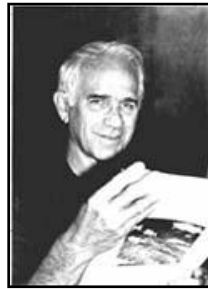


Willard N. Bascom

1916-2000



We are sad to report the death of Willard N. Bascom, our second director, who led the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project from 1973 to 1984. He died on September 20, 2000 at his home as a result of infections resulting from multiple fractures sustained in a car accident in June 2000. Willard Bascom helped to establish SCCWRP as the primary scientific research organization focusing on marine pollution in the Southern California Bight in the 1970s and 1980s. Prior to his directorship, SCCWRP had summarized and reviewed existing data, with some collection of new data to produce the first State of the Bight report for southern California. With Willard's arrival, SCCWRP began active scientific research describing and understanding processes associated with contaminant sources, fates, and impacts in the SCB. Studies ranged from the broad scale (e.g., satellite imagery of the SCB and region-wide surveys) to fine scale (e.g., understanding how contaminants affect biochemical mechanisms in organisms).

He brought photographic and cinematographic technology to SCCWRP, allowing us to visually survey the seafloor, outfalls, and marine life and thus to better understand the environment of concern. SCCWRP actively explored the mainland shelf, island and banks, and the slopes of the southern California basins. Although almost entirely funded by the municipal and county sanitation districts sponsoring SCCWRP prior to Willard's arrival, SCCWRP obtained outside funding from the U. S. EPA, the State Water Resources Control Board, National Science Foundation, NOAA, University of California, and others, during Willard's directorship.

Willard encouraged SCCWRP's interaction with the scientific community and public. He initiated the SCCWRP seminar series, which brought scientists of renown (such as physicist/photographer Harold Edgerton) to speak monthly at SCCWRP, to an open audience of SCCWRP staff and interested parties. He also initiated the SCCWRP Annual Report series, which over the years has included articles and papers reporting the scientific research conducted by SCCWRP. This annual report series had a world-wide readership, as demonstrated by the large number of reprint requests from scientists around the world. Overall, Willard Bascom's tenure as director of SCCWRP was a period of discovery and better understanding of contaminants in the marine environment and of the ecology and physical environment of the Southern California Bight. Willard Bascom's directorship at SCCWRP was only part of a life of achievement in oceanography, archaeology, and a variety of other subjects, being active throughout his life to the end.