whom he formed a long-lasting collaboration for the remainder of his career. On 1 February 1990, Mike's career brought him and the family, which now included his wife Mary-Anne and two sons, James and Jeffery, to their home in Summerland, British Columbia. Mike worked at the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre (PARC) of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) as a respected and valued research scientist until his passing. Working at PARC was like an old home coming as Mike shared his career with no less than eight MPM graduates from SFU and Tom Lowery from UBC. During his 24-plus years at PARC, Mike led a successful research team that focused on insect toxicology and determined the biochemical mechanisms of insecticide resistance,



**Michael James Smirle  
(1954 – 2014)**

knowledge essential for developing strategies to manage resistant pest populations. With his capable technician Cheryl Zurowski always in support, Mike contributed to the development of pest management systems for orchard and grape crops, as well as our understanding of the environmental fate of new insecticides. His collaboration on the CIDA Hebei Dry-Land Farming Project, led to his becoming an Adjunct Professor at the University of Beijing, China. He published 34 papers in peer reviewed journals, 2 book chapters and 58 miscellaneous technical articles during his career. At PARC he served as Head of the Environmental Studies Section for a number of years and for the past 4 years served as the Test Site Manager for the Minor Use Pesticide Program at Summerland run by AAFC's Pest Management Centre. For the past few years, he also led a major research project on spotted wing drosophila (SWD) that brought together research scientists from both AAFC Centres in British Columbia, Agassiz and Summerland. Regulatory agencies such as the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) sought out Mike for his expertise; as well, he was approached for numerous consultations on SWD. Co-workers at PARC would look to Mike for assistance on many issues as he had a seemingly infinite amount of patience and a calming presence. His ability to bring together disparate individuals into productive groups will be greatly missed. Mike was a longtime member of the Entomological Societies of Canada (ESC) and British Columbia (ESBC). He served as an Associate Editor to *The Canadian Entomologist* (2006 – 2014) and on the Editorial Board of *Biopesticides International* (2004 – 2014). He was President of the ESBC at the time of his passing. Outside of his work Mike's greatest joy was spending time with his boys and their friends. Mike loved every moment that he spent on the sidelines of local soccer pitches and track and field venues, attending his sons' high school plays or, most especially, cheering on James and Jeff at the hockey rink, watching them thrive and grow into the incredible young men they are today. Mike's lifelong love of music allowed him to share his talents as a regular organist at Holy Child Parish and singing with the Mosaic Vocal Ensemble during his years in Summerland. It comes as a shock when the entomological community loses one of its valued scientists. This tragedy is compounded when that scientist is also a great human being, and a close friend for over 30 years - Mike was all of these things. He will be dearly missed by everyone fortunate enough to have known him.

Gary Judd, with input from Tom Lowery and Kenna MacKenzie  
AAFC Summerland