

## IN MEMORIAM

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### PIERCE BRODKORB, 1908 - 1992

William Pierce Brodkorb, retired Professor of Zoology at the University of Florida and Honorary Member of the Florida Ornithological Society, passed away quietly on 18 July 1992 in Gainesville. He was born in Chicago on 29 September 1908, and he received his A.B. from the University of Illinois in 1933 and his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Michigan in 1936.

Brodkorb was fascinated by birds since early childhood. His first contact with professionals was at the Field Museum of Natural History where, as a teenager, he was taught how to prepare specimens by collector Colin Campbell Sanborn and where he worked as a staff technician under the influence of H. B. Conover and C. E. Hellmayr. Brodkorb received his Ph.D. degree under the direction of Josselyn Van Tyne and afterwards continued at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology as a curator until he joined the Army Air Force in 1943. In 1946, he became a member of the faculty at the University of Florida where he remained until his retirement on 29 December 1989.

In the 1950s, Brodkorb shifted the focus of his research from living birds to fossil birds. An inveterate collector, he spent much of the early years of this work field collecting fossils from numerous sites in Florida; and, over the next 40 years, he assembled (and was the principal preparator of) one of the largest reference collections of bird skeletons in the world. The collections he bequeathed to the University of Florida included about 12,500 skeletons from 129 families and 3700 study skins from 122 avian families, in addition to literally uncounted thousands of avian fossils from Florida localities.

Brodkorb was a highly productive scholar and published nearly 200 scientific papers. Perhaps his greatest work was the monumental *Catalogue of Fossil Birds*, which was issued in five parts between 1963 and 1978. He was active in professional societies and was a dedicated supporter of the Florida Academy of Sciences having served as editor of the *Quarterly Journal* from 1963 to 1972. In September 1985, in Lyon, France, Brodkorb proposed the creation of a society that would bring together those who study fossil birds. He was thus instrumental in the formation of the Society of Avian Paleontology and Evolution (S.A.P.E.), which held its second international meeting in his honor.

Brodkorb directed to the completion of their degrees 18 masters students and 18 doctoral students — both of us were doctoral students of his. Brodkorb taught through example letting his students take the lead in their own research and leaving them to their own drive to succeed.

Brodkorb received many awards, among which was Honorary Membership in the Florida Ornithological Society in 1982. He was named Florida Scientist of the Year by the Florida Academy of Sciences in 1970. He was elected a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1958; and, in 1978, he received the Union's highest honor, the Brewster Award.

Additional biographical information about Pierce Brodkorb is available from these sources: *Papers in Avian Paleontology Honoring Pierce Brodkorb* by K. E. Campbell, Jr., ed. (1992); *The Auk* 96: 212 (1979); and the *Fla. Field Nat.* 10: 63-64 (1982). A memoriam will appear in *The Auk* in the near future.—**Glen E. Woolfenden**, Department of Biology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620, and **Diana G. Matthiesen**, Department of Zoology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.