



ROBERT M. MENGEL, 1921-1990
(From a photograph taken in 1986)

IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT M. MENGEL

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Robert Morrow Mengel, Member of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1938, Elective Member since 1951, Fellow since 1965, Editor of *The Auk*, 1963-1967, and Editor of AOU Monographs, 1970-1974, died in Lawrence, Kansas, on 15 January 1990, at the age of 68.

He was born in Glenview, Kentucky, a suburb of Louisville, on 19 August 1921. He attended public grade schools and Male High School in Louisville and then attended The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, from 1937 until his graduation in 1940. He joined the Wilson Society in 1937 and the AOU in 1938 while at The Hill School. He entered Cornell University in 1940. In 1942 he joined the U.S. Army Air Force, where he served in the Army Airways Communications System, spending 21 months in Libya, Egypt, and Arabia. He left the service as a sergeant in 1946, completed his undergraduate degree at Cornell in 1947, and then began graduate school at the University of Michigan. Bob took a position as University Research Associate at the University of Kansas in 1953, became Curator-in-Charge, Ornithology and As-

sociate Professor, Systematics and Ecology in 1967, and was promoted to Professor in 1971.

Bob was attracted to birds from childhood, an enthusiasm encouraged by his mother, who was also very interested in natural history. Ever the collector, he saved much of his earliest watercolor work, including several carefully constructed booklets, each page with its animal painting accompanied by a short formal description and an imaginative discourse on its behavior.

When Bob's mother died in 1934, Bob was 13 years old and was already keeping his first written records of birds. By the time he met Burt Monroe Sr. in 1936, such records had become habitual. Bob was being raised by relatives by then, his father having been in a sanatorium for several years. Burt quickly became Bob's ornithological mentor and substitute father. Burt acquainted Bob with ornithology at the national level, introducing him to Albert F. Ganier, then the senior statesman of Tennessee ornithology, and to George Miksch Sutton.

Bob and I met as freshmen at Cornell, where

we took Arthur A. Allen's introductory ornithology class in spring, 1941. We spent as much time in the field as we could spare from classes, and then a bit more. One May morning we visited the famous Taughannock Falls peregrines, which made an impression on me that remains vivid today, though the Taughannock aerie has been vacant for half a century.

On one excursion from Ithaca in spring, 1942, Ernest (Buck) Edwards, Dwain Warner, Bob, and I—end-to-end some 25 linear feet of people packed into Bob's Ford coupe—spent a week collecting herps, mice, and birds in central Florida. Bob was our leader on this trip. He had been there before and he owned the car. I remember best a salt marsh on Merritt Island, near Titusville, dotted with male Dusky Seaside Sparrows defending their territories. Snakes always had a special appeal to Bob and, on our trip home, writhing cloth sacks on the back shelf of the car entertained gas station attendants.

On his return to Cornell after World War II, he met Jane Strahan and they married shortly after he graduated in 1947. Bob and I both received generous and unjustified credits from Cornell for courses taken in Army training, and we headed off to graduate school at the University of Michigan inadequately trained in physical sciences and math, although rich in field biology in the old Cornell tradition. Neither of us ever quite made up the lost ground.

Bob's major professor at the University of Michigan was Josselyn Van Tyne, who approved for a Ph.D. project Bob's continuing study of the birds of Kentucky, probably an unwise decision because of the size of the project. After Van Tyne's death in 1957, William H. Burt suggested that the thesis consist only of the biogeographic and ecological analysis of Kentucky birds, leaving the massive species accounts for later. Thus, with Professor Burt as his major advisor, Bob received his Ph.D. in 1958. "The Birds of Kentucky" (xvi + 581 pp.) was published in 1965, AOU Monograph No. 3, with pp. 6–136 based on the dissertation. Because many readers have come to expect little biological information from "state bird books," this much cited and praised work might have been even more useful if entitled "Ecology and biogeography of birds of Kentucky."

When Bob began his duties at the University of Kansas, he was charged with preparation of

a scholarly bibliography of the internationally known Ralph Ellis Library of Ornithological Literature. Two volumes (A–D) have been published (1972, 1983) by University of Kansas Publications, Library Series, and a third (E–G) will soon be in press. Mengel's Ellis bibliography is a standard reference in rare book rooms of major libraries and in antiquarian bookshops worldwide.

