

**Memorial Resolution for John Edwin Dallman**  
**30 May 1930 – 2 September 2019**

John Dallman received his Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1953. After a two-year stint in the United States Army Transportation Corps, he returned and received his Master of Science Degree in Anthropology in 1958. From 1956 to 1959, John worked as the Curator of Exhibits at the State Historical Society Museum. In 1959, John began working as the UW Zoology Department Visual Aids Illustrator. In that position, he was also enthusiastically involved in the activities of the UW Zoological Museum. In 1977, under the supervision of Professor David A. Baerreis, John completed his Ph.D. in Anthropology, with a study of food habits and dietary caloric intake of native peoples in northwestern Iowa. After completing his degree and working closely with the Museum, he eventually became a Zoological Museum Curator in charge of the Paleontology collection and collector and curator of scientific instruments formerly used in research projects or UW class instruction.

As Museum Curator, John retrieved a number of late Pleistocene mammals from excavation sites in Wisconsin. Here is a story relayed by Kandis Elliot, a former graduate student in the Department of Zoology and currently UW Artist Emerita:

“One day, John and a number of staff, grad students and other helpers were on the site of a mastodon dig. John had discovered the exact site by driving a probe deep into the edge of a cornfield with such strength as to drive the probe through the skull of a mastodon several feet down in the clay. Because of the swampy ground, a fairly powerful sump pump was required to keep the hole from filling with water as the dig went deeper and deeper, uncovering a mastodon’s skull, leg bones, pelvis, ribs, everything but the big long tusks. The process took several days. When each day was over, John would pick up the cast-iron sump pump—about the size of a lawnmower—and carry it back to the car on his shoulder. On one of these migrations, the farmer, whose field was giving up the mastodon, came up to John to talk about things. John had the pump on his shoulder, and he politely fielded questions about (we suspected) how all this fossil business played against the biblical great flood. Not wanting to get banished from the dig by spewing blasphemy, John was trying to reconcile a biblical 5000-year-old-Earth with a receding glacier 10,000 years ago. For ten minutes this went on, with the pump on John’s shoulder. Onlookers started to be less interested in the discussion than how long John could hold the pump. Eventually he moved it to the other shoulder. At some time we suspected the farmer was also more interested as to how long John could hold the pump, and prolonged the discussion to find out. After at least twenty minutes John finally moved the pump onto a nearby fence post and balanced it there. The farmer then was either satisfied with John’s answer, or lost interest now that the pump was no longer on his shoulder, and we all finally got back to the cars and left. I’m guessing the pump weighed at least 100 pounds. The mastodon, complete with a hole in its skull, now resides in the UW Zoological Museum.”

Not only did John excavate large animals, but he buried them as well. Many years ago, a white rhinoceros died at a local zoo. Per usual protocol, the specimen was offered to the Museum. After making arrangements with the local tow truck company to deliver the rhino on a flat-bed tow truck, John asked UW Grounds to dig a hole with a backhoe and the rhino was buried in a quiet place on the University campus. A number of years later, the flesh having decayed, the rhinoceros was excavated and its skeleton was added to the collection. Because of the success of this process, an elephant and a giraffe were also buried and later excavated by John on University property.

Although respected as a serious scholar with several publications in Anthropology, John was also well known for his ingenious biological April Fools exhibits which appeared annually in a display case in Zoology buildings. John was an experienced lecturer, skilled wood worker, accomplished artist in two and three dimensional art, calligrapher, clock repairman and an all round department craftsman.

After his retirement in 1992, John's commitment to the University continued. He was a regular volunteer at the Zoological Museum until a few years before his death.

*Assistance in preparation was provided by many former colleagues of John Dallman and respectfully submitted by Laura Monahan, Curator of Collections, University of Wisconsin Zoological Museum.*