

2013 Goldie Award – Adele Crowder

The 2013 recipient of the Goldie Award was Adele Crowder. On October 17th, 2013, FBO President Mike McMurtry and Bill McIlveen travelled to Kingston to present the award to Adele during the monthly meeting of the Kingston Field Naturalists.

Adele Crowder was born in Ireland, completed her PhD on the chemistry of peat bogs at Dublin University, and worked as a research associate in Paleoecology at the University of Belfast. In 1966 Adele came to Canada with her husband Christopher and three children and settled in Kingston where Chris, a medieval historian, was appointed professor in the History Department at Queen's University. Having initially turned down a full-time position in the Biology Department at Queen's in order to balance family commitments, Adele began working part-time in the department, first as a lab coordinator in 1967, then as an assistant to Roland Beschel in the Fowler Herbarium, and eventually as a Professor of Biology. In 1970 she was named Curator of the Fowler Herbarium, a position which she held until 1995. In 1971 she helped to develop a general Ecology course – Biology 202 – which she continued



Adele Crowder receives the 2013 Goldie Award. Photo: D. Menges

to teach with Professor Raleigh Robertson for 20 years. This course took a hands-on approach to field ecology with numerous field trips in the Kingston area and to the field station at Lake Opinicon. Adele was a very involved and approachable teacher who inspired many students to pursue ecology and organismal biology as a course of study.

Adele is quick to tell you that she is not a taxonomist or field botanist – but rather a theoretical ecologist who makes observations in the field and takes them back to the lab to figure them out. Her research accomplishments are therefore cross - disciplinary in nature, and cover a broad spectrum of habitats.

The subjects of her academic publications range from the paleoecology of eastern Ontario streams and lake basins – to studies of aquatic macrophytes, wetlands, sediments and fish habitat in the Bay of Quinte – to metal uptake and toxicity in plants adjacent the Sudbury smelters – to forest succession in old fields. In addition to her academic work, Adele has conducted numerous botanical and ecological investigations and produced 45 technical reports for Parks Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and the private sector. Focused on the Kingston region and eastern Ontario, these include ecosystem and species recovery plans, environmental assessments, feasibility studies and general inventories.

Over the course of her career Adele has supervised or mentored and co-published with 26 students. Among them, Don Cuddy, retired ecologist for OMNR, Dr. Gregory Taylor Dean of Science in the Office of Sustainability, and Professor in the Department of Biology, University

of Alberta and the late Sam Vander Kloet who was professor of Botany at Acadia University. As Curator of the Fowler Herbarium Adele was determined to make specimen information accessible for use. In 1996, she was senior author of the Plants of the Kingston Region and has continued to update that publication with new specimen records in subsequent years. In 2003, she co-authored with Vivien Taylor a catalogue for the Jordon Library exhibition: Mrs. Traill, Mrs. Roy and Miss Boyd: Plant collectors in 19th century Upper Canada. The publication celebrates these three women, whose plant collections were originally deposited in the Fowler Herbarium, and places them in an historical context of Canadian botany and taxonomy at that time.

Adele has been, throughout her career, actively associated with the Queen's University Biological Station (QUBS) at Lake Opinicon and has documented its flora. In 1976 she was instrumental in securing of the Hughson Tract, a significant expansion of land holdings of the station, which enabled long-term field studies and started the series of acquisitions which has provided a significant amount of working property and a substantive conservation presence in the Rideau Lakes area (now in excess of 3,232 ha).

In 1979, Adele introduced the idea of and codeveloped and taught the Naturalists Workshops which were offered by the QUBS for 19 years. These week-long events were designed to provide interpreters, professional field biologists and dedicated naturalists with a broad knowledge of natural history, ecology and animal behaviour, and to assist with identification skills. She also convened one- or two-day workshops on wetlands, species at risk, and other topical subjects to train and enhance communication amongst biologists working in the field. Adele continues to lend her scientific expertise to, and speak out on, local environmental issues.

The 2013 Goldie award celebrated Adele Crowder's many contributions to our understanding of the ecology of Ontario plants and the impacts of human activity on them. She has provided us a model for the modern ecologist who increasingly needs to step outside of disciplinary boundaries and be willing to look at the interactions between plants, animals, fungi and their environments. Thank you Adele.