



# Audubon of Kansas Board Members

*A view of the Niobrara River from the Hutton Ranch. Photo by Dr. Jackie Augustine*

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Linda Sue Mitchell  
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Paul Willis  
Charlie Wright

# HONORING AOK'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS THAT WE HAVE LOST

*AOK and the conservation community in Kansas and the Great Plains have recently lost several staunch supporters. We include in this issue of Prairie Wings brief notices of these valued friends and colleagues.*

## ■ Marge Kennedy, 1944-2021

Bruce and Marge Kennedy have long been critical components of leadership for Audubon at all levels within Nebraska, the Nebraska Wildlife Federation, and Save the Niobrara River Association which became the Friends of the Niobrara (FOTN). They have added greatly to the success of the Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary and also Audubon of Kansas outreach in Nebraska. Marge and Bruce brought a group of FOTN volunteers to the Niobrara just last May for their annual river clean up, and they stayed at the Hutton Guesthouse. They have been known as active conservationists for nearly a half century. Marge completed her Bachelor's Degree at the University of Nebraska in 1966. She married Bruce Kennedy of Lincoln in November 1965. Bruce and Marge moved to their "place" south of Malcolm in 1972, and in the next 49 years, turned it into a refuge of happiness and joy, horseback riding, cookouts, fishing and fireworks. Marge is survived by her loving husband, Bruce. Marge made friends with everyone she met, and she will be sorely missed.

## ■ Jan Meyers, 1928-2019

Jan Meyers was the first Republican woman to be elected to the United States House of Representatives from Kansas. She represented the Third Congressional district, including Kansas City, from 1985 to 1997. A moderate on social issues and a staunch conservative on fiscal issues, she chaired the House Small Business Committee for two years. Sometimes voting against her party, she declared, "Listen to your conscience and your constituents—if your conscience is different than your constituents', then you'll have a hard time." Her father was a newspaperman, running the *Nebraska Superior Express* in Superior, Nebraska, Jan's hometown. She was particularly proud of the role she played in the long fight to establish the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the Flint Hills. She joined Kansas Democratic Representatives Dan Glickman and Jim Slattery in sponsoring legislation to establish the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. It passed the House of Representatives in 1991, but was stalled in the U.S. Senate until 1996 when Senator Nancy Kassebaum won approval for a revised authorization bill. Jan Meyers enjoyed her family's native prairie pasture in Jewell County. As an AOK Trustee, she also shared pride in the Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary. She thought that House members should serve no more than ten to fourteen years, and chose not to run for re-election in 1996.

## ■ Paul Willis, 1929-2021

Paul M. Willis, a former AOK Trustee and an Honorary Trustee, died on July 11, 2021 at the age of 92 in Salina. Paul, who was born in Cherryvale, Kansas, was an energetic individual who was especially active in issues related to prairies, birds and roadside habitat while on the AOK Board. Paul earned a Bachelor's Degree from Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg, KS, and a Master's Degree from Kansas State University. He taught biology at Highland Park High School and Shawnee Heights High School, both in Topeka, for 32 years, retiring in 1989. He was active in the Topeka Audubon Society (President 1980-82 and 1998-99), Kansas Wildflower Society, Shawnee and Saline County Master Gardeners, Senior Olympics, and the Kansas Advisory Committee on Environmental Education and many other groups. Paul married Lillian Maxine "Lil" Curry on August 12, 1951 in Prescott, Kansas. Lil, who served many terms as secretary of Topeka Audubon Society, preceded him in death on June 17, 2010. He married Barbara Harris on November 26, 2011 in Salina. She survives in Salina.

## ■ Charlie Wright, 1932-2021

Audubon of Kansas was honored to have Charles E. Wright of Lincoln, Nebraska as an Honorary Trustee. Charlie was a prominent attorney, a dedicated conservationist and historian. He grew up in western Nebraska and enjoyed fishing, muskrat trapping and hunting with his father. He served two terms on the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and was a founding member of the NGPC foundation in 1983. He was a friend of Ron Klataske and, following the gift of the Hutton property to AOK in 2001, he, along with fellow Nebraskan and former AOK Trustee Harold W. Andersen, took a particular leadership interest in the Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary. He had a special passion for Native American history and causes and wrote the book entitled *Law at Little Big Horn: Due Process Denied*. Charlie and his wife Suzy established the Standing Bear Scholarship Fund in 2007.





*Mount Mitchell, Winter dawn sunset. Photo by Dr. Jackie Augustine*

## 2021 MEMORIALS TO AOK

### ■ Joseph Poracsky

Joseph Poracsky earned his Ph.D. from KU in 1983 in geography and was a professor of geography for 31 years at Portland State University, teaching cartography, remote sensing, and urban forestry. He also served on and chaired the Portland Urban Forestry Commission.

### ■ Linda Sue Mitchell

Linda was a devoted wife and a loving grandmother. “She wasn’t afraid of hard work or making sacrifices. She was an excellent listener and moral support person. Mom taught us how to bake, sew and do crafts. She also taught us the importance of gathering as a family. She was fairly quiet about her faith but we all knew where her heart stood we knew that her morals and values centered around Jesus. The mountains were Mom’s favorite vacation destination but whether she was in the mountains or back home here in Kansas, she always wanted to take care of the trees and her hummingbirds. She also loved butterflies, dragonflies, and ladybugs. Basically she loved all of nature and felt strongly that we should take care of it. Mom was actually the person who convinced me to start composting.” Memories of Linda were shared with us by her daughter Julie Klahr.

### ■ Daphne Fautin

Daphne Gail Fautin was an American professor of invertebrate zoology at the University of Kansas, specializing in sea anemones and symbiosis. She was world-renowned for her extensive work studying and classifying sea anemones and related species. Fautin has been called “the world authority on sea anemones” by Professor J. Frederick Grassle of Rutgers University. About studying sea creatures from landlocked Kansas, she was quoted as saying, “you only need to be near an airport, not the ocean.” When she retired, Daphne and her husband Bob Buddemeier moved to Medford, Oregon.