

**NOMINATION COVER SHEET**  
 2009 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

<b>1. <u>NAME</u></b> Full (Legal): Ralph P. Eckerlin <span style="float:right">Preferred First Name: Ralph</span>	
<b>2. <u>INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION</u></b>  Institution: Northern Virginia Community College Rank/Position Title: Professor of Biology Year Rank/Title Attained: 1980 Years at Institution: 37 Campus Email Address: reckerlin@nvcc.edu  Campus Phone: (703) 764-6051 Campus Mailing Address: Mathematics, Science and Engineering Division 8333 Little River Turnpike Annandale, VA 22003  Campus Communications Contact: Name: Carlene Mackereth E-mail: cmackereth@nvcc.edu	<b>3. <u>PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION</u></b>  Academic Discipline: Biology Specialization/Field: Parasitology Type of Terminal Degree: Ph.D. Year Awarded: 1975 Awarding Institution: University of Connecticut
<b>4. <u>PERSONAL INFORMATION</u></b>  Home Phone:  Cell Phone Number:  Home Mailing Address:	

*Please check only one box:*

- RESEARCH/DOCTORAL INSTITUTION NOMINEE:**   
**MASTERS/COMPREHENSIVE/BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTION NOMINEE:**   
**TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION NOMINEE:**   
**RISING STAR NOMINEE:**   
**TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY NOMINEE:**

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**President or Chief Academic Officer**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ 

Printed Name: John T. Dever, Executive Vice President, Academic & Student Services

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

### **NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

The mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to respond to the educational needs of its dynamic and diverse constituencies through an array of comprehensive programs and services that facilitate learning and workforce development in an environment of open access and through lifelong educational opportunities.

## SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Many students over the years have felt that they received a great start toward the pursuit of a career in Biology from the gifted teaching of Dr. Ralph Eckerlin. For more than thirty-seven years he has taught a variety of classes at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) including General Biology, Health Science, Human Anatomy and Physiology, and Invertebrate Zoology. Students have nominated him for the Alumni Federation Outstanding Faculty Award and twice for the Student Government Outstanding Faculty award. His classes fill up early because of word-of-mouth student endorsements. Informally, former students come back to visit and to relate stories of their success long after leaving NVCC. Eckerlin has maintained an interest in research and has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals. At Virginia Academy of Science meetings, he has authored or co-authored more than twenty-five presentations that have resulted in published abstracts. Several of these, co-authored with students, were the first such presentations and published work for the student. Eckerlin has a long history of service to his college and his division. He has served on or chaired numerous screening committees that have been instrumental in the hiring of many successful faculty members. He has served on college committees and on the Annandale Campus Council. Within his division he served on professional development, textbook selection, lab manual, and ad hoc committees as well as serving for twenty years on the Science Seminar Committee. His professional service to his discipline is legendary. Eckerlin has held numerous offices in several professional societies and served as President of four of them. He is a member of the editorial board for the journal *Comparative Parasitology* and has been for twenty-four years. He served that journal as editor for five years. He regularly reviews manuscripts for several additional journals as well.

## TEACHING

Dr. Eckerlin began teaching at Northern Virginia Community College in 1971. He still finds it challenging to teach introductory-level General Biology in a way that is fresh, topical, and interesting. His students recommend his classes to friends and seek him out to take additional classes with him. Early on, in the 1970's, Eckerlin taught the first Invertebrate Zoology course offered at NVCC. His logical lecture style, hands-on laboratories, and numerous field trips to observe organisms *in situ* were popular with the students. One of his former students still reminds him of the laboratory exercise dealing with the anatomy of the crustaceans. Eckerlin had purchased several dozen large, intact shrimp from a local supermarket. Each student carefully examined the segmented body, two pairs of antennae, the biramous appendages, etc. Near the end of the lab, Eckerlin produced several large vessels of boiling water. In went the shrimp and everyone ate! Eckerlin suggested that this was just using another sensory receptor to make observations on the crustaceans.

Over the years the interests of students have changed, and NVCC no longer offers Invertebrate Zoology. More recently, many students choose health-related careers. Eckerlin has taught Health Science and Human Anatomy and Physiology courses to many who went on to become nurses, physical therapists, pharmacists, and physicians. The integration of structure (anatomy) and function (physiology) is absolutely essential to understanding how body systems operate. Dr. Eckerlin requires the usual memorization of names and identification of long lists of bones, bone markings, muscles, cranial nerves, etc. However, as appropriate, the endocrine control of each body system is integrated so that the dynamic function of the system is illustrated. How does one test this integrated understanding? Eckerlin still requires written responses to essay questions that demonstrate the students' understanding. "This is not always a multiple choice world," says Eckerlin. Some of the experiential aspects of his Anatomy and Physiology course

are the dissection of a cat (a good surrogate for a human cadaver) and visits to the cadaver lab at the college's Medical Education Campus. Also, students are given a scientific journal article to read and then summarize in their own words. This is as much a writing exercise as it is a science learning exercise.

