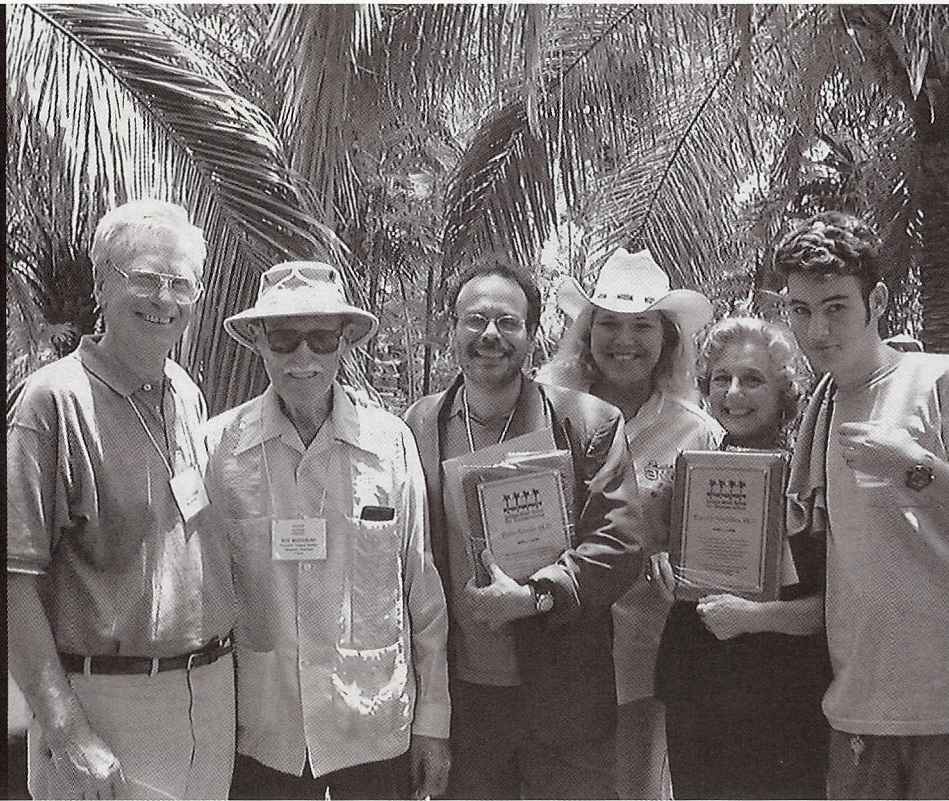


On Sept. 21, 2002, one of our great champions of field botany, Roy Woodbury, died of skin cancer.



“Dad lived, breathed, collected, taught, shared, and even fought in court for native plants—his life’s work and love.”

*Lynka Woodbury*

Roy Woodbury (2nd from left) with (from left): Don Stone, past head of Botany Department at Duke University (where Roy received his master’s degree), Pedro Acevedo, keynote speaker at the Caribbean Botanical Gardens for Conservation Conference 2002 and former student of Roy’s, granddaughter Rita Woodbury, wife Ruth Woodbury, and grandson Royce Woodbury, May 2002.

Born in North Dakota in 1914, Roy Woodbury’s lifelong love affair with plants began shortly after his family moved to South Florida. At the age of five, Roy was tending his own garden. As a teenager, Roy was the first president of the Future Farmers of America in Florida (and second in the U.S.). His first choice of study at the University of Miami (UM) was chemistry, but botany professor Walter S. Phillips so impressed Roy that he changed his major to botany, thus launching a career that spanned more than 70 years.

After earning a master’s at Duke and a doctorate at Rutgers University, Roy taught botany at UM for 20 years. He was the first faculty member to plant native plants at the Gifford Arboretum, a botanical garden on the UM campus. He then went on to teach biology, taxonomy, ecology, and ethnobotany at the University of Puerto Rico for nearly 30 years. Roy also worked as a consultant on endangered habitats to the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources, and was an international authority on Caribbean plants during the 1960s into the early 1980s.

Roy never retired from botany. After moving to Palm City, Martin County (where he was eagerly claimed by our Cocoplum Chapter FNPS), he actively catalogued plants in Jonathan Dickinson State Park, the Savannahs, DuPuis Reserve (identifying 782 plants including 46 threatened/endangered species), and many other parks and wild areas of Martin County.

Some 15 years ago, Roy came across an unusual looking fern on

land owned by the Audubon Society in western Martin County. Daughter Lynka Woodbury, Herbarium Manager at Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, has been working on a description and biology of this new species of endemic fern, which will be named after her father. About a year ago, the fern was rediscovered by Woodbury’s friends and admirers—just in the nick of time. A planned restoration project (to restore water tables and incorporate controlled burns) could have threatened the very existence of this fern, found nowhere else in the world.

In addition to the rare fern, there are seven other plants named for Roy Woodbury, plus there’s the “Roy Woodbury Crooked Tree Trail” in Timer Powers Park, Indiantown, Martin County. Woodbury received lifetime service awards from the University of Puerto Rico, the University of the Virgin Islands, the Florida Native Plant Society, the Caribbean Botanical Gardens for Conservation, and the Conservation Alliance of Martin County.

Many members of FNPS have cherished memories of field trips led by Roy Woodbury. In a recent issue of the Dade Chapter’s *Tillandsia* newsletter, author and FNPS member Roger Hammer recounted how an orchid discovered by one of Roy’s students (on a field trip led by Woodbury), spurred Hammer’s interest in Florida flora and his subsequent career as a professional naturalist.

Fortunately, Roy has left us six children, 11 grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. So we’re bound to have a great many more Woodbury contributions.