

RECOLLECTIONS OF JAMES DAVIDSON FAWCETT (1933–2020): IMBIBING WITH THE KIWI

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THERE JUST WEREN'T ANY OTHER PROFESSORS AT UNO LIKE HIM, AND I WAS REALLY LUCKY TO HAVE HIM AS MY ADVISOR. IF I EVER NEEDED ANYTHING I JUST HAD TO KNOCK ON HIS DOOR, AND HE NEVER ONCE TURNED ME AWAY. I KNOW THAT HE WASN'T ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF MY THESIS RESEARCH, BUT HE STILL LET ME PUSH FORWARD WITH IT, AND HE DUG UP EVERY POSSIBLE SOURCE HE HAD FROM HIS LIBRARY FOR ME. THIS DEDICATION WAS CERTAINLY SOMETHING ELSE, AND I CAME TO EXPECT IT FROM ALL MY TEACHERS AND WAS DISAPPOINTED TO FIND THAT WASN'T THE CASE. I WON'T NAME NAMES, BUT I STOPPED BY A PROFESSOR'S OFFICE WITH AN URGENT QUESTION AT ONE POINT, AND WAS TOLD "WELL I WAS ADVISING STUDENTS, AND I'D HOPED I WAS DONE FOR THE DAY." Wow! I MAY ONLY BE A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, BUT I'VE TAKEN THIS ATTITUDE WITH ME FROM DR. FAWCETT. I FIND TIME AND WAYS TO HELP MY STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER I NEED TO STAY LATE, SLOW DOWN A LESSON, ETC. WE'RE ALL A LITTLE WORSE OFF WITHOUT HIM.

HE WAS A LOT OF FUN AS WELL. I LOVED LISTENING TO HIM TALK WISTFULLY ABOUT HOW THINGS USED TO BE EASIER—THAT IS, YOU COULD GO OUT AND COLLECT YOUR ANIMALS WITH A PISTOL! I SAW DR. FAWCETT EAT A SINGLE TIME IN THE ENTIRE TIME THAT I KNEW HIM; AT A DINNER WHEN OMAHA HOSTED THE MIDWEST HERPETOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM (AT THAT POINT I HAD BEGUN TO SUSPECT THAT MAYBE HE JUST NEVER ATE AND SUBSISTED OFF OF TUATARA BEER THAT HE SO OFTEN MENTIONED). EVEN WHEN WE SPENT 10+ HOURS ON FIELD TRIPS HE NEVER ATE. HE EVEN FREQUENTLY MENTIONED HOW FRUSTRATED IT MADE HIM TO SEE PEOPLE EATING DURING NOON TIME SYMPOSIUMS IN THE DEPARTMENT.

—AJ ANTON
OMAHA NORTH HIGH MAGNET SCHOOL

THE ONE STORY THAT STICKS OUT, ASIDE FROM HIM NOT WEARING A TIE IN THE LAB OR HIS OFFICE WHEN HE WAS THERE ON SUNDAYS, RELATES TO HIS TEACHING COMPARATIVE ANATOMY AND EMBRYOLOGY. CLEMENT EMODI WANTED TO TAKE THE COURSE AND SINCE I HAD ALREADY DONE WELL IN COMPARATIVE ANATOMY, I AGREED TO BE THE TA FOR THE COURSE. ONE DAY CLEMENT ASKED JIM ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BRAIN...AND RIGHT THERE, CHALK IN HAND, HE STARTED WITH THE FISH BRAIN, THEN SNAKE/LIZARD/BIRD, THEN RODENT, AND FINALLY PRIMATE BRAIN. IT TOOK ABOUT 20 MINUTES AND HE USED THE SAME BASIC DRAWING OF THE BRAINSTEM,

BUILDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CEREBELLUM AND CEREBRUM, EVEN EMPHASIZING THE FOREBRAIN DEVELOPMENT FROM REPTILES THROUGH HUMANS. IT WAS INCREDIBLE! I HAD TAKEN NEUROANATOMY AT THE MED CENTER, SO I COULD FOLLOW ALONG WITH AMAZEMENT. IT WAS AMAZING WATCHING CLEMENT UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE ALL THAT INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN 20 MINUTES! JIM HAD A KNACK FOR REACHING STUDENTS AND HELPING THEM MOVE FORWARD WITH THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND EDUCATION.

—DAN BRADY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

I CAN'T THINK OF A TIME WHEN I SAW DR. FAWCETT WITHOUT A SMILE, ACCOMPANIED BY A LAUGH AND A CHEERY VOICE. FOR THOSE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE WELCOMED INTO HIS LAB, HE WAS A SUPPORTIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC MENTOR WHO GENEROUSLY SHARED HIS KNOWLEDGE, STORIES, AND GUIDANCE.

DR. FAWCETT WAS A THROWBACK TO OLDER, MORE FORMAL DAYS OF SCIENTISTS IN SUITS AND TIES. I FONDLY REMEMBER HIM COMING INTO THE OFFICE EACH DAY, TAKING OFF HIS SUIT JACKET AND CHANGING INTO HIS CARDIGAN SWEATER (OR LAB COAT), ONLY TO REVERSE THE PROCESS AT THE END OF THE DAY. IT ONLY ADDS TO MY WARM FEELINGS FOR DR. FAWCETT TO ASSOCIATE THIS MR. ROGERS-LIKE ROUTINE WITH HIM. I FEEL ESPECIALLY LUCKY TO HAVE BEEN IN HIS LAB AT A TIME WHEN THERE WERE FEW OTHER ON-SITE GRADUATE STUDENTS, SO I HAD DR. FAWCETT'S UNDIVIDED ATTENTION MOST DAYS AND BENEFITTED GREATLY FROM HIS COUNSEL. I AFFECTIONATELY REMEMBER WALKING AROUND HIS LAB TO EXAMINE THE MANY SPECIMENS STILL PRESERVED IN FORMALDEHYDE AS WE WOULD DISCUSS HERPETOLOGY, ECOLOGY, PAST STUDENTS, AND MY HIGH-MAINTENANCE GECKOS. HIS ENCHANTMENT WITH HERPS WAS TRULY CONTAGIOUS.

WHEN I VISITED HIM LAST YEAR, SOME TWENTY YEARS AFTER RECEIVING MY MASTER'S, TO ASK HIS SUPPORT FOR MY APPLICATION TO A PH.D. PROGRAM IN (MARINE) ECOLOGY, HE WAS ENCOURAGING AND EXCITED FOR MY NEW ENDEAVOR. WE SHARED A WONDERFUL CONVERSATION ABOUT HIS TIME IN NEW ZEALAND AS A YOUNG COLLEGE STUDENT AND HIS ORIGINAL LOVE OF THE ROCKY INTERTIDAL ZONE AND MARINE BIOLOGY. I WAS SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED TO HEAR OF THIS KINSHIP, AND I WILL ALWAYS CARRY THAT MEMORY WITH ME. INDEED, AS I WAS PACKING FOR MY MOST RECENT MOVE, I WAS CAREFUL TO BRING ALONG THE NEW ZEALAND COIN HE GAVE ME AFTER COMPLETION OF MY THESIS AS A PHYSICAL SYMBOL OF HIS SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

I WILL DEARLY MISS THE CHRISTMAS CARDS THAT CAME WITHOUT FAIL EACH YEAR, DESPITE THE FACT THAT I MOVED MORE THAN TEN TIMES OVER THE INTERVENING YEARS. THIS TOUCHING GESTURE WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS ENDURING CONNECTION TO HIS STUDENTS. DR. FAWCETT SERVED AS QUITE A ROLE MODEL FOR THOSE OF US WHO WENT ON TO BECOME MENTORS TO OTHERS. I CAN ONLY HOPE TO BE SUCH A PRESENCE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE I COUNSEL.

