

Termite Research Symposium: In Honor and Remembrance Of Professor Jeffery P. LaFage

by

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This issue of *Sociobiology* contains the proceedings of a special symposium on termite research held to honor and remember Jeffery Paul LaFage (1945-1989) at the 31st Annual Meeting of the International Research Group on Wood Preservation (IRG), Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, 19 May 2000. Jeff was an active member of IRG, and worked hard to encourage other termite researchers (including a number of the speakers in this symposium) to become involved with the group. He initiated the Working Group on Biological Problems (Fauna), served as leader of that group for several years, was elected Vice President of IRG in 1988, and would have been installed as President in 1993. In an informal tribute to Jeff, a large number of termite researchers attended the Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, that year and planned several cooperative international studies. The 1990 IRG meeting immediately following Jeff's death was dedicated to his memory, as was the National Conference on Urban Entomology held that same year.

In many ways, this IRG symposium held 11 years after Jeff was murdered in the Vieux Carré in New Orleans, Louisiana, is a follow-up to a symposium held in December 1990, at the Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) in New Orleans. That symposium, entitled "Use of Biological Information in Termite Control: A Symposium to Honor the Late Jeffery P. LaFage," was organized by N.-Y. Su, M. I. Haverty, and W.L. Nutting and brought together 19 scientists from five countries (Su & Haverty 1991). The proceedings were published in *Sociobiology* 19 (1): 1-287. The particulars of Jeff's life and his distinguished but all too short career are described in that volume (Nutting 1991, Haverty & Nutting 1991).

The present meeting is the first IRG meeting to be held in the United States since 1993. The Executive Council and the Scientific Programme Committee felt that this was a fitting opportunity to honor and remember an American colleague and friend who would have been the first American to serve as President of IRG. We (JKG & JWC) felt that

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this was also an opportunity to follow up on the progress of work initially described at the ESA symposium in 1990, to describe progress in research areas pioneered by Jeff, and to emphasize the international connections among termite researchers of which Jeff was such a strong proponent. We invited 15 researchers from six countries to participate in the five-hour symposium, and it is testimony to their presentations and the interest shown by our IRG colleagues that the room remained full for the entire symposium, even though this was the last event of the week-long conference.

The contributions to the symposium are quite diverse, and include discussion of the current large-scale efforts to control Formosan subterranean termites in New Orleans - efforts that Jeff initiated during his time at Louisiana State University. A number of the papers deal with termite foraging biology and the use of baits for termite control, which were research areas of particular interest to Jeff both as a graduate student in Arizona and later as a faculty member in Louisiana. The contributors include both personal friends and collaborators, and a second generation of termite researchers who have been influenced by his work.

As we write this introduction, one of us (JKG) has in front of him a letter from Jeff, dated 2 March 1984, that says (among other things) "I hope that the IRG materials and application enclosed . . . are of value to you." JKG submitted that application for IRG membership (with Jeff's sponsorship), and it has indeed been of great value. The letter closes with "Keep in touch!" In his work with IRG and with the community of termite researchers (cf., LaFage 1986), Jeff certainly did what he could to keep us all in touch. We hope that, by organizing this symposium, we have done what we can to follow his directive.

We thank the IRG Executive Council and the Scientific Programme Committee for encouraging us to organize this symposium and all the speakers for their enthusiastic participation. We are grateful to Dow AgroSciences LLP (Indianapolis, IN), particularly Dr. Ronald J. Sbragia, for supporting publications of these proceedings and to Dr. David Kistner for his expert editorial skills and for making *Sociobiology* available as a venue for publication. This is Journal Series No. 4517 of the College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

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