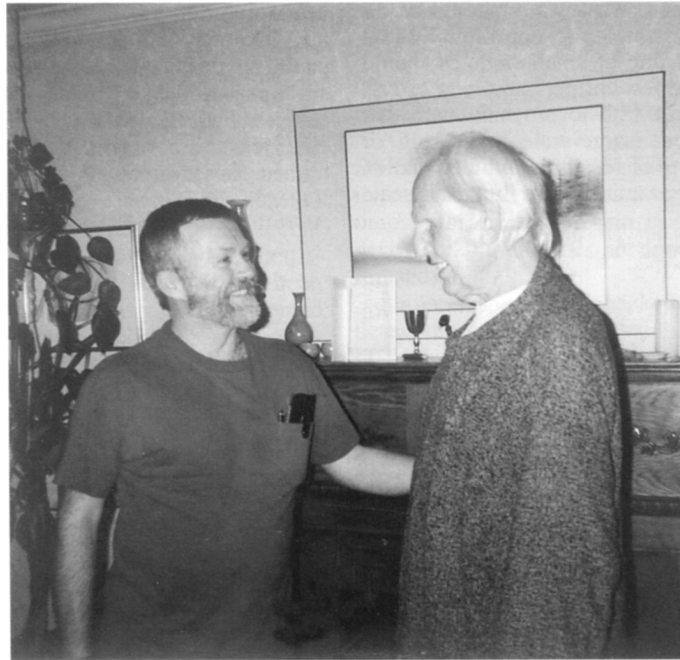

MEMORIAL



RONALD PEARSON TRIPP

(1914–2001)

The passing of Ronald Pearson Tripp marks the end of the career of a great trilobite taxonomist and one of the last great “gentleman geologists.” I had the pleasure of knowing him personally since 1973.

I first became aware of Ron Tripp while reading the trilobite volume of the *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology* (1959), of which he was co-author. In 1973 I began the challenge of conducting trilobite research for publication, in spite of the fact that I had not yet completed an undergraduate degree in Geology. Concerning the trilobite family Encrinuridae, this study soon led me to seek the expertise of Ron Tripp—the leading authority on that family at the time, and Associate of the British Museum (Natural History).

From the start Ron was very kind and eager to help, generously offering information, reprints, and his wealth of wisdom and knowledge concerning Silurian and Ordovician trilobites and British geology. He made it a point to correct me when I assumed his title to be “Dr.,” informing me that he did not have a Ph.D. In spite of the many other research projects and other responsibilities on his plate, Ron happily engaged in searching for lost specimens, examining collections, photographing, and conducting many other tasks that could only be done from a British vantage point. He finally agreed that it would be appropriate for him to formalize our joint project and eventually became the senior author of two studies and an appendix with his long-time friend and collaborator—John

Temple—and myself. During this time, he served as Treasurer of the Palaeontological Association and was voted in as the first non-degreed Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Ron Tripp always exemplified scientific professionalism. He described John Temple as a “cautious chap,” but the same quality also applied to Ron Tripp himself. He was a very thorough researcher, withholding manuscript submission until the last stone was turned. His handwriting was barely decipherable (a condition that, ironically, improved after he lost his sight), to the extent that I began to think it was his way of forcing people to study things more closely. Ron was a very active trilobite taxonomist, carefully describing and publishing numerous new species and higher taxa in many scientific journals and monographs—yet he was by no means a “splitter.” He remained active in Ordovician trilobite research and other subjects into the last years of his life, as Associate of the Royal Ontario Museum.

It was my great pleasure and honor to have known and learned from Ronald Pearson Tripp. The global paleontological community and the body of scientific knowledge have gained much from him. His professionalism, depth of knowledge, and kindness made him an inspiration to amateurs and professionals alike. He will be missed by all.

Kenneth C. Gass
921 11th Street South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
<SQP@charter.net>