"THE KIWI" WAS CONSISTENTLY WARM, FUNNY, AND KIND. HE SIMPLY KNEW NO OTHER WAY TO BE IN THIS WORLD. WHILE THE WORLD WILL MISS HIS PRESENCE, I AM PROUD TO BE ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES WHO HAS A HEART FULL OF MEMORIES TO KEEP HIM CLOSE.

—WENDY BRAGG
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA CRUZ

JIM AND I WERE GRAD STUDENTS, GOOD FRIENDS AND OFFICE MATES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IN THE 1960S. HOBART SMITH, THE WORLD-FAMOUS HERPETOLOGIST, WAS OUR FACULTY ADVISOR AND A REAL INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US.

OVER SEVERAL YEARS WE SHARED MANY CONVERSATIONS, GRAD SCHOOL EXPERIENCES, AND FIELD TRIPS IN ILLINOIS—OFTEN IN FOUL WEATHER AND AT NIGHT, ESPECIALLY FOR COLLECTING AND STUDYING AMPHIBIANS. MY FONDEST MEMORIES WERE OF JIM ON OUR MEXICO EXPEDITION IN 1966.

WE WERE COLLECTING HERPS IN MEXICO FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS, ESPECIALLY DOWN THE EAST COAST THROUGH VERACRUZ AND INTO THE NORTHERN YUCATAN. WE TRAVELED IN TWO GOOD FIELD VEHICLES, JIM AND TOM FRITTS IN ONE, MY WIFE GINGER AND I IN THE OTHER. WE CAMPED IN TENTS AND EXPERIENCED AN INTERESTING MEXICO WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS. JIM WAS BY FAR THE MOST HUMOROUS AND ENTERTAINING OF THE FOUR OF US, REGALING US WITH HIS EXPERIENCES AND TRAVELS AND TALES OF NEW ZEALAND CULTURE AND GEOGRAPHY. I DO RECALL JIM SMOKED A LOT [NOTE: HE QUIT IN THE 1990s], BUT MY FAVORITE MEMORIES ARE OF BEING ON THE TRAIL SOMEWHERE, ARDENTLY LOOKING FOR LIZARDS, SNAKES, TURTLES, FROGS, ETC. SUDDENLY JIM WOULD STOP, SAYING “SSHHH. DID YOU HEAR THAT?” WE WOULD ALL BE SILENT, LISTENING INTENTLY, LOOKING OUT INTO THE BUSH. BEFORE WE COULD REALIZE IT, JIM WAS ON HIS WAY BACK TO CAMP—IT WAS AFTERNOON TEATIME! THAT WAS MY FIRST SERIOUS INTRODUCTION TO COMPULSORY TEATIME—WHICH PREPARED ME FOR LATER ROUTINES WHEN I WORKED AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS IN KEW, ENGLAND. IN SHORT, THE MEXICO FIELD TRIP WAS A MOST ENJOYABLE HIGH POINT FOR ME, THANKS IN GREAT PART TO JIM AND HIS CONVIVIALITY AND KIWI HUMOR.

—BILL BURLEY
MT. VERNON, WASHINGTON

I RECEIVED MY B.S. DEGREE IN BIOLOGY FROM FU JEN UNIVERSITY IN TAIWAN, AND UNIV. OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN REFERRED ME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA IN JANUARY 1974. I TOOK ENDOCRINOLOGY WITH DR. DEGRAW, THEN MET DR. FAWCETT. HIS WARM, CANDID AND DOWN-TO-EARTH PERSONALITY, AND EXTRAORDINARY ENTHUSIASM TO HELP STUDENTS IMPRESSED ME SO MUCH THAT I CHOSE HIM AS MY THESIS MENTOR. I DON'T LIKE REPTILES AND FREAKED OUT WHEN HIS SNAKE ESCAPED FROM THE CAGE AND WAS UNDER MY DESK IN THE LAB.

UNDER HIS SUPERVISION, I DID ESTROGEN AND TESTOSTERONE RESEARCH WITH OVARIECTOMIZED GREEN ANOLES. I AM NOT GOOD AT WRITING ENGLISH. HE HELPED ME A LOT TO FINISH MY THESIS; SO I WAS ABLE TO RECEIVE MY MASTER'S DEGREE IN 1.5 YEARS, WENT TO MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY TRAINING, AND IN TIME RECEIVED A SPECIALIST IN HEMATOLOGY CERTIFICATE.

AFTER WORKING 13 YEARS IN SEVERAL HOSPITALS, I LANDED AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH IN BETHESDA, MARYLAND; A MEDICAL RESEARCHER FOR 20 YEARS. I AM NOW TEACHING HUMAN ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY AT NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE. I CHERISH DR. FAWCETT AS MY ROLE MODEL, NOT ONLY BY BEING THEIR TEACHER BUT ALSO ACTING AS THEIR FIRST LINE OF SUPPORT.

DR. FAWCETT WAS THE ONE-IN-A-MILLION TEACHER. HE SUCCESSFULLY EDUCATED SO MANY BIOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS IN ALL CORNERS OF U.S. HIS WARM, CARING, DEEP PASSION, AND STRONG DEDICATION TO HIS STUDENTS WILL BE REMEMBERED FOREVER. I AM VERY PROUD TO BE A PART OF HIS LAB. MY BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION TO HIS LAB WAS TO RECOMMEND MY COLLEGEMATE, JULIANN GONG KIANG, TO HIS LAB. SHE IS THE BEST SCHOLAR, AND SHE HAD CONTRIBUTED A LOT TO ORGANIZING HIS LAB.

HE ALWAYS MAILED ME A XMAS CARD UNTIL 2018; SO I WAS PUZZLED ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED. IF I KNEW HE WAS SICK, I WOULD HAVE VISITED HIM. I OWE HIM TREMENDOUS RESPECT.

—ELIZABETH CHAO
NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

I WAS NOT A STUDENT OF JIM'S, BUT HE AND I WOULD EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES IN THE HALL AND THE ELEVATOR OVER MANY YEARS, BOTH AS A GRADUATE STUDENT AND AS A STAFF MEMBER. AS THE YEARS WENT BY, I NOTICED HIS ANXIOUSNESS JUST BEFORE HE HEADED ON TO HIS YEARLY VISIT TO NZ, BUT WHEN HE RETURNED HE WAS WALKING ON A CLOUD AND THE MOST TALKATIVE HE WOULD BE FOR THE YEAR! THOSE TRIPS REALLY RECHARGED HIS BATTERIES! AS THE OTHERS HAVE STATED, HE WAS ALWAYS HELPFUL WITH INFORMATION, PARTICULARLY WITH QUESTIONS OF EMBRYOLOGY, OF WHICH I HAD VERY LITTLE UNDERSTANDING!

