Bill Cody Receives Honorary Doctorate of Science from McMaster University, June 5, 2007

William James (Bill) Cody was born in Hamilton, Ontario in 1922. He grew up in Hamilton during the Depression. During summers, he worked on his uncle Bruce’s fruit farm near St. David’s in the Niagara Peninsula. He always enjoyed the outdoors, but it was with the help of McMaster University’s Professor Lulu Gaiser that his love for plants grew. Bill received his bachelor’s degree from McMaster University in 1946.

That same year, Bill joined the Canada Department of Agriculture at the Central Experimental Farm, in Ottawa, as Junior Agricultural Assistant. He was subsequently promoted to Senior Agricultural Assistant, Technical Officer and then Research Assistant. His enthusiasm for the outdoors led him to travel extensively during the summer months across nine provinces and two territories. During these excursions, he collected over 35,000 plant specimens. He has published over 343 articles, including books, scientific papers, and popular articles. He is Canada’s leading expert on the flora of the Yukon and is an Honorary Research Associate with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Bill was appointed Curator of the Vascular Plant Herbarium in 1959. He held this position for 28 years. Under his supervision it became the largest vascular plant herbarium in Canada with more than one million specimens, including the thousands collected by him personally. The herbarium provides a basis for research and identification of economically important plants in Canada.

Officially retiring in 1987, after 41 years of service, Bill continues to go to the office. His expertise in identifying specimens and his knowledge is sought after by the younger generation of botanists. He remains an internationally recognized authority in Canada and continues to contribute to the development of the collection.

He joined the Ottawa Field-Naturalist’s Club when he arrived in Ottawa in 1946. The position of Business Manager of a scientific journal, The Canadian Field-Naturalist was his for over 50 years. His duties included managing finances, monitoring stock, billing for reprints and public relations.

Bill was married for 47 years to Lois and together they raised five children: David, Margaret, Leslie, Douglas and Gordon. Having sung in a barber shop quartet and church choir, his joy of music was very evident. Bill’s baritone voice could be heard resonating throughout the halls of his office and apartment building. He often had a pun or quip on the tip of his tongue.

In recent years, Bill had the opportunity to return to the Yukon four times. Each time, he took one of his children to help him collect and log specimens in order to determine range extensions and also to let them experience a place that had been a large part of his life.

Bill is very proud of his family heritage. His father, William MacPherson Cody, was the first appointed anesthetist to the Hamilton General Hospital. Also, his second cousin, 3 times removed, was William Frederick Cody, known to most as “Buffalo Bill” Cody, a famous hero of the American Wild West.

Among the tributes awarded to Bill are the following: the Lawson Medal, most prestigious award of the Canadian Botanical Association (1997); the Distinguished Technical Communication Award of the Society for Technical Communication (1997); induction into the McMaster University Alumni Gallery (2002); The Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal (2002); and the Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Award (2006).

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Atlas of amphibians and reptiles of Quebec, 2007 inventory

Instructions for participants in the 20th herpetological survey for the Quebec Atlas of amphibians and reptiles, coordinated by the St. Lawrence Natural History Society in collaboration with the Ministère des Ressources naturelles de la Faune du Québec. The data from this annual inventory program are incorporated into the Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec database; to date this database contains more than 60,000 date entries on Québec species. This provincial inventory is done every year with the important cooperation of volunteers. Contributors are encouraged to send their e-mail address and request for instruction on transmitting data, Observation cards in paper format are available on request.

Mathieu Oulette, Research Officer, Research and Conservation, Ecomuseum – St. Lawrence Valley Natural History Society, 21 125 chemin Saint-Marie, Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec H9X 3Y7; phone 514-457-9449; fax 514-457-0769; e-mail: info@herpetofaune.org.

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