Bob and Jane were divorced in 1958. They had no children. In 1963 he married Marion Anne Jenkinson and they adopted a four-year-old girl in 1971. Teaching duties in the Department of Zoology and curatorial work in the Museum of Natural History occupied increasing amounts of Bob's time as a Research Associate and, variously, Instructor and Lecturer in Zoology. By this circuitous route, he arrived at a full professorship, thereby finishing his career in exactly the sort of job he had aimed for, museum curation with some teaching involvement. In their curatorial work Robert and Marion worked together so effectively that everyone close to the Kansas scene knows that she is equally responsible for the status of the University of Kansas bird collections today, which are among the best in this country in facilities, organization, computerization, and general usefulness.

Bob once described himself as an "ornithologist interested in ecology and systematics with some expertise in other areas," a remarkable understatement of his scholarly accomplishments. He was exceptionally diverse in his interests and produced excellent scholarship across the range of his work. His initial interest in ecological analysis of Kentucky birds in particular and Appalachian avifaunas more generally led to a systematically oriented interest in the evolutionary history of wood warblers, resulting in his much cited 1964 paper on this topic in "The Living Bird." His area of interest was thereby enlarged to temperate and boreal North America, particularly historical faunistics and speciation events. One odd offspring of his long interest in the history of the northern plains and Rocky Mountains was a 1968 paper on Comanche, a U.S. cavalry horse that was the only living thing found on the battlefield after Custer's stand at the Little Big Horn. Comanche is still on display in the K.U. Museum of Natural History.

Intermittently, Bob worked with fossil birds

and, as coauthor, he described one new genus and three new species. He devoted considerable attention, with others, to the behavioral ecology of caprimulgids, particularly the Chuckwill's-widow. His substantial 1971 paper on dog-coyote hybrids in the *Journal of Mammalogy*, based primarily on hybrid litters raised in his own home, attracted much attention. His publications began in 1937 with notes in "The Kentucky Warbler" and will end with the appearance of the next volume of the Ellis bibliography, 117 titles in all.

Excellent critical judgment, artistic skills, and eloquence put Bob in demand as a reviewer. His thirty reviews provided more latitude for his considerable literary skills than did his technical papers, and his reviews were adornments to the journals in which they appeared.

Authors of papers published in *The Auk* during the five years of his editorship, 1963–1967, will remember not only the skill and scholarship he brought to improving manuscripts, but also the entertaining and thoughtful correspondence that was a by-product. In addition to editing AOU Monographs from 1970–1974, Bob was also Associate Editor of *The Wilson Bulletin*, 1954–1955; Academic Editor, University of Kansas Museum of Natural History, Miscellaneous Publications, 1981–1987; and Special Editor for the "Festschrift" for R. W. Wilson, 1984, Carnegie Museum of Natural History Special Publication 9. In some of these endeavors he was aided by Marion, in Bob's words "the best editor I have ever known."

Bob also served the AOU as Councillor (1968–1970, 1972–1974), as chair of the Archives Committee (1982–1988), as member and chair of the Brewster Memorial Award committee, 1967–1968, and in many other ways. He was a member of the Wilson Ornithological Society, the Cooper Ornithological Society, a life member of the Kentucky Ornithological Society, the Kansas Ornithological Society, and for many years the British Ornithologists' Union, as well as a number of other professional societies.

Bob was already a serious watercolor painter of birds when we first met at Cornell in 1940. He studied informally under George Sutton while they were both at Cornell and Michigan. While Bob marveled at the realism and detail in Sutton's work, and especially in the work of Sutton's mentor, Louis Fuertes, his own style was different—less feather-by-feather detail,

more impressionistic, yet faithful to the structure and behavior of birds. Ralph Palmer's "Handbook of North American Birds" has the largest collection of Mengel's paintings in one work; "The Birds of Kentucky" and the recent "Guide to Bird-finding in Kansas and Western Missouri," by Zimmerman and Patti (University of Kansas Press, 1988) also contain many illustrations by Bob. Other color plates and illustrations appeared in *Auk*, *Condor*, *Living Bird*, *Audubon*, and elsewhere over the past 40 years, but in total his published work is only a small part of his lifetime production.

Few ornithologists know of Bob's devotion to landscape painting, which took much of his attention in the last half of his career. I know of none of his landscapes, per se, that has been published, but those that hang in his home are beautiful. He felt most honored on the several occasions when his watercolors were included in juried art shows, judged without respect to anything dealing with birds. He eloquently expressed his scholarly perspective on natural history art in his 1980 paper "Beauty and the beast: natural history and art," in *Living Bird*.