MANY OF US THAT WERE STUDENTS IN THE BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT BACK THEN, WHETHER UNDERGRADS OR GRAD STUDENTS, CHERISH OUR TIME AT UNO. IN THAT TIME NOW PAST, WE WERE BLESSED WITH EXTREMELY WELL-EDUCATED FACULTY, KNOWLEDGEABLE NOT ONLY IN THEIR SPECIALTIES, BUT IMMENSELY VERSED IN ALL INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS. JIM WAS PART OF THAT INTELLECTUAL BLANKET THAT WE AS STUDENTS WERE SO FORTUNATE TO EXPERIENCE!

—GEORGE CUNNINGHAM
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

JIM WAS A POLISHED GENTLEMAN, A FRIEND, SCHOLAR, AND A DEDICATED RESEARCHER IN HERPETOLOGY. HE FIRED UP MY INTEREST IN BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND STUDIES. DAN BRADY AND I BOTH CAME OVER FROM CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY AFTER OUR B.S. DEGREES IN BIOLOGY.

LAB 232 WAS LIKE FAMILY TO ME. I REALLY ENJOYED MY TIME WITH DR. FAWCETT AND OTHER VARIOUS STUDENTS. I GRADUATED DECEMBER 20, 1980, BUT DIDN'T PURSUE A PH.D. PROGRAM. INSTEAD, I RECEIVED A CALL TO RELIGIOUS LIFE AND JOINED THE CAPUCHIN FRANCISCANS OF MID AMERICA PROVINCE BASED IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI. JIM ENCOURAGED ME SHARING WITH ME HIS FOND MEMORIES OF TEACHING WITH FRANCISCAN FRIARS IN NEW ZEALAND.

I'M 72 NOW AND AN ORDAINED CATHOLIC PRIEST HERE IN NIGERIA SINCE 1993. LAST I VISITED DR. FAWCETT WAS WAY BACK IN 2001/2002. WE TOOK PICTURES TOGETHER THERE IN THE FAMOUS LAB 232.

I WILL BE REMEMBERING HIM AT MY DAILY MASS AND PRAYING FOR HIS ETERNAL REPOSE.

—FRIAR AKOSA CLEMENT EMODI
CAPUCHIN FRANCISCAN FRIARY, NIGERIA

HE AND I BECAME WELL ACQUAINTED DURING OUR THOUSANDS OF MILES DRIVING IN MEXICO; I THE SENIOR UNDERGRADUATE AND JIM THE BIOLOGIST SOMEWHAT SENIOR BEYOND HIS YEARS, BOTH NEOPHYTES TO THE WILDS OF MEXICO, THE SPANISH LANGUAGE, AND THE INNUMERABLE CULTURAL *NOVIDADES* TO BE FACED. GRASPING AT THE FEW WORDS WE UNDERSTOOD ON THE MENU WHILE WAITING AT A FERRY CROSSING IN TABASCO, JIM AND I ORDERED FRIED FISH EGGS AS A LATE BREAKFAST THINKING WE WERE GETTING "FISH AND EGGS." WE WERE QUITE COMPATIBLE DRIVING TOGETHER, BUT IT WAS ALWAYS BEST TO REMIND JIM TO STAY IN THE RIGHT LANE WHEN HE MADE A LEFT TURN BECAUSE HE WAS INSTINCTIVELY PROGRAMMED TO REVERT TO KIWI DRIVING RULES AND THE WRONG SIDE OF THE ROAD ON LEFT TURNS. WE BOTH ATTEMPTED TO LEARN A BIT OF SPANISH BY REPEATING THE COMMERCIALS ON THE RADIO, STUDYING MENUS, AND CHATTING WITH THE LOCALS DURING OUR MARKETING SOJOURNS IN SEARCH OF TURTLES. ONCE WHILE I WAS DRIVING THROUGH A MODERATE SIZED TOWN, I ASKED JIM TO LEAN OUT THE PASSENGER WINDOW AND ASK A MAN ON THE CORNER WHERE THE POST OFFICE WAS. JIM ATTEMPTED TO COMPLY BY

ASKING “¿SENIOR, CUANTA CUESTA EL CORREO?”; I.E., HOW MUCH THE POST OFFICE WOULD COST RATHER THAN WHERE IT WAS LOCATED.

JIM BROUGHT A GOODLY NUMBER OF HISTOLOGICAL SPECIMENS (MOSTLY LIZARD GONADS) WITH HIM WHEN HE CAME TO ILLINOIS AND MANY NIGHTS WE (JIM, BILL RHOTEN, AND I) TOOK DOZENS OF TINY VIALS ALONG TO THE CAMPUS PUB SO THAT JIM COULD CHANGE FLUIDS IN THE VIALS AT APPROPRIATE TIME INTERVALS WITHOUT MISSING OUT ON THE EVENING’S OUTING. A TIMER WAS SET, AND FLUIDS WERE DECANTED OR ADDED AS APPROPRIATE, ALL IN THE DIM LIGHTING OF THE CAMPUS HANGOUT.

JIM WAS A CHARACTER, A BASTION OF INFORMATION AND SCHOLARSHIP, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY A PERFECT GENTLEMAN AND A FRIEND TO MANY.

—TOM FRITTS
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

I HAVE MANY FOND MEMORIES OF CHATTING WITH JIM ABOUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS DURING MY YEARS AT UNO. MANY TIMES DURING OUR CONVERSATIONS, JIM WOULD LAUGH. IN FACT, I CAN REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I MADE HIM LAUGH. IT WAS MY FIRST DAY OF TEACHING AT UNO IN 1977. I WAS WALKING UPSTAIRS FROM THE MAIN OFFICE AND ENTERED THE HALLWAY ON THE SECOND FLOOR. STANDING IN FRONT OF THE DOOR LEADING INTO THE HALLWAY CONTAINING SEVERAL OFFICES (INCLUDING MINE) WAS JIM FAWCETT HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH ORNITHOLOGIST ROGER SHARPE. I SAID, “EXCUSE ME” AND WHEN THEY BOTH TURNED TO ME, I [A MAMMALOGIST] SAID, “SO WHAT IS THIS, THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE URIC ACID CLUB?”

—KEN GELUSO
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

ONE TIME I WAS IN DR. FAWCETT’S OFFICE AND WE WERE JUST CHATTING. I WAS LEANING ON HIS FILE CABINET AND FIDDLING WITH THE PUSH BUTTON LOCK. I PUSHED ON THE LOCK AND IT SNAPPED SHUT. HE LOOKED AT ME AND SAID, “I DON’T HAVE A KEY FOR THAT.” I COULDN’T BELIEVE IT. HE DIDN’T GET ANGRY ABOUT IT, BUT I FELT PRETTY DUMB.

