

A Tribute to Dr. Jack Vallentyne



Dr. Jack Vallentyne (aka Johnny Biosphere), died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Hamilton on Saturday, June 16th, of colon cancer. Although he had severe intestinal problems for the last five months, his cancer was diagnosed only recently. After cremation, his ashes will be scattered in the Laurentian Great Lakes (Lake Superior) which he loved and cared for immensely. He is survived by his wife, Ann, children, Peter, Stephen, Jane, Anne-Marie, and Geoffrey, and grandchildren, Jade, Corben, Spencer, Jenna, and Tessa.

Dr. Vallentyne was well known globally for his anti-eutrophication and phosphorus abatement campaigns, well documented in his book *The Algal Bowl* (1974). His campaign resulted in the reduction of phosphorus in laundry detergents. Furthermore, he had tremendous influence on the revision of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) by developing and implementing the 'ecosystem approach' in the management of the Great Lakes and emphasizing the need to think holistically and globally. He had a distinguished career in the environmental conservation, restoration and management of aquatic resources. Dr. Vallentyne served as the head of the Eutrophication Section at the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg and was the architect of the world renowned ELA (Experimental Lakes Area) research program. He was responsible for recruiting a group of talented scientists from around the world including Drs. David Schindler, Kaz Patalas, Mitsuru Sakamoto, Gregg Brunskill, Stephen Holmgren and Andy Hamilton.

Prior to joining the Department of Fisheries, Dr. Vallentyne was a Ph.D. student of George Evelyn Hutchinson at Yale, one of the last renaissance men of wisdom. Hutchinson's students formed a biogeochemical think tank that changed the path of ecology and whole earth science. Jack served as an Assistant Professor in Biology at Queen's University; a Fellow of the Carnegie Institution of Washington Geophysical Laboratory; and a very young professor of zoology at Cornell University.

He taught everything from biogeochemistry to statistical ecology, evolutionary biology, cosmochemistry, origin of life, and even began a revolutionary pub lecture series for grad students. He worked on amino acids in meteorites and moon rocks and Silurian halite crystal liquid inclusions, Pleistocene pigments in sediment cores, and the statistics of roulette and poker games. He also spent a year in Pallanza, Italy with the limnological Tonolli family.

Dr. Vallentyne established the first biological laboratory (Fisheries Research Board Detachment) on the Canadian side of Great Lakes at CCIW in Burlington and recruited Dr. R.A. Vollenweider, another renowned scientist, to organize a lake wide biological program on Lakes Ontario and Erie for the first time. Later he served as a senior scientist at the Department of Fisheries & Oceans until his retirement. He also served as the Canadian Co-chair of Science Advisory Board (International Joint Commission). Since his arrival at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters (CCIW) in Burlington, Dr. Vallentyne actively promoted the "ecosystem approach" to research, environmental conservation and education by initiating seminar series, Science Citizen Committee, and yearly environment week celebrations including programs for the public and visits to elementary schools. Jack's passion for drama and theatre were evident in his public awareness programs, which included the popular characters "Professor Trout" and "Johnny Biosphere", which he skilfully conducted to communicate with the public especially with children. In order to recognize his landmark contributions to world science the Aquatic Ecosystem Health & Management Society (AEHMS) established a "J.R.Vallentyne Lecture Series" in 1997 at its biennial conferences which are delivered by distinguished scientists. Up until his death, he paid regular visits to CCIW and was busy preparing a presentation for the upcoming SIL Congress in Montreal as well as a co-authoring a book on eutrophication with David Schindler. Dr. Vallentyne has left a rich legacy with far reaching implications for the improvement of ecosystem and human health. The biosphere will miss "Johnny" greatly.

In keeping with Jack's life-long work on promoting environmental awareness, donations may be sent to Greenpeace or other environmental organizations.