Bob became interested in fly fishing around 1955 and this innocuous hobby quickly became a serious passion, which he pursued from the Rocky Mountain states to Alaska to England. He became skilled at tying flies, as well as catching fish, taught fly fishing courses several times at the University of Kansas, and eventually produced an unpublished book-length manuscript on fly fishing, written with his characteristic storytelling flair. His relentless focus on the capture of individual fish may be an impediment to its publication, but the manuscript has some lovely chapters.

Bob's brilliant mind, conversational wit, and sometimes his sharp tongue endeared him to his friends but must surely have intimidated dull students and stodgy colleagues. His friends will remember him especially as a great storyteller. He never forgot an old favorite, nor did he hesitate to embellish a tale that needed improvement. I resist the temptation to repeat any of his stories here because I could not do them justice, but they often come to mind. There was the account of his brief but glorious possession of his first BB gun, confiscated for the pain and outrage it caused Mrs. R., who lived next door and liked to garden. And the time that he dropped his Leica into a trout stream, and then

dismantled it and drove furiously through the Montana countryside, holding it out the car window until it dried. He was a walking library of tales from the years when E. Raymond Hall was at the helm of the K.U. Museum.

My last visit with Bob was in September 1989, shortly after his return to Lawrence from a fishing trip to Montana. Though he was weak and painfully thin by then, he decided that the fishing had been so enjoyable that there was no good reason not to go right back for more, which

he did. These pleasurable ventures were made possible by Marion's strength and unfailing support during the long course of his illness, which consisted of three different cancers, all apparently tobacco-induced.

Bob was a warm friend and a remarkably talented colleague. We miss him.

I am grateful to Harold Mayfield, Kenneth Parkes, Jean Tordoff, and Glen Woolfenden for help.

IN MEMORIAM: KONRAD LORENZ, 1903–1989

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Konrad Zacharias Lorenz died of kidney failure on 27 February 1989, in Vienna, the city where he was born on 7 November 1903. Internationally renowned as an authority on animal behavior, he received many honors, crowned by the Nobel Prize for physiology and medicine in 1973. He shared the prize with Karl von Frisch and his close friend and fellow ornithologist, Niko Tinbergen. He became a member of the AOU in 1938 and was elected an Honorary Fellow in 1951. Together, he and Tinbergen founded the subdiscipline of ethology, destined to have a profound effect on the scientific study of animals in general and birds in particular. The best known of his ornithological studies were on ducks and geese, especially the Graylag Goose. He became imprinted on Graylags as a small boy, watching their migration down the Danube, near his family home at Altenberg, a grand villa built by his father, Adolph Lorenz. The other bird that qualifies as a totem animal for Lorenz is the Jackdaw. His pioneering studies of the ethology of social corvids (1931, 1935) first became known to the English-speaking world in the translation of "The companion of the bird's world" by Margaret Morse Nice, published in *The Auk* in 1937. In the second volume of her classic studies of "The life history of the Song Sparrow," published in 1943, Nice related many of Lorenz's observations and theories, and applied them

creatively in interpreting the behavior of songbirds. Greatly influenced by the work of his mentor, Oskar Heinroth, and his massive, four-volume "Die Vögel Mitteleuropas" (1924–1933), Lorenz was more of an aviculturalist than a bird-watcher. He raised many bird species himself and was a gold mine of information on avian behavior and its development. He viewed ontogeny as a product of the interplay between instinct and experience, one of the best illustrations of which, even today, is the phenomenon of imprinting in galliforms and anatids.

Lorenz was a controversial figure throughout his life. To fellow ethologists, lucky enough to participate in the International Ethological Congresses in the fifties and sixties, he was a constant, sociable but authoritarian source of support and inspiration. The Max-Planck-Institut für Verhaltensphysiologie, created for Lorenz and Erich von Holst in Bavaria in 1950, became a mecca for everyone involved in the new science of ethology. Lorenz was always deeply concerned with the methodology and philosophy of biology, and the implications of ethology for understanding our own species. In her Song Sparrow monograph, Nice quotes from a letter Lorenz wrote to her that "the study of animal behavior is the only and ultimate source of understanding ourselves." This preoccupation with possible human implications of studies of innate behavior had its darker side. For