I STILL HAVE A POSTCARD JIM SENT ME FROM NZ IN JULY OF 1979 WITH A PICTURE OF A TUATARA ON IT. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN JUST BEFORE I LEFT FOR TEXAS A&M. HE TOOK ME OUT TO DINNER AS A GRADUATION GIFT. HE ORDERED LAMB FOR DINNER.

—MARK GRASSMAN
FRISCO, TEXAS

HE REALLY GAVE ME THE SPACE I NEEDED TO GROW—I DON’T TEND TO DO WELL WITH HELICOPTER ADVISING, AND HE QUICKLY IDENTIFIED THAT AND LET ME DO MY THING. HE LET ME TAKE OVER THE LAB, REARRANGE IT COMPLETELY, AND THROW OUT LOADS OF OLD MATERIAL SO THAT I COULD MAKE IT MY OWN SPACE.

HE HAD UNWAVERING FAITH IN ME, EVEN WHEN OTHERS DIDN’T. I REMEMBER BEING LAUGHED AT BY SEVERAL FACULTY MEMBERS AT UNO WHEN I TOLD THEM I WAS GOING TO WORK ON SMALL-MOUTHED SALAMANDERS; ONE SIMPLY LAUGHING AND SAYING, “HAVEN’T THEY ONLY TURNED UP ABOUT 10 OF THOSE THINGS?” AND ANOTHER LAUGHED WHEN THEY SAW ME GEARING UP TO THROW TRAPS OUT IN LATE FEBRUARY AND EARLY MARCH, SAYING “WHAT THE HELL DO YOU EXPECT TO CATCH—ICE?!” DR. FAWCETT SIMPLY RESPONDED BY LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW AND SAYING “WELL, THE DAFFODILS ARE POPPING UP...I SUPPOSE THE SALAMANDERS WON’T BE FAR BEHIND!”

HE WAS A WONDERFUL TEACHER AND ONE WHO I MODEL MUCH OF MY TEACHING METHODS AFTER—AND A TOUGH FELLOW AS WELL. HE HAD THE RESPECT OF EVERY STUDENT WHO WALKED THROUGH HIS DOOR.

ONE STORY THAT I REMEMBER VIVIDLY AND WILL NEVER FORGET WAS WHEN HE WAS TELLING ME ABOUT VISITING NEW ZEALAND OVER THE SUMMER...I JOKINGLY SAID “WELL, IF YOU’RE GOING THERE I WOULDN’T MIND IF YOU BROUGHT BACK A TUATARA FOR ME!” TO WHICH HE RESPONDED “OOOH I DON’T THINK SO. I’D BE SPENDING SOME TIME IN HER MAJESTY’S DUNGEON IF I TRIED THAT!!”... HE LITERALLY SAID “HER MAJESTY’S DUNGEON”...AND I JUST COULDN’T HELP BY BUSTING OUT LAUGHING.

—MIKE GRAZIANO
BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY

DESPITE THE DECADES THAT HAVE PASSED, I CAN STILL WALK AROUND IN THAT LAB AND THROUGHOUT ALLWINE HALL IN MY MIND.

ONE OF MY MANY ENDURING MEMORIES OF JIM IS WHEN HE QUIT SMOKING. IT STICKS MORE SO THAN MOST BECAUSE IT WAS AN UNCHARACTERISTIC MOMENT. I CAN’T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHEN HE QUIT, BUT WE WERE BOTH SMOKERS AT THAT POINT. I ASKED HIM ABOUT QUITTING (WE WERE IN HIS OFFICE) AND HE STARTED IN HIS TYPICAL GENTLEMANLY STYLE AND POLITELY EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH HE REALLY ENJOYED SMOKING (AND THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH A PLEASANT PUFF NOW AND THEN!), HE OBJECTED TO THE EXORBITANT “SIN TAXES” ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS. I THINK I HAD A COUNTER-ARGUMENT...BUT IT WAS MET WITH A VERY TERSE RESPONSE...THERE WAS NO WAY HE WAS GOING SUPPORT THOSE DARN STADIUMS AND FOOTBALL TEAMS. I THINK IT WAS THE ONLY TIME I DETECTED A GLINT OF “ALMOST ANGER” IN HIS EYE AND VOICE! HE WAS RESOLUTE!

JIM WAS ACCOMMODATING AND TOLERANT AS A MENTOR. I’M NOT SURE I’D HAVE HAD THE CAREER THAT I’VE ENJOYED SO MUCH WITHOUT HIS HELP EARLY ON. I WAS LUCKY TO ATTEND UNO DURING A HEYDAY OF COLLEGIALLY AMONGST ITS GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY; SOMETHING THAT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY RARE IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS TODAY. I’M INCREDIBLY PROUD TO BE AMONG THOSE THAT COUNT THEMSELVES IN JIM’S ACADEMIC LINEAGE. JIM WILL BE MISSED.

—ANDY HOLYCROSS
MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I STILL HAVE SUCH VIVID AND FOND MEMORIES OF DR. FAWCETT AND OUR LAB 232. AS SOMETIMES HAPPENS IN LIFE, I WAS SO LUCKY TO HAVE HIM JUMP INTO MY LIFE AT SUCH A CRUCIAL TIME. I ARRIVED AT UNO IN 1972 AND, ALONG WITH JOHN, BRAD, AND THEN LUCIAN AND ELIZABETH, WE WERE THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF LAB 232. HIS CLASSES IN A&P, EMBRYOLOGY, HISTOLOGY, AND HERPETOLOGY WERE REALLY INSPIRATIONAL AND ALLOWED ME TO BE SUCCESSFUL EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SEMESTERS WHEN I DID THE TA IN EACH COURSE. THERE WERE A BUNCH OF US WHO WERE DESPERATELY TRYING TO GET INTO MED SCHOOL, BUT DR. FAWCETT HAD SUCH PATIENCE, DETERMINATION, AND MENTORSHIP THAT HE ALLOWED ME AND OTHERS TO FIND THE VISION TO COMPLETE OUR DEGREES AND THESES.

THE WORD “INCLUSIVENESS” IS SUCH A MODERN WORD, BUT FOR US DR. FAWCETT LIVED AND PROMOTED IT EVERY DAY. JUST LOOK AT THE BREADTH OF THE LIST OF HIS MASTERS STUDENTS HE MENTORED. AT FIRST HE PRESENTED SUCH “PROPER” FRONT, BUT SOON I FOUND HE WAS SO PERSONABLE AND HAD SUCH ENTHUSIASM AND PASSION FOR ALL THINGS HERPS AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

YEARS LATER I BECAME THE FACILITY MANAGER AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY FOR TWO LARGE BIOLOGY DEPARTMENTS AND DURING MY 36 YEARS I LED THE DESIGN AND FACILITATED THE RENOVATIONS OF 40 LARGE FACULTY RESEARCH LABS, BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL ROOMS, AND GREENHOUSES. MANY TIMES, I WOULD THINK BACK AND CHUCKLE ON HOW DR. FAWCETT WOULD HELP US IMPROVISE TURNING A MECHANICAL ROOM INTO AN “ANIMAL HOUSING ROOM,” AND THEN THE HISTOLOGY SOLUTIONS ODORS THAT PERMEATED THE LAB.

WE WILL ALL SADLY MISS HIS WIT AND HUMOR, BUT JUST THINK AND LOOK AT ALL THE LIVES HE TOUCHED AND INSPIRED. I WILL KEEP HIS GOOD MEMORIES CLOSE BY.

—*JOHN HOWELL*
CORNELL UNIVERSITY, RETIRED

FOUR DECADES HAVE PASSED. I JOINED DR. FAWCETT’S LAB AS A TEACHING ASSISTANT FOR THE ANATOMY COURSE. I WAS ASSIGNED TO HIS LAB AT A SMALL DESK AGAINST THE BACK WALL WITH A WINDOW THROUGH WHICH I COULD SEE THE PARKING LOT WHERE HE USUALLY PARKED HIS CAR. THE COFFEE POT WAS ON THE WINDOWSILL NEXT TO MY DESK. HE CAME BY TO GET HIS COFFEE SEVERAL TIMES EACH DAY AND WOULD CHIT-CHAT WITH ME. HE ALWAYS ENDED THE CHAT WITH “OKEY-DOKE.” HE WHISTLED PART OF THE MUSIC OF “THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI” WHILE HE WAS FEEDING LIZARDS AND CHANGING THEIR WATER. DURING THOSE TWO YEARS, MY ONLY LIFE WAS DIVIDED BETWEEN THE ROOM I RENTED TO SLEEP AT NIGHTS AND THE LAB WHERE I STUDIED AND WORKED DURING THE DAYS. I SPENT LONG HOURS STUDYING TEXTBOOKS AND PERFORMING EXPERIMENTS IN THAT LAB. I MADE AND ANALYZED NUMEROUS HISTOLOGY SLIDES. DR. FAWCETT WAS ALWAYS THERE, READY FOR MY QUESTIONS. HE WAS AN EXCELLENT MENTOR.

I MET MY HUSBAND DURING MY SECOND YEAR AND BROUGHT HIM TO MEET DR. FAWCETT. WE GOT MARRIED THAT SUMMER. HE AND DR. DEGRAW WERE THE WITNESSES AND SIGNED OUR MARRIAGE LICENSE. FROM THAT MOMENT ON, BOTH OF THEM WERE ASSOCIATED WITH OUR LIVES FOREVER. HE ONCE CAME BACK FROM NEW ZEALAND WITH A BIG, BLACK STUFFED KIWI TOY AS A GIFT TO US. I GRADUATED FROM UNO, MOVED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY FOR MY PH.D., AND SUBSEQUENTLY BEGAN MY ACADEMIC CAREER AT WALTER REED ARMY INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH, AND THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES IN MARYLAND.

DR. FAWCETT SENT ME A CHRISTMAS CARD EVERY DECEMBER SINCE THEN UNTIL 2018, AND I RELIGIOUSLY SENT HIM ONE AS WELL. ALTHOUGH HE FAILED TO REPLY TO ME BY CARD, I HAD SENT HIM ONE VERY EARLY, AHEAD OF CHRISTMAS IN 2019. I WORRIED AND WONDERED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM. EVENTUALLY, THE WORST NEWS THAT I HAD BEEN AFRAID OF WAS DELIVERED TO ME, SIX MONTHS AFTER HIS PASSING.

DR. FAWCETT, YOU HAVE MADE A HUGE IMPACT IN MY LIFE, WHICH WAS BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION. I APPRECIATE YOUR MENTORSHIP AND WILL ALWAYS MISS YOU.

—*JULIANN GONG KIANG*
UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

I MET JAMES FAWCETT IN EARLY 1981, WHEN I ATTENDED MY FIRST MEETING OF THE NEBRASKA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY, HELD AT ALLWINE HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY THIS FRIENDLY, ENTHUSIASTIC, DISTINGUISHED MAN WITH AN INFECTIOUS ENGLISH, OR SHOULD I SAY, COMMONWEALTH ACCENT. HE GAVE A QUICK, BUT ACCURATE AND LIVELY SUMMARY OF THE NEW BOOKS, PERIODICALS, AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS ON HERPETOLOGY HE HAD LAID OUT ACROSS THE LAB TABLE AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM. I BECAME A

REGULAR ATTENDEE, AND QUICKLY DEVELOPED A FONDNESS FOR DR. FAWCETT'S PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR, RUNNING THE MEETINGS LIKE A SWISS WATCH, HIS EMPHASIS THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY WRITING, AND AT THE SAME TIME, HIS WELCOMING ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONS FROM A VARIETY OF HERPETOLOGICAL INTERESTS. HE TREATED EVERYONE THE SAME.

THE NHS PUBLISHED A NEWSLETTER, AND SEVERAL MEMBERS WERE DEVELOPING A DEEP, LIFELONG INTEREST IN NEBRASKA'S NATIVE HERPETOFAUNA, AND BEGINNING TO WRITE ABOUT OUR FINDINGS. JAMES FAWCETT OFFERED MUCH SUPPORT AND ENTHUSIASM FOR OUR EFFORTS, AND SUGGESTED WE MEET AT HIS OFFICE TO GO OVER THEM AS A GROUP. HIS TEACHING ENTHUSIASM WENT INTO OVERDRIVE, AND HE SHOWED US, CAREFULLY, EXACTINGLY, AND WITH OBVIOUS PASSION THE CORRECT WAY TO WRITE A SIMPLE SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE. HE THOROUGHLY EXPLAINED THE SCIENTIFIC AND MORAL IMPORTANCE OF PROPER CITATION, THE CORRECT ORDER AND FORM, THE IMPORTANCE AND CORRECT USE OF THE LINNAEAN BINOMIAL, THE GENERAL CHARACTER AND TONE OF THE TEXT, THE ALL-IMPORTANT BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND THE DANGERS OF UNSUPPORTED SPECULATION. HE TAUGHT US THAT A PROPERLY WRITTEN SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE, NO MATTER HOW SHORT, SIMPLE, OR HUMBLE, COULD BE READ, USED, AND REFERENCED BY THE HERPETOLOGICAL COMMUNITY ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD!

THOSE EDITING SESSIONS WHERE JAMES FAWCETT TAUGHT US THE RIGHT WAY TO INTERPRET OUR HERPETOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS, RESEARCH, AND MORE HAVE STAYED WITH ME TO THIS DAY! THEN I REMEMBER HIS ENGAGING "KIWI" ACCENT, HIS PATIENT, BUT UNWAVERING GUIDANCE, AND HIS NOT-TO-BE-CONTAINED ENTHUSIASM WHEN WE GOT IT RIGHT AND THE NEWSLETTER WAS "OFF TO PRESS." IT WAS TRULY AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO KNOW DR. FAWCETT. HE BROUGHT US ALL TO A HIGHER PLANE.

