

Don and Carol Harper Scholarships in Marine Invertebrate Zoology

Established in 2013 by Donald E. Harper, Jr.

The scholarships established in the names of me and my late wife, Carol, are my way of giving back. Texas A&M was very good to me!

I was accepted into graduate school on probation after having compiled a less-than-stellar undergraduate record, but one which I improved dramatically after I figured out how to study. I got a very good education under the mentorship of the faculty at TAMU, especially from Dr. J.G. Mackin, Dr. Sewell H. Hopkins, and Dr. Merrill Sweet. For the last three years of my Ph.D. work, I was awarded a NASA Traineeship which allowed me to really concentrate on my research.

After spending 5 years as an itinerant biologist, working on multiple research projects, I accepted a position as Assistant Professor at what became Texas A&M University at Galveston (then known as Moody College of Texas A&M). I spent 31 years there – teaching, conducting research, and working for the betterment of the University – and gradually worked my way up to Professor of Marine Biology. My university service included 2 stints as Department Head, and I also chaired several committees. I was a member of the Scholarships and Awards Committee for 7 years, including 5yrs as chair of the committee. The principal thing that distressed me as we decided on awards was that there very few scholarships in marine biology.

As a result, when I became financially able, I began establishing scholarships for Marine Biology students, both undergraduate and graduate, who had demonstrated financial need. I have been rewarded by letters of appreciation from students who have received these scholarships. I only wish my wife had lived long enough to read the letters. She very much enjoyed interacting with students and helped host many events at our home in Galveston.

Don Harper