In addition to teaching at NVCC, Eckerlin taught his specialty, Parasitology, at George Washington University for twenty-five years. His was the only Parasitology course offered in the Greater Washington Consortium. He inherited a course of low enrollment that was offered only every other year. Quickly the course was offered annually to full enrollment, and eventually enrollment swelled such that two laboratory sections were needed to accommodate the demand for the course. Eckerlin often brought slides and specimens from his own collection to supplement what was available. Students were required to attend a scientific society meeting dealing with Parasitology so that they would know that it was a vibrant and relevant discipline. Students at George Washington University elected him to an honorary Golden Key award in recognition of his teaching excellence.

Not all teaching and learning occurs in the classroom. This can be illustrated by the trips Dr. Eckerlin led or co-led to sites in the West Indies, Mexico, and Central America. Many of these trips were made with no financial support from the college and without college credits for the students. Only after "intersession" began at NVCC were credits earned by students. More than twenty trips were made to places such as Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Andros Island (Bahamas), Mexico, Belize, and Costa Rica. To keep costs low, everyone camped, cooked his own meals, and contributed to vehicle costs. Typically several different forest types were visited. Daily walks resulted in observation of the flora and fauna and of the interactions between them. Lectures were impromptu on the trail or around a picnic table. Sometimes nets were set so that birds or bats could be captured, identified, and released. Eckerlin still recalls fondly the exclamations of several students on holding a living bird for the first time, and the joy of watching it fly away upon its release. Different cultures, different life styles, different languages and environments were sampled, all so different from what was familiar in Northern Virginia. A colleague once remarked that for some, we teach them not to be afraid of the dark. When he takes his cat for its rabies vaccine he invariably encounters at the office a young woman who went on one of those trips some –twenty years ago. No, she never became a famous biologist, but she still talks fondly of that trip as a singular, memorable event in her life. She was able to participate within a group in something she would never have done alone.

This letter from a former Health Science student summarizes the experiences of many of Dr. Eckerlin's students:

*"I am about to successfully graduate from the NVCC Nursing Program – a program which is extremely demanding on many levels. As a stay-at-home-mom coming back to school, I was incredibly nervous regarding the journey I was about to embark on. Dr. Ralph Eckerlin was slated to teach my first pre-requisite course, NAS 161. He was the first professor I spoke with – he couldn't possibly have been more kind and helpful in giving me the supportive nudge that I needed. He taught the difficult subject of Anatomy and Physiology with an emphasis on Microbiology AND he did this during the intense six week summer session. (If memory serves, this wasn't even his usual subject.) He taught difficult material in a manner that was understandable and bridged it with relevant subject matter. For example, Dr. Eckerlin plowed his way through the Citric Acid Cycle with no notes to refer to, explaining it thoroughly step by step, and providing relevance to overall systemic functioning. Anyone who actually understands the Citric Acid Cycle has my vote! He also included anecdotes from his professional experiences as a researcher which made the material much more interesting. Somehow, he combined all of this with a smattering of humor, which is odd in and of itself, coming from a scientist. This was a*

*hard class and his standards were high, but I came away with an incredibly solid base of knowledge that I've had to fall back on consistently through nursing school. I couldn't possibly have been better prepared. Dr. Eckerlin is an exceptional representative not only of his department, but of the college. I'm absolutely sure I'm not the only success story out there directly due to his efforts. I hope you will recognize him for his genuine dedication to students and for being an indispensable representative of the college. I am so fortunate to have had him as a teacher.*

*With respect and gratitude, Cindy Broadus"*

## **DISCOVERY**

Although a community college is primarily a teaching institution where there are few facilities for research and only limited support for research, Dr. Ralph Eckerlin has maintained a research program. He came to NVCC in 1971 with some, but not all, of the research completed for his doctoral dissertation. In the first three years at NVCC he completed the experimental work and the writing of the dissertation despite the time and effort required to prepare for and teach several different biology courses. Sometimes staying up all night was the only way to get the uninterrupted time needed for an experiment or to do some continuous writing. Among the accomplishments of his work was the adaptation of a wildlife parasite of squirrels to a laboratory host, the hamster, which could be used for drug testing or other studies. He defended his dissertation in Parasitology successfully in 1974.

Eckerlin's publication record was fairly meager during the 1970's. He had heavy teaching loads and two young children at home, yet the research went on. He began a program to survey parasites of birds and mammals in a suburban environment. This led to numerous presentations about his work at Virginia Academy of Science meetings. In the years that followed, the pace of research and publication increased, abetted always by his understanding wife.

The beautiful Southern Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and West Virginia harbor remnants of the boreal forests and the fauna they support that dominated the two states during recent glacial advances. Here, examination of high-elevation animals led to the addition of a number of flea species to those already known from Virginia and West Virginia. Additionally, the description of a new species of tapeworm from the Southