

HAROLD MOSSOP

by JOHN JACK*

*Of such as he was, there be few on earth;
Of such as he is, there are few in heaven;
And life is all the sweeter that he lived,
And all he loved more sacred for his sake;
And Death is all the brighter that he died,
And Heaven is all the happier that he's there.*

— Gerald Massey

“As long as the wild birds sing Harold will be remembered.” These are the opening words of a letter of condolence received by Mrs. Ida Mossop following Harold’s passing on May 26, 1973.

The thought so beautifully expressed, emphasized the part of Harold Mossop that we knew best, his love of nature, the outdoors and most of all, the birds. The great motivation of Harold’s life was his strong belief in a loving God. This faith with an ability to communicate by written and spoken word made Harold the great interpreter he was of the wonders of our natural environment.

Introduced to birding at an early age by his father, he had no formal education in ornithology, but became known and respected for his contributions to the science by professionals and lay people across the continent. In turn, his son David has become a professional ornithologist and also the author of a column, complete with sketches, which remind one so much of the “Chickadee Notes” we enjoyed for many years and which Harold carried on from one of his mentors, the late A. G. Lawrence.

In the Manitoba Naturalists’ Society he occupied many positions — President, Secretary, Treasurer and Auditor. But Harold will be remembered best for his interpretations of birds. His impact on young people in Saturday morning bird walks in Assiniboine Park and his lectures and demonstrations in classroom and field led some to careers in biology. Thus his influence lives beyond his own lifetime.

Just over a year ago, Life Membership in the Manitoba Naturalists’ Society was conferred on Harold. The inscription on a plaque presented at the same time reads, “Manitoba Naturalists Society Award for exceptional merit to Harold Mossop for his outstanding contribution to ornithology in Manitoba, April, 1972.”

Unfortunately, Harold did not have a span of years that might have been expected. An accomplished vocalist, organist and preacher, his church received a full share of his time; he was an honest, hardworking businessman, and he had a happy home life. Head of a family which shared love, understanding, work and recreation, his faith and guidance enabled them to come through the long illness and final parting with sorrow in their hearts but happy and confident in the future.

Harold’s death brings a loss to the community and to the causes to which he devoted his life. In his time he served well and led others to carry on his good works. Thus the influence of a man who believed and worked for his beliefs must endure.

29 Elm Park Road,
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
R2M 0W3