PHILIP SHAW BARKER
(1933 – 2009)

ENTOMOLOGICAL CAREER, RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Dr. Philip Barker passed away on May 3, 2009 at the age of seventy-five. Phil was a long time honorary member of the Entomological Society of Manitoba, and active contributor to the society serving as President (1970) and Editor (1971-1972, 1975-1982). For over thirty years he was a Research Scientist working as an entomologist in Winnipeg at the Cereal Research Centre of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Phil's career is remembered in the Newsletter of the Entomological Society of Manitoba, 2009, 36(1): 7-8, and the Bulletin of the Entomological Society of Canada, 2011, 43(1): 38-39.

Phil was born in Mexico to an English family, but received early schooling in Spanish in Chile and Argentina. His first entomological work was at the Rockefeller Institute in Mexico. From there he went to the University of California, Berkeley and completed his M.Sc. thesis on the biology of strawberry whitefly in 1960. His Ph.D. thesis on the basis of DDT-resistance was completed in 1965 at McGill University. Phil then moved to Winnipeg to begin his career in stored product entomology for the Department of Agriculture, publishing the first of many papers on chemical control of mite and insect pests of stored grain in 1966. During most of his career, Phil focussed his research on the biology of mites living on stored grain and the chemical control of mites and insect pests of stored grain, particularly control by chemical fumigants. He produced over 50 publications on these topics.

Phil may have saved his best work for last, at least as far as those of us who work on field crop entomology are concerned. Forever inquisitive, Phil developed a special interest in the wheat midge just before his retirement. Initially he charted the first serious outbreak of the pest in Manitoba, and then began investigating the distribution of larvae on wheat spikes. He obtained samples of wheat spikes from breeding plots to investigate the ups and downs in levels of infestation at the research farm at Glenlea. Phil was capable of spending hours on painstaking dissections, listening all the while to German opera or polka music. He routinely received small sheaves of wheat from Ron McKenzie, a wheat breeder at the centre. As a result of a lifetime of looking at wheat seeds, Phil soon noticed a curious tendency in some winter wheat lines to produce short, misshapen seeds that he called 'tubbies'. Even more interesting, wheat

midge larvae were absent from these wheat lines. Phil had discovered a previously unknown source of resistance to wheat midge in a few lines of wheat. His discovery led to the characterization of the resistance and ultimately the registration of spring wheat cultivars with resistance to the wheat midge. These resistant wheat cultivars will result in the saving of tens of millions of dollars annually for wheat growers in western Canada, and other parts of the world. From the time of his retirement until near the end of his life, Phil returned to the laboratory almost daily, spending his time dissecting 1,000's of wheat spikes a year, screening breeding lines for resistance.

But to those of us who worked with Phil, he was much more than his scientific achievements. He was a study of contrasts and contradictions. He was an Englishman born in Mexico who spoke impeccable Spanish, an avid rugby player as a youth who, because of his size, played American football during his early university days at Berkeley until it interfered in his studies. He was an early advocate of the application of statistical methods in entomology, but disdained computers and preferred his treasured programmable calculator. A lover of warm weather, he preferred to live in one of the coldest cities in Canada, and could not fathom not wearing long underwear for at least six months of the year. An amazing linguist, Phil decided to learn German during his retirement so he could better enjoy Oktoberfest. His knowledge of German went along with his three other languages English, Spanish and French. For Phil, there was no better way to learn the essence of a language than through its musical heritage. Soon after his granddaughter Kassandra was born, Phil took on the challenge of learning Chinese so he could better communicate with the parents of his daughter-in-law. His knowledge of languages was also put to good entomological use; he happily translated German and French research papers as a favour to his colleagues whenever asked.

Phil relished the chance to point out the inanities of the world through the medium of comics. He especially liked Calvin and Hobbes. Then later came his "Laws of Mistakes" and "Thoughts about Fools", or the timeless words of Rudyard Kipling. Codes or more specifically the history of cryptography became a later passion. He often ordered utterly obscure books on old but not forgotten code methodology, books that no doubt in the past would warrant a visit from the cloak-and-dagger types. He loved to share his current interests with his work mates. We all still miss his booming cheerful voice as he greeted people each morning as he proceeded to his corner of the lab, his microscope, and the boxes of wheat spikes.

Phil's death resulted from complications from intestinal and liver cancer that he lived with without complaint for nearly two years. He is survived by his wife Joan Barker, sons Douglas (Bei) and Michael (Corinne), daughter Suzanne (David), and granddaughter Kassandra.

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