

The Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio



Kent L. Scott Gentian Award for 2017

Since its beginning, our society has been blessed to have dedicated individuals as members who generously share their knowledge, time, and insightful interpretations of nature through writings, leading programs and walks, and through conversation. In Jane McCullams' 2015 Gentian Award introduction for our founding president Ann Malmquist, she spoke of Ann's "gusto and zeal for her unwavering commitment to preservation and conservation of the natural environment and native plants." Reading through our society's *On the Fringe* publications, one thing is apparent, Ann was in good company of dedicated and like-minded folks and her legacy still is. One of these folks is the recipient of this year's Gentian Award; and, like Ann, is an "unflinching champion of the natural environment."

Tonight the Native Plant Society is honored to present this year's Gentian Award to Kent Scott who throughout his life helped guide people of all ages to develop their own set of eyes for seeing the richness and intricacies of our natural world and their own path towards understanding and caring. In early *On the Fringe* publications, I came upon writings by Dr. Richard Lighty who illuminated what attracts us to nature and our responsibilities toward respecting the other species of life we share our planet with. He further asked the question: "Why then is it so difficult to pass this enthusiasm along to others? Kent Scott didn't find it difficult at all to share and pass along the "magic" of discovery through nature study. Just ask Vicki Ball Solomon, Dan Best, Mary Huey, Ann Bugeda, Pat Morse, Pat Biliter, current and past volunteers he worked side-by-side with, me, many in this room, many we've never met.

Kent's lifelong study of nature began in childhood, well before earning his undergraduate and graduate degrees in zoology and education. He taught

biology at Lakeland Community College where our own Judy Barnhart first met him while she attended classes and took care of the greenhouse and set up biology labs for classes taught by professors. Before joining Lake Metroparks in 1971 as one of their first naturalists, Kent worked for Cleveland Metroparks as a naturalist at both Brecksville and Rocky River nature centers. Through his nature education programs, people of all ages learned about the natural world. Two young people were particularly so inspired by these experiences that they pursued nature education as a profession.

Vicki Ball Solomon was inspired and shares: “For a year or so, Kent took time to nurture, direct, and encourage my enthusiasm, so much so that I chose interpretation as my career. After all these years, I’m privileged to now myself join the Lake Metroparks’ team of naturalists. This brings our lives full circle. Kent has left, in me, a living legacy of his love of nature and his investment in young people. I am so grateful.” And, Dan Best, a naturalist with Geauga Park District, who first met Kent as an eleven year old was profoundly inspired and shares:

“As a budding young nature bug, Kent served as a guiding force and mentor during the summer of 1968 or 1969 when he ... guided the Trailside Explorer program at the onetime Rocky River Reservation Trailside Nature Center. What an experience that was for me, an 11 year old kid! A pivotal experience that helped set my compass towards a career in nature education/interpretation. For that I will always be grateful to Kent Scott.”

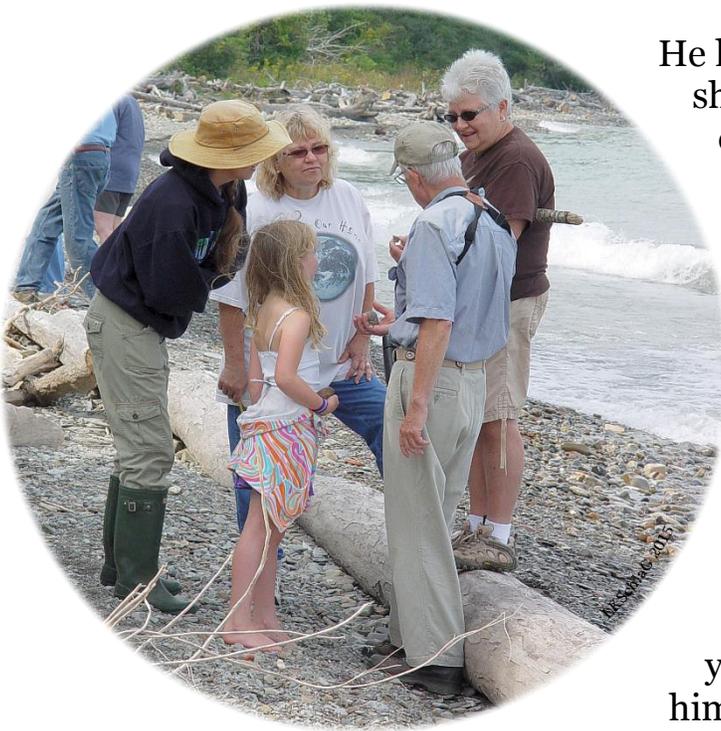
Whether professionally as a naturalist or actively involved with community or conservation organizations like: the Native Plant Society, Holden Arboretum, The Ohio Prairie Association, Blackbrook Audubon Society, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, local garden clubs, and Burroughs Nature Club to name a few, Kent has made lasting contributions and lifelong friendships.

At Lake Metroparks, Kent was instrumental in starting many nature programs for the public and in attracting volunteers to assist with programs and projects. Programs such as gorge hikes at Penitentiary Glen continue to the present and some volunteers Kent recruited are still active with Lake Metroparks. Kent’s colleague and fellow naturalist Ann Bugada remembers Kent as a kind and tenacious man who “lived his environmental ethic and was instrumental in the early years of the park district. He explored every corner of the parks, on or off trail and delighted in sharing nature adventures with people of all ages.

His volunteers were devoted to him and his influence has ranged beyond Lake County.”

Kent appreciates earth’s diversity, and as such, he was eager to engage enthusiastic individuals to share their joy and passion through nature programs so others may learn. To this day, Mary Huey shares her knowledge of birds and nature observations with others and at Burroughs Nature Club meetings and during the Christmas Bird Counts she organizes and leads.

Mary shares: she “met Kent when he began to attend Burroughs Nature Club in the early 1970’s. He was the Lake Metroparks naturalist who launched me on my “bird walk leader” career – I would never have contemplated taking on that volunteer role without his invitation. Everyone knows how impressive and broad his knowledge is in all things nature but I admire him most for his longevity as an advocate for nature and for drawing folks into understanding it and enjoying it.



He has never quit interpreting and sharing his knowledge and love for the outdoors ... Thank you Kent for all you’ve shared with me and with everyone you’ve ever met!”

For a lifetime of sharing his compelling interest in our natural world, inspiring others to develop their own “art of seeing things” as John Burroughs put it, and practicing good stewardship of plants and animals, our members, the public, and all of nature’s creatures he has cared for over the years have been blessed for knowing him. I know I am.

Let us join together in congratulating Kent Scott on receiving this year's Gentian Award for 2017 and in welcoming Hilda H. Reardon who is here to accept our society's Gentian Award on his behalf.

The plaque has a picture of a fringed gentian and says:

Gentian Award
For Dedication to the Native Plants of Ohio
Kent Scott
2017

Lisa K. Schlag, treasurer and webmaster of the Native Plant Society, gave this introduction at the Annual Meeting on October 28, 2017.