



## Llewellyn M. "Doc" Ehrhart

April 22, 1942 - March 3, 2022

Llewellyn (Llew) Ehrhart Jr., known by many as "Doc," was born in Dallastown, Pennsylvania, on April 22, 1942, and died at home in Oviedo, Florida, on March 3, 2022. He was 79. He is survived by his twin daughters, Ashley Ehrhart (Oviedo) and Samantha "Mandy" Silver (husband Andrew, Winter Springs). He was preceded in death by his parents, Thelma and Llewellyn Ehrhart Sr., his brother, Wendell, and his beloved wife of 53 years, Carol.

A son of small-town grocery store owners, Doc met Carol at church camp when they were 13 years old, and they were married upon his graduation from Franklin & Marshall College. The two then moved to Ithaca, NY, where Doc pursued his PhD in zoology at Cornell University. After five bitter winters, they moved to Florida so Doc could continue his small mammal studies as a faculty member at the newly minted Florida Technological University (now UCF). But when he encountered the enormous sea turtles nesting on the beaches of Kennedy Space Center, he knew he'd found his calling.

During more than 30 years as a UCF professor and researcher, Doc developed the university's respected marine turtle research program. And, after countless late nights tagging turtles on the beach and early mornings surveying nests with his devoted students, Doc (call sign: "Rattlesnake") considered it the accomplishment of a lifetime when data from his project was

instrumental in the establishment of the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge in 1991. Today, the refuge's 20 miles of coastline, stretching from Melbourne Beach to Wabasso Beach along Florida's east coast, have seen a dramatic resurgence of threatened and endangered species, and host about one quarter of all sea turtle nesting in the United States.

Doc was a life-long swimmer, who in recent years turned to bicycling, enjoying nothing more than biking all around Oviedo and adjacent Black Hammock, greeting neighbors and counting species of native vertebrates he encountered along the way. He was in all things a traditionalist yet a groundbreaker, a naturalist and a conservationist, a field biologist who enjoyed getting dirty but cleaned up well, a teller of one particularly bad joke that only he thought was hilarious, and a much-loved husband, father, teacher, mentor, and friend.

The family is planning a private memorial celebration of Doc's life, with details to be determined.

The family of Llewellyn (Llew) Ehrhart Jr. invites you to leave a message of condolence on the Tribute Wall created in his loving memory.

# Tribute Wall



“*Doc was my teacher, advisor, committee member, but most of all - a dear friend. He opened up a whole new world for so many of us through sharing his perspective and showing his respect of nature. His passion shone through as he mesmerized us students with detailed accounts of the evolution of the rattlesnake fang or the zoogeography of the seals. And the stories of all things sea turtle. Memories of his passion and energy make me smile. Doc- I dearly miss you. There are no words that can express what losing you means to me and so many others. We hold you in our hearts and smile whenever we think of you. I think that's what you would have liked.*

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**Karen Holloway-Adkins** - March 29, 2022 at 11:38 AM

AM

“*Doc gave me an opportunity for which I will be forever grateful. During the mid 1970s, I applied to many graduate schools with no success. My grades were quite good, but my GRE scores were not, a cause for rejection from most universities. I was about to give up on an academic career when a friend of friend told me about assistantships available at UCF (then FTU) to work with sea turtles & gave me a phone number to call Dr. Ehrhart. He was willing to look beyond my GRE scores & offered me an assistantship to work on a master's degree. It was an opportunity that changed my life. I learned so much from him, especially in his herpetology & mammalogy classes, & this knowledge I still use today. Surprisingly, I can still name ten families of carnivores. In the past few years, I have attended two reunions of the UCF Biology Department, & it was such a pleasure to talk with Doc again at these events. I know he will be missed by all who knew him.*

*Angie McGehee*

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**Angie McGehee** - March 22, 2022 at 04:49 PM

LT

“As a little girl, I looked up to my older Ehrhart cousins- softball games among the “cow paddies” on Levere’s farm, family times together. My grandson is now studying marine science and “Little Llewelyn “ is an inspiration!

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**Linda Sechrist Thomas** - March 21, 2022 at 09:28 AM

JS

“Llew was first an admirable human being. He was a valued colleague at UCF, and then, with his family, a treasured part of our lives. He led us to birds, to turtles, and to endless aspects of Nature. His contributions to the preservation the natural world were a gift to all of us.

*Joan and Harry Smith*

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**Joan and Harry Smith** - March 16, 2022 at 07:32 PM

SC

“ I worked on the UCF Marine Turtle crew for a couple years in the late 90s. So many memories. It was difficult but rewarding work. I will cherish those memories forever. I also took a very tough vert zoo class with Doc and learned so much. He was a wonderful teacher. We did an overnight south of New Smyrna. Fun times. Looked for rattlesnakes, got poison ivy instead.

*I recall how personable Doc was. He bought donuts for us after morning surveys. We also did the lagoon and reef on the boat. I will always remember when we pulled so many bull sharks on a net retrieve. Rick handled the brunt of that. And when Brady Barr brought the Nat Geo crew. We had that satellite transmitter week with no sleep. Very intense. The sawfish!*

*Then there was egg inventory. We won't get too detailed about that. Kinda smelly.*

*I love you Doc. I will always cherish the grueling sea turtle work and your vert zoo class. I was so sad to hear you had left us.*

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**Scott Chase** - March 16, 2022 at 12:07 AM

NF

“ Ashley, Samantha and Andy

*Your dad leaves behind many memories and achievements and hopefully they will be of comfort to you during this time and always.*

*Sincerely,*

*Nancy & Dwayne Fielder*

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**Nancy & Dwayne Fielder** - March 15, 2022 at 07:59 AM

VA

“ *Such a beautiful life Uncle Doc's was and the impact he had on so many. My heart is with you all as you grieve his loss here in Earth. Peace & Hugs, Valerie (Ehrhart) Smyder*



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**Valerie** - March 14, 2022 at 06:52 PM

PR

“ *I was one of hundreds of UCF students that had the great fortune of knowing and loving Doc. He was a great man that inspired everyone that came in contact with him. He altered the course, mindset and careers of so many. He was a true conservationist with unwavering passion for sea turtles and small mammals. We will miss you my friend. Are you a turtle?*

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**Paul Raymond** - March 14, 2022 at 06:05 PM

PS

“ *We met Doc and Carol when Andy and Samantha were just thinking about getting married. My husband and I were so impressed. Over the years we've shared many dinners and boat excursions together. I will always remember the times on the James river with Doc at the controls of the boat showing all four of my grandchildren (on different vacations) all of the wonderful birds and gators and turtles that they would never have seen if he wasn't there to point them all out and explain what they were. I will miss his presence greatly. I wish nothing but the best for Ashley , Samantha and Andy And join you in your sorrow.*

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**Pam Silver** - March 14, 2022 at 05:57 PM