—*JOHN LOKKE*
BROWNVILLE, NEBRASKA

HE FOUND OUT THAT I HAD DONE AN HONORS PROJECT IN COLLEGE INVOLVING HISTOLOGY AND THAT MY THESIS INVOLVED HISTOLOGY, SO HE HAD ME BE HIS TEACHING ASSISTANT WITHOUT FORMALLY TAKING HIS HISTOLOGY CLASS. THIS WAS WHEN I FIRST GOT TO UNO AND I KNEW ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ABOUT HIM—WHY WOULD I SINCE I WAS INTERESTED IN THOSE "WARM BLOODED CREATURES"? HE ALLOWED ME INCREDIBLE LATITUDE IN THE LAB FOR THE LITTLE HE KNEW ABOUT ME AND EVEN LESS THAT I KNEW ABOUT HIM. ABOUT THE SECOND OR THIRD LAB SESSION HE STARTED TO JUST QUIETLY EASE IN THE DOOR AT A RANDOM TIME DURING THE SESSION AND OBSERVE WITHOUT SAYING HARDLY A THING MOST OFTEN, AND THEN EASE OUT AS QUIET AS A CHURCH MOUSE. FREQUENTLY I DID NOT EVEN SEE HIM. IT WAS VERY EARLY IN THE VERY FIRST HISTOLOGY LAB, I WAS IN A LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH A FEW STUDENTS ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIVER AND SPLEEN TISSUE WHEN ONE OF THEM BLURTED OUT SOMETHING ABOUT WHERE HE ORIGINATED. I TOLD THEM THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHERE HE WAS FROM, BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS AUSTRALIA. IMMEDIATELY BEHIND ME I HEARD A HUFF AND OUT CAME "THAT'S A PENAL COLONY" AND THE DOOR WENT SHUT WITH A BANG. I THOUGHT MY CAREER AT UNO WAS OVER. WHEN THAT LAB SESSION WAS COMPLETED, I WENT TO HIS OFFICE TO APOLOGIZE BUT HE WAS NOT THERE. SO I HURRIEDLY WENT TO MY ADVISER, KEN GELUSO'S OFFICE HOPING TO SALVAGE MY CAREER. INSTEAD, I DISCOVERED THE TWO OF THEM LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY. I NEVER MADE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN. ONLY THEN DID I UNDERSTAND HIS HUMOR. AND DESPITE MISIDENTIFYING HIS HERITAGE (CONFUSING IT WITH A PENAL COLONY) AND LIKING WARM BLOODED CREATURES, HE KEPT ME ON DOING HIS HISTOLOGY LABS THE ENTIRE TIME I WAS A STUDENT.

I WAS NOT ONE OF HIS GRADUATE STUDENTS AND HE STILL CARED FOR ME JUST AS IF I WAS ONE OF THOSE FORTUNATE FEW. ADDITIONALLY, HE WROTE ME A MARVELOUS RECOMMENDATION LETTER FOR ADMISSION TO MEDICAL SCHOOL, ASSISTING ME TO GET IN THE FIRST TIME I APPLIED, DESPITE ADMONISHING ME FOR “ABANDONING A FULFILLING CAREER IN ACADEMICS.”

—PETE LUENINGHOENER
ELKHORN VALLEY FAMILY MEDICINE CLINIC

HE GREATLY SHAPED WHO I AM PROFESSIONALLY. I THINK HIS BIGGEST IMPACT ON ME WAS DEMONSTRATING TO THIS KID FROM NORTH OMAHA WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE TO BE A PROFESSIONAL BIOLOGIST. HE SEEMED TO ME TO FIT THE STEREOTYPE I HAD OF WHAT A COLLEGE PROFESSOR WAS: THE MUSTACHE, WHITE SHIRT AND TIE, THE PROPER ENGLISH ACCENT (I FIRST ASSUMED HE WAS BRITISH AS I HAD NEVER HEARD A KIWI ACCENT), ETC. IF YOU WERE TO CAST A 1970’S MADE-FOR-TV MOVIE AND NEEDED A “PROFESSOR,” YOU WOULD HAVE CAST JIM. I REMEMBER SITTING IN HIS OFFICE ONE DAY WHEN HE SAID, “IF YOU PLAN TO BE A PROFESSIONAL HERPETOLOGIST, YOU SHOULD BELONG TO THE HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETIES.” I HAD LITTLE TO NO MONEY, BUT IMMEDIATELY JOINED ALL THREE (HL, SSAR, AND ASIH) IN 1988 AND STILL BELONG TO ALL TO THIS DAY. I WENT TO THE KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS WHERE I SLEPT ON JOE COLLINS’S COUCH AND MET MY HERPETOLOGICAL HERO, HENRY FITCH, AND HAD HIM SIGN MY COPY OF *AUTECOLOGY OF THE COPPERHEAD*, WHICH I READ OVER AND OVER LIKE IT WAS A SACRED TEXT.

WHEN I LANDED MY FIRST FACULTY POSITION AND WAS ALLOWED TO TEACH COURSES THAT I HAD TAKEN FROM DR. FAWCETT (COMPARATIVE VERTEBRATE ANATOMY AND HERPETOLOGY), I WENT BACK TO MY NOTES FROM HIS CLASSES. THEY WERE SO WELL-ORGANIZED AND COMPLETE. HE WAS AN AMAZING TEACHER.

JIM’S KNOWLEDGE OF THE LITERATURE WAS ASTOUNDING AND UNSURPASSED. HE COULD BE FOUND POURING OVER RECENTLY ACQUIRED JOURNALS AS SOON AS THEY WERE DELIVERED, AND HE WOULD OFTEN TELL ME ABOUT ANY RECENT LITERATURE PERTAINING TO MY RESEARCH ON TURTLES. I CAN STILL SEE HIM SITTING AT HIS DESK OR AT THE TABLE IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL HIS BOOKSHELVES, READING INTENTLY, AND JOTTING NOTES. JIM’S BIBLIOPHILIA WAS ALSO TRANSMITTED TO ME. MY OFFICE IS CRAMMED WITH BOOKS! THANKS JIM.

I DID NOT KNOW JIM HAD CANCER, AS HE APPARENTLY KEPT THAT FROM MOST PEOPLE. I HEARD THROUGH FRIENDS THAT HE HAD SOME MEDICAL PROBLEMS. THEREFORE, I NAIVELY ASSUMED HE WAS GOING TO THE 9TH WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND. I HAD PICTURES IN MY MIND OF DR. FAWCETT AND ME CATCHING SKINKS ON THE ROCKY HILLS WE HAVE ALL SEEN IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* MOVIES. I EMAILED HIM TO SEE IF HE WAS GOING AND HERE IS AN EXCERPT FROM HIS REPLY ON SEPTEMBER 5TH, WHICH WAS THE LAST TIME I HEARD FROM HIM:

*HELLO MARK, SURPRISE EMAIL!
NO, I SHALL NOT BE ATTENDING THE NZ HERP MEETING...
FOR ME, THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A MEETING OF A LIFETIME, CATCHING UP WITH
OLD COLLEAGUES AND HEARING ABOUT THEIR RECENT RESEARCH ENDEAVORS, ESPECIALLY
THEIR TUATARA BREEDING PROGRAM AT THE SANCTUARY. OH WELL, I’LL JUST HAVE TO READ
ABOUT IT!
AS YOU CAN SEE, I DON’T GET TO MY UNIV. OFFICE TOO OFTEN NOW.
WELL MARK, HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR TEACHING AND RESEARCH.
ALL THE BEST,
FROM A TRANSLOCATED NORTH ISLAND KIWI,
JIM*

I REPLIED TO HIS EMAIL ASKING HIM IF HE HAD SUGGESTIONS ON “MUST SEE” PLACES ON THE SOUTH ISLAND AND HE NEVER REPLIED. I THOUGHT OF HIM QUITE OFTEN DURING MY RECENT TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE OBSERVED TUATARA AND OTAGO SKINKS AT THE OROKONUI ECOSANCTUARY. HE WOULD HAVE LOVED THAT!

