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# IN MEMORIAM

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## GORDON SILVERSIDES, 1927-1994

PAT ADAMS, 401-108 Street, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. S7N 1R1

On July 3rd the Saskatoon Natural History Society lost a member who will be remembered for, among other things, his persistent efforts over several years to preserve the Saskatoon Natural Grasslands (Silver-spring Prairie). Even after the land

passed into the ownership of the Meewasin Valley Authority (paid for with Gordon's \$1.00!), he continued to spearhead efforts to set up the Nature Centre, assemble its exhibits and arrange for volunteers to interpret the prairie. Even though he was



*Gordon Silversides with students at the Nature Centre.*

*Melanie Elliott*

assisted by others, he was the driving force behind the Nature Centre. He used to say, "We must preserve this prairie to show what our farmland came from and to let people see the diversity of life which existed in the prairie ecosystems." To ask Gordon about the prairie was to initiate a lesson in learning.

Gordon, whose parents were teachers, was born in Wolseley, Saskatchewan, and received his Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan. He taught in northern Saskatchewan, Jamaica and Moose Jaw, before retiring in Saskatoon 12 years ago with his wife, Alice.

Gordon enjoyed participating in the activities of the Golden Eagles, a group of seniors in the Saskatoon Natural History Society. He was seldom seen there without his Tilley hat covered with pins or his knitted toque.

Gordon was a perceptive member of the Board of our Society. He had the vision to see things that could be achieved and accepted responsibility for making changes. For example, he was not only a supporter of the concept of establishing a resource centre for the Society but also volunteered to set it up and to staff it each Monday for its first year.

Gordon was always enthusiastic about the outdoors and the environment and carried this over into this career. In 1992, in recognition of these efforts, he received the B. M. Melanson Award from the Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environment Education Association and the Conservation Award from Nature Saskatchewan. In December 1993, Gordon received the ninth annual "Conservation Award" from the Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA) for outstanding contributions to conservation within MVA's jurisdiction.



No wonder that birds of such a feather have been hunted since the days of the Aztecs, when cloaks made entirely of hummingbird skins were worn by nobles of Montezuma's court... With the Victorian age of exploitation and over-adornment, the slaughter of hummers increased. The glittering skins were made into millions of artificial flowers and useless dust catchers. Thus in 1888, in Brazil, three thousand skins of the marvelous topaz-throat were mashed together in a single bale which was disposed of in London at auction, along with twelve thousand other exquisite little hummer carcasses. *Donald Culross Peattie. 1947. A cup of sky. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. (Krutch & Eriksson. 1962. A treasury of birdlore. Eriksson, NY. P. 17)*



Birders: An overlapping term with "bird watchers," who observe the birds' behaviour. "Birders" have special interest in adding to their lists of species sighted. In Britain, they are known as "twitchers" — a term they dislike — and there are currently three paging services that rent beepers to alert them when a rare bird visits the British Isles. *Globe and Mail. 8 March 1994*