



## **Lawrence S. Hamilton**

June 5, 1925 – October 6, 2016

Born in 1925 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Professor Emeritus Lawrence Stanley Hamilton left a legacy matched by few when he died in Charlotte, Vermont at age 91. After growing up in Canada and serving as a British Royal Navy pilot in WWII (1944-45) he began a career in nature conservation that included studying forestry at the University of Toronto (BS, 1948), NY State College of Forestry (MS, 1950), University of Michigan (Ph.D., 1963), and University of California, Berkeley (Post-Doctoral Studies, 1965). Larry married Helen Halliday in 1947, and they had four children. He served as a Zone Forester in Ontario, Canada until 1951 when he moved to the US to join the faculty in the (then) Department of Conservation as extension forester, assisting private small-scale woodland owners better manage their lands for multiple purposes.

He transitioned to a teaching/research appointment in 1954, became a naturalized US citizen in 1957, and served as director of the department's Arnot Teaching and Research Forest until 1970. Building on his teaching of forest ecology, Larry developed courses related to ecological analysis, land-use policy and planning, watershed management, and eventually international conservation, which closely reflected his evolving research interests. He was widely respected as an exceptional educator and mentor inspiring countless students to pursue leadership roles in environmental conservation. Representing the feelings of many, former graduate student Peter Willing recently said of Larry: *His first question to me when I asked if he would take me on as a graduate student, was "will you step up to the leadership of the local Sierra Club group?" I said yes. Over the 8 years I was at Cornell, he inspired and abetted me in an unabashed*

*advocacy of environmental principles and causes. That inspiration has endured almost 50 years, and has yet to run out.*

Larry was a visionary about the need for interdisciplinary, applied scholarship to address the challenges of natural resource management. He led the department in initiating what was then a novel and sometimes contested policy and planning focus reflecting the integration of socioeconomic and ecological sciences for the management of natural and environmental systems. At the time of Larry's retirement from Cornell, then department chair Harry Everhart noted: *This pioneering program in resource management that takes into consideration science, sociology, and economics has helped to maintain our leadership in the solution of many environmental problems.*

Larry's legacy is reflected in today's interdisciplinary applied environmental management focus for the Department of Natural Resources and its Human Dimensions Research Unit, undergraduate major in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences, and the Graduate Field of Natural Resources.

Larry also was a 'public scholar' presaging Cornell's current commitment to engagement and experiential learning. He ran a popular seminar in resource analysis for ecologically based planning for decades where successive classes of Cornell students used the local Fall Creek Watershed as a case study for data collection, analysis, and outreach to communities and local policy and management agencies. Larry, with his tray of 35-mm slides illustrating Fall Creek's beautiful scenery, multiple ecological features, various uses, and potential problems, was a popular speaker at formal and informal community gatherings across the region. As he developed his knowledge of water resources he involved faculty in a water resources seminar that led to establishing the Water Research Center (now Institute).

Larry was a pioneer in international scholarship in the department, and a role model for students interested in international studies. He initiated a long-term collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the early 1970s and was one of the first to document the critical importance of tropical rainforest deforestation and mangrove destruction in Latin America.

Larry was appointed Professor Emeritus upon his retirement from Cornell in September 1980. At that point he married Linda Schenck and moved to Hawaii to begin a 13-year career as a Senior Fellow in the Environment and Policy Institute of the East-West Center. His deep commitment to preserving the world's environment grew in stature and influence across the international community of conservation scientists and practitioners. He became widely respected as an advocate for protecting tropical cloud forests and ecological corridors; promoting trans-boundary parks and protected areas for both conservation and peace; and understanding the spiritual, cultural, and ecological values of mountain ecosystems. An active member of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, Larry initiated and led the Mountain Biome theme for almost 25 years. His extraordinary ability to collaborate, communicate, and organize workshops supported efforts of thousands of managers, scientists,

and policy makers concerned with sustainable use and protection of the world's natural resources.

Larry began his version of 'retirement' in 1993 when he moved to Charlotte, Vermont. In keeping with his philosophy to "act globally and locally," he remained involved with IUCN and international mountain conservation, in addition to focusing his attention locally. He and Linda embraced a sustainable rural lifestyle. He was a trustee of The Nature Conservancy Vermont for over 20 years, and shared his expertise and love of nature with the local community through writing, public speaking, and leading many conservation activities. He served as Tree Warden of Charlotte for more than 20 years. A lifelong peace advocate, Larry was active in the Green Mountain Chapter of Veterans for Peace.

Widely appreciated was Larry's approach to conservation, which took into account both the needs of nature and of her people. IUCN colleagues Adrian Phillips and Graeme Worboys articulated this recently: *People loved and admired Larry because they recognized the deep morality that guided his love of nature and his view of the world. He believed in peace unto nature, and peace among humanity.* Linda confirms that: *He was known as a spirited guy with a bright twinkle in his blue eyes and a readiness to share hugs with both people and trees.* We had the joy of knowing Larry since the mid-1970s and fully agree with the superlatives commonly used to describe him: passionate, energetic, approachable, contagious enthusiasm for helping others understand the natural world, lovable curmudgeon, infectious collegiality, youthful energy and love of life, boundless curiosity, person of solid integrity, wise counselor, champion of conservation, and marvelous friend. Little wonder that one of his affectionate nicknames was *Lorenzo el Magnifico*.

In addition to surviving in the memories of innumerable students, colleagues, friends, and family members, the fruits of Larry's work are seen in natural areas worldwide as living legacies available to countless people whose lives benefit from his many accomplishments. His written legacy includes over 400 published articles, reports and books covering topics from woodlot management in New York to the protection of tropical and mountainous ecosystems worldwide. In 1992 Larry created, and edited until 2015, the quarterly newsletter *Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE*, widely read by managers and researchers in more than 55 countries. Some of his professional career achievements have been recognized by numerous honors and awards, including: two Fulbright-Hayes Fellowships (Australia [1969-70] and New Zealand [1978]); the New York State Conservation Council's Forest Conservationist of the Year award (1969); the Environmental Achiever Award from Friends of UNEP (1987); the Sierra Club's Raymond E. Sherman Award (1990) the Packard International Parks Merit Award (2003); the University of Hawaii Distinguished Scientist Award for work on Cloud Forest Conservation (2004); the prestigious (Belgian) King Albert Gold Medal for Mountain Conservation Leadership (2004); Honorary IUCN Membership (2008); and his heartfelt favorite, the recent designation of the *Hamilton Trail* in Vermont TNC's Williams Woods Nature Preserve in Charlotte.

Larry was proud of his Irish heritage and the extended Hamilton Clan that included family in Canada and the US. An honor that especially pleased him was the family's 2005 "Grandpa

Larry" medallion ("Archdruid of the Hamilton Clan, Defender of Sacred Mountains and Tennis Player Extraordinaire") At the August 2017 family wake for him Linda announced that she had been able to complete an important project for Larry, the book *Fences in the Landscape Talk, Are We Listening? A whimsical photographic essay*. It draws from hundreds of photos of fences taken by Larry all over the world 1948-2016, a subject that held his curiosity all those years. The book encourages people to observe the landscape and reflect on the stories that fences can tell about that landscape, its natural resources, and the people who built the fences, and also to remember that all fences are impermanent. It is a product of his life-long enthusiasm for learning and understanding. Linda wrote: *This book is a testament to his curiosity and good cheer, the love in his heart, plans in his head, and mud on his boots.*

In addition to Linda, his professional and life partner of 36 years, Larry is survived by children Bruce (Joan Hamilton), Anne (Doug Johnson), Lynne (Howard Silverberg); daughter-in-law Beth Sachs (Blair, deceased); grandchildren Kate Hamilton (Daniel de la Vega), Patrick Hamilton (Violet Lehrer); Kelsey and Sam Johnson; Joshua and Elena Silverberg; Ben Sachs-Hamilton; great-grandchild Amelia de la Vega; first wife Helen; brother Earl; and several nieces and nephews.

*Written by James P. Lassoie and Daniel J. Decker*