DR. FAWCETT, YOU WILL BE MISSED BY ALL OF US WHO HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SITTING IN YOUR CLASSROOMS AND LABS AND WORKING WITH YOU AS GRADUATE STUDENTS. YOUR IMPACT ON MY LIFE HAS SURELY BEEN PASSED ON TO MY STUDENTS OVER THE YEARS. WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT FOR DR. FAWCETT.

—MARK MILLS
MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

I ADMIT...I AM NOT SURE I AM AT THE POINT IN LIFE WHERE I AM COMFORTABLE THINKING ABOUT HIM AS JIM AND NOT DR. FAWCETT. SOME OF MY BEST MEMORIES ARE FROM TIME TUCKED UP IN THE HERP LAB IN MY LITTLE CORNER SURROUNDED BY JARS OF SPECIMENS AND HELPING TO CARE FOR ALL THE LIVING CREATURES OF THE LAB. I NEVER HELPED CARE FOR AGING LIZARDS, BUT I DID HELP TAKE CARE OF A COUPLE OF OLD *XENOPUS* THAT HAD LIVED IN THE LAB WELL BEFORE I ARRIVED. WHILE I OFTEN HEARD A “JINGOES” OR TWO, I WAS NEVER PRIVY TO ANYTHING THAT MERITED A “TOMMYROT.” I GUESS I SHOULD COUNT MYSELF LUCKY.

I THINK WHAT ALWAYS STAYED WITH ME WAS HIS REMARKABLE RANGE AND NATURAL ABILITY TO TEACH. AT FIRST THIS SEEMED LIKE NORMAL TO ME. I WENT TO A VERY SMALL UNDERGRAD INSTITUTION IN NM AND THE FACULTY MEMBERS OFTEN TAUGHT SEVERAL COURSES. HOWEVER, NOW THAT I AM IN THE “REAL WORLD” OF ACADEMIA I SEE WHAT A TRUE GIFT HE HAD AND WAS TO ALL OF US. AT 42 YEARS OF AGE, I STILL HOPE I WILL “GROW UP” TO BE JUST LIKE JIM SOMEDAY.

MY THESIS RESEARCH HAD ME INJECTING LIZARDS WITH AN ANTIANDROGEN THAT WAS THE MAIN INGREDIENT OF PROPECIA. I OFTEN TEASED HIM THAT I WAS SECRETLY SLIPPING SOME OF THE POWDER INTO HIS COFFEE MUGS IN AN EFFORT TO HELP HIM REGROW HIS HAIR. HE HAD A WONDERFUL SENSE OF HUMOR. I AM PROUD TO BE ON HIS BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR HOW HE SHAPED MY LIFE AND CAREER.

—DENA QUIGLEY
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

DR. FAWCETT WAS TRULY A ONE-OF-A-KIND MENTOR AND ROLE MODEL. HIS GENEROSITY AND PASSION FOR EVERYTHING HE DID WAS INSPIRING AND INFECTIOUS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IN A WORLD THAT SEEMS TO SUPPORT THE MOST VOCAL AND MOST OUTRAGEOUS OF VOICES, HE POSSESSED A QUIET STRENGTH THAT ACCENTUATED HIS GREATNESS. I MET HIM IN 2000, AND HE WELCOMED MY INTEREST IN HIS BELOVED TUATARA. HE IMMEDIATELY OPENED HIS ENDLESS LIBRARY TO SHARE ARTICLES AND PHOTOS OF TUATARAS WITH ME. WHENEVER HE LEARNED OF A HERPETOLOGICAL PASSION OF MINE, HIS LIBRARY WAS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO ME. I WOULD WATCH IN AMAZEMENT AS HE WOULD OPEN HIS CARD CATALOGUE AND SEEMED TO INSTANTLY KNOW WHERE REFERENCES WERE THAT WOULD INTEREST ME. IN 2003 AND 2004, AS I DEBATED AND HESITATED TO UNDERTAKE GRADUATE LEVEL WORK IN BIOLOGY (BIOLOGY WAS NOT AND IS NOT MY CAREER), DR. FAWCETT RELIABLY BUT UNIMPOSINGLY ENCOURAGED ME WITH SUBTLE AND NOT SO SUBTLE REMINDERS THAT I REALLY WANTED TO FORMALLY STUDY REPTILES. WHEN I DECIDED TO EMBARK UPON THAT GRADUATE SCHOOL ADVENTURE, HE CELEBRATED MY DECISION WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM; THAT IS TO SAY, I RECEIVED ONE OF HIS TRADEMARKED KIWI EXPRESSIONS AND AN IMMEDIATE DISSERTATION OF ALL THE THINGS I WOULD NEED TO DO.

AS MY CAREER INTERFERED WITH MY STUDIES, DR. FAWCETT REMAINED FLEXIBLE AND SUPPORTIVE, BUT HE NEVER LOWERED HIS EXPECTATIONS. AFTER MY GRADUATION, WE CELEBRATED WITH A DINNER AT FUDDRUCKERS, AND HE IMMEDIATELY BEGAN ENCOURAGING ME TO FIND ANOTHER HERPETOLOGICAL CHALLENGE TO PURSUE. WHEN MY DAUGHTER BEGAN TO ATTEND THE NEBRASKA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS, DR. FAWCETT TREATED HER WITH WARMTH AND RESPECT. HE SHOWED HER VARIOUS ITEMS IN HIS LAB AND TALKED WITH HER ABOUT HER SNAKES. WHEN SHE BECAME THE RECORDING SECRETARY FOR THE SOCIETY, HE SPOKE DIRECTLY TO HER ABOUT SOCIETY BUSINESS AND HANDED HER THE DOCUMENTS SHE NEEDED TO TRACK. WHETHER HE KNEW IT OR NOT, THOSE SIMPLE GESTURES MEANT A LOT TO HER AND WERE OFTEN TOPICS OF PROUD DISCUSSIONS AT HOME: “DR. FAWCETT GAVE ME THE MAIL!” WHEN SHE BECAME A COLLEGE STUDENT, HIS GREETINGS IN PASSING TO HER WERE THE SUBJECTS OF TEXTS AND PHONE CALLS, “I SAW DR. FAWCETT TODAY AND HE REMEMBERED ME!” IT IS A TESTAMENT TO HIS IMPACT ON OTHERS THAT SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE SUCH WONDERFUL MEMORIES AND STORIES TO TELL OF THEIR ENCOUNTERS AND FRIENDSHIP WITH DR. FAWCETT. HE WILL BE MISSED BY ALL.

