
**Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Robert Raymond Kowal**

Robert R. Kowal passed away on August 3, 2015 at the age of 76. Bob was a valued Professor of Botany at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1971-1997. He was widely known for expertise in cytotaxonomy and numerical taxonomy of plants (particularly Compositae and the genus *Packera*) and recognized for having trained a number of current authorities in the field of plant systematics.

Bob Kowal was born on April 23, 1939 in Paterson, New Jersey, where he developed a love of nature as a young boy. He pursued his interests in plant science and mathematics as a college student at Cornell University where he graduated as class valedictorian. Bob continued at Cornell as a graduate student, advised by the eminent ecologist Robert T. Clausen, earning a doctoral degree in plant taxonomy and ecology. Bob held a post-doctoral fellowship in biomathematics at North Carolina State University from 1967-69, then served as visiting assistant professor in biology at Kansas State University from 1969-71, and thereafter joined the Botany faculty at the UW-Madison.

A dedicated teacher, for many years Bob taught a high-enrollment introductory botany course, where his creative methods stimulated a generation of plant biology students. Bob was not too dignified to smash plant pots to dramatically exhibit root systems, or pin a host of balloons to his clothes to illustrate how fruitlets together form aggregate fruits such as those of blackberry. Bob also taught diverse advanced plant courses that influenced many undergraduate majors and graduate students. For years, graduate students flocked to him and pressed him into service as a thesis committee member for his strong expertise in biostatistics and consistently constructive and insightful advice on experimental design and interpreting results. Everyone in the department knew to go to Bob for instruction on imaging plant chromosomes, help with Latin names and descriptions of new species.

His departmental colleagues greatly appreciated Bob's long and attentive service as the chair of the Greenhouses and Garden Committee. This not only supported teaching and research but also attracted appreciative interest from the public, promoting both his department and the university at large. Bob also invited visits to his remarkable home garden collection of daylilies and hostas and generously shared cuttings from his plants with colleagues and neighbors. He welcomed students and friends to share his time and home where they appreciated deep discussions of botany, conservation issues, and life in general.

Bob Kowal will be remembered by many as an accomplished intellectual yet also a kind and humble person who illuminated his academic and personal surroundings.