



James K. McPherson
1937 - 1994

James King McPherson was born in Tucson, Arizona in 1937 and grew up in San Diego and Orange County, California. He received a B.S. in Zoology from the University of Idaho in 1959. His graduate studies were in plant ecology under C.H. Muller at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he earned a M.S. in 1966 and a Ph.D. in 1968.

Dr. McPherson was a member of the faculty in the OSU Botany Department from 1968 until his retirement in 1992. He also served as acting Head of Botany from 1980-1981. During his tenure at OSU, Jim McPherson distinguished himself as a scholar, teaching students in areas ranging from vegetational surveys to allelopathy in sunflowers. His course in field botany was well-known, as was his summer field course on plants of the southern Rocky Mountains. He set a fast pace, both on foot and intellectually. Many of his former students, now widely dispersed, continue to praise his greatness as a teacher and report that they think of McPherson whenever they identify a plant.

Jim's volunteer service included work for the Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Club. He managed the Conservancy's Springer Prairie Preserve and contributed expertise and labor to the new Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in Osage County. At the time of his death he was completing a study of the flora of the Black Mesa area in the Oklahoma Panhandle.

Dr. McPherson was awarded the Oklahoma Nature Conservancy's Stewardship Award in 1992 and in 1994 was posthumously awarded the National President's Stewardship Award.

His work for the Sierra Club included serving as president of the Stillwater Group. He also led Sierra Club National Service Outings in the Ruby Mountains of Nevada and the San Juan Wilderness of Colorado.

The McPherson Fund was established by Dr. McPherson's wife Iris after his death. Each year, monies are distributed to Botany graduate students to help with their ecological research, especially in the summer months, and to defray the costs of attending national and regional conferences.