—PAUL RODRIGUEZ
KILKENNY, MINNESOTA

I MET JIM FAWCETT OVER 50 YEARS AGO, PROBABLY SHORTLY AFTER I ARRIVED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO TO BEGIN MY UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION. I HAD BEEN A CONFIRMED “KID HERPER,” AND SO I HAD QUICKLY SOUGHT OUT CU’S TWO HERPETOLOGISTS, T. PAUL MASLIN, CURATOR OF HERPETOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO MUSEUM, AND HOBART M. SMITH, WHO HAD JOINED THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY THE SAME YEAR THAT I ARRIVED AS A FRESHMAN. BOTH PAUL AND HOBART WELCOMED ME INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE LABS. WITH A PRIMARY INTEREST IN SNAKES, HOBART SET ME TO WORK DESCRIBING NEW SPECIES OF *TANTILLA* FROM SOUTHERN OAXACA AND CHIAPAS.

MEANWHILE, THERE WAS AN ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE LAB RUN BY AN ENERGETIC REPTILIAN REPRODUCTIVE PHYSIOLOGIST, RICHARD JONES. I DO HAVE A CLEAR IMAGE IN MY MIND OF JIM IN THOSE DAYS. OLDER AND MORE RESERVED THAN MOST OF HIS FELLOW GRAD STUDENTS, JIM WAS A QUIET AND DIGNIFIED PRESENCE DURING THOSE TURBULENT YEARS ON THE BOULDER CAMPUS. THE PERIOD FROM 1968 TO 1972, MY UNDERGRADUATE YEARS, WERE TUMULTUOUS, WITH SOCIAL STRIFE, ANTIWAR DEMONSTRATIONS, AND UNREST FOLLOWING THE KENT STATE KILLINGS IN 1970 THAT LED TO AN EARLY CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY THAT YEAR. THROUGH ALL OF THAT TURMOIL, JIM MANAGED TO MAINTAIN A CALM AND DIGNIFIED PRESENCE AND TO PRESS FORWARD WITH HIS DISSERTATION RESEARCH IN THE JONES LAB.

SOMEHOW, HE TOOK ME UNDER HIS WING, AND I CAME TO KNOW BOTH HE AND GEORGENE. ONCE, UPON HIS RETURN FROM HIS ANNUAL TRIP HOME TO NEW ZEALAND, HE BROUGHT ME A MINIATURE METAL SCULPTURE OF A TUATARA, MOUNTED ON A SLAB OF NEW ZEALAND JADE. THAT TINY ARTIFACT FOLLOWED ME THROUGH COUNTLESS MOVES TO GRADUATE SCHOOL AND SEVERAL JOBS, RESIDING PROUDLY ON MY DESK. MOSTLY, I REMEMBER JIM FOR HIS CEASELESSLY CHEERFUL COUNTENANCE, HIS UNFLAGGING GOOD HUMOR, AND HIS IMPISH SMILE. I CAN’T RECALL A MOMENT, IN ALL THE TIME I KNEW HIM, WHEN JIM WASN’T SMILING. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER JIM AS A KIND, GENTLE, PATIENT, AND THOROUGHLY DELIGHTFUL FRIEND, WHOSE INFLUENCE ON ME, AS AN ASPIRING RESEARCHER, WAS STRONG AND POSITIVE.

—AL SAVITZKY
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

I HAVE VERY FOND MEMORIES OF OMAHA AND DR. FAWCETT. I WAS HIS FIRST INDIAN FOREIGN STUDENT WHO HE ACCEPTED FOR A MASTER'S PROGRAM. MY FIRST MEETING WITH HIM WAS ON A COLD SNOW-CLAD MORNING WHEN HE WAS AT HIS DESK WITH HIS COFFEE MUG AND GREETED ME WITH GREAT PLEASURE.

I USED TO REALLY ENJOY ALL HIS CLASSES, AND THE SNAKES AND LIZARDS "INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE JARS." MY MOST FOND MEMORY OF HIS LAB WAS WHEN I WAS WORKING ON MY THESIS AND SOMEONE GOT HIM A PYTHON THAT HAD AN EGG IMPACTION. HE WAS ABOUT TO ASK THEM TO TAKE THE SNAKE AWAY WHEN HE REMEMBERED THAT I WAS A VETERINARIAN AND COULD EXAMINE HER. I IMMEDIATELY GOT TO WORK AND USED ALL THE LUBRICANTS AND HUMIDITY, AND RELIEVED HER OF HER MISERY. THE BEST OUTCOME WAS DR. FAWCETT DECIDED TO KEEP THE PYTHON AS OUR LAB PET. I NAMED HER KAA.

MY LAST DAY IN OMAHA WAS FILLED WITH LOADS OF MEMORIES OF THE LAB, SNAKES, THE PEOPLE I WORKED WITH, AND MY FAREWELL DINNER AT OLIVE GARDEN WITH DR. FAWCETT. I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER MENTOR TO BEGIN MY JOURNEY IN A COUNTRY WHERE EVERYTHING WAS NEW AND DIFFERENT.

—*GAYATRI SHRIKHANDE*
BANFIELD PET HOSPITAL

I WAS NOT A STUDENT OF THE KIWI. HOWEVER AS A GRADUATE STUDENT, WE WOULD OFTEN SEE EACH OTHER IN THE HALLS OR ON THE STAIRWAY. I ALWAYS ADMIRER HIS PRESENCE. HE WAS A GENTLEMAN AND I LOVED HIS JOVIAL STORIES. HE ALWAYS HAD A FEW MINUTES TO ASK ME TO TELL HIM ABOUT MY REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR THESIS WORK IN THE GOLDEN LION TAMARIN. HIS PARTING WORD WAS ALWAYS "CHEERS." WHEN SUZANNE MOSHER TOOK SABBATICAL, THE KIWI ASKED ME IF I WOULD TEACH A SPRING SEMESTER OF HER CLASS IN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY. I WAS WAITING TO BEGIN A NEW PHASE AND HAD A POSITION WAITING AT UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER (UNMC) THE NEXT FALL SO I JUMPED IN AND TAUGHT THE LECTURE PORTION. SINCE A T.A. SUPERVISED THE LAB I WOULD OFTEN WANDER IN TO MINGLE WITH THE LAB STUDENTS AND END WITH THE KIWI DROPPING BY AND SHARING HIS WONDERFUL ADVENTURES IN NEW ZEALAND. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I ENJOYED MORE, HIS ACCENT OR HIS STORIES.

THE KIWI WAS CERTAINLY A ONE OF A KIND GENTLEMAN, ALWAYS WELL DRESSED, KIND SPEAKING, AND JOVIAL. AND I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW HE AND GEORGENE ENTERTAINED THE UNO BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT. AND BOY THAT WAS A WONDERFUL TIME.

—*JUDY STRIBLEY*
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER, RETIRED