

In memory / En souvenir de

The Canadian forest entomology community lost a highly talented and creative member in November 2017 with the passing of Dr W. 'Jan' A. Volney, after his courageous 5-year battle with cancer. Jan is remembered by his colleagues for his warm heart and his respectful, compassionate treatment of people. His sense of fair-play won him many friends and contributed significantly to much successful collaboration over his career. His well-developed understanding of nature, insightful vision of natural processes, and highly principled approach to science and its application will be sorely missed by those who had the good fortune to know and work with him. Jan was born on the island of Aruba and took his grammar and secondary school studies at Knox College in the mountains of Jamaica. He fondly recollected his time in the Caribbean, and those years doubtlessly



Winston Jan Anthony Volney
(3 March 1946 – 24 November 2017)

contributed to his generally happy, uncomplicated attitude, his mischievous sense of humour, his love of sharing spicy food with others, and his knowledge of good rum and its applications. Jan's parents moved their family to New Brunswick in 1961. As a young man in a new home, Jan was enthusiastic about exercising his expanded opportunities for learning, and soon after coming to Canada, he enrolled at McGill University to study math and physics. While studying in Montreal he made regular excursions to Mont Ste. Hilaire, and during these forays his passion for nature convinced him that he'd not enjoy a career that kept him inside and away from the living world. Thus, he transferred to the University of New Brunswick to study forestry, earning a BScF in 1970. He continued his education to earn a MSF in Forest Ecology at Yale University in 1972, and both a PhD in Forest Entomology at SUNY-Syracuse and an MA in Statistics at the University of New Brunswick in 1977. Entomology, ecology and mathematics, as applied in forestry, were his passions. Jan was a highly independent thinker and a prodigious reader, especially of history, biographies and conceptual mathematics. He often delighted his colleagues with sparkling insights drawn from lateral thinking that linked his academic passions to his reading in other areas. Although Jan's formal education as a university student ended in 1977, he continued to learn and grow intellectually throughout his life

Jan's work career included experience in management, teaching and both pure and applied research. He worked briefly as an entomologist practising in forest protection in New Brunswick before moving onto a university position at the University of California at Berkeley (1977-85). At Berkeley, Jan pursued fascinating work on ecology and evolution of species within the California budworm complex, and guided a number of successful graduate students through their degrees. In 1985, he responded to the call of the North and returned happily to his adopted country to take up a position with the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) where he spent most of his career. After a year as an Insect and Disease Specialist at the Winnipeg lab, Jan moved to the Northern Forestry Centre (NoFC) in Edmonton where he spent the next 25 years, retiring as a Senior Research Scientist in 2012.

At NoFC, Jan worked in the context of a variety of themes. These included the general population biology of several Lepidoptera defoliator species and innovative approaches to

their management, development of effective sampling programs to characterize forest insect populations and communities, understanding the effect of industrial emissions on Canadian forests, and integration of a suite of productivity and conservation goals in the context of the evolving Canadian approach to Sustainable Forest Management. He designed, implemented and managed the large Zama Spruce Budworm Management Experiment to explore the promise of new spruce harvesting designs to better manage budworm impacts. He was a dedicated co-founder and strong advocate of the Ecosystem Management Emulating Natural Disturbance (EMEND) project in northwestern Alberta, and invested much of the latter part of his career in hands-on field work at EMEND and in ensuring that this visionary project was successfully developed. The energy, enthusiasm and big-picture organization that he brought to these tasks was most impressive and inspirational to those around him.

Jan followed a sound, no-nonsense program for conducting research in forest entomology and forest management, and through his determined example helped collaborators and students to see the wisdom of his straight-forward approach. Folks charged with managing forests knew that they could trust Jan to deliver sound science to help them evaluate, improve, and achieve management objectives. Jan's determination to make his science relevant to evolving needs should be noted. Much of his research was motivated in direct response to industry and/or government interest, but took a biologically well-informed approach to solving the problems identified by forest managers. Numerous useful discoveries resulted from this basic application of the scientific method. Jan authored or co-authored over 70 peer-reviewed publications in the primary scientific literature and a large number of other useful publications directed at scientists, practitioners, forest policy-makers and the public at large. He improved much additional scientific work through his advice about design and analysis or the thoughtful application of his editor's and reviewer's pen.

Jan was also an active Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta for the last 20 years of his career, and from that stage he contributed enormously to the development of students, both as an undergraduate instructor and graduate supervisor. His well-prepared and passionately delivered lectures shone with the light of his enthusiasm for insects and his practical hands-on experience with their biologically-based management. They were much appreciated by the students. Some of those students went on to summer jobs with the CFS, putting their formal education to work before they had finished it. Many of Jan's graduate students have themselves gone onto excellent careers in forest entomology and forest science, and Jan's significant influence on their lives and careers is well-known. Jan held students to high standards but, as a paragon of respectful encouragement, made it possible for students to attain them. And, in the end, students learned to reach high and for the deepest understanding possible.

In addition to his direct and continuing contributions as a practicing scientist, Jan effectively took on administrative tasks in support of a large number of other scientists. In his work as a Project Leader, Team Leader, and Acting Director at the Northern Forestry Centre he reviewed, evaluated, assessed, and supported projects of other researchers. His colleagues remember him fondly as a friend first, and hold him in high esteem for his boundless encouragement, mentorship, and inspirational leadership. His sage advice, practical approach to problem solving and humour helped many colleagues find their way through stressful times. As an effective Co-Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* from 1998-2002, his evaluation, advice, and decisions about scientific publication affected a broad cadre of forest scientists conducting research, both in Canada and internationally and, of course, contributed to the high quality and excellent reputation of forest science in Canada. As an active member of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, he served the national organization and his home section in a number of capacities, bringing an appropriate level of attention to the importance of entomological considerations in effective forest management.

Jan was a highly gregarious person, who involved himself in the scientific community. He loved to travel and interact with old friends and make new ones. He participated regularly in the International Congresses of Entomology and the Western Forest Insect Work Conferences, and Chaired the Organizing Committee for the 3rd North American Forest Insect Work Conference held in Edmonton in 2001. For his contributions to research in forest science and entomology, Jan was recognized by the following awards: Canadian Forest Service Award of Merit, Natural Resources Canada Departmental Award, Alberta Emerald Award for Environmental Excellence, Alberta Science and Technology (ASTech) Award, and a Scientific Achievement Award from the Canadian Institute of Forestry.

Jan's deep interest in both insects and the natural history that surrounded him was apparent to all who worked with him. For example, those who accompanied him in the field often found him tasting the foliage being consumed by the insects that he was charged with controlling and remarking about what tasted good to him and what did not. We note that he also tasted the insects themselves to investigate the conversion of biomass characteristics, and because he advocated that one should taste what they studied. Days in the field spent executing sampling routines were brightened by lively discussion that often began when Jan observed some natural history phenomenon that piqued his interest. He was as good as anyone we've known at imagining himself in an insect's world. At NoFC, Jan was an enthusiastic participant in social events, Corporate Challenge activities and United Way fundraising events. Etched in the NoFC corporate memory is the vision of Jan, outfitted in a tight-fitting pink tutu, duct-taped to the wall as part of a United Way fundraising activity.

Jan is survived by his wife of 47 years, Patricia, son Peter (Ottawa), and sisters Shelley McBrearty and Phonda Elizabeth Cormier, both of Saint John, as well as many cousins scattered throughout the world. In addition, many colleagues and former students will carry Jan's influence into the future, gratefully remembering with a smile the uncommon man that was its source.

John Spence, David Langor and Colin Bergeron (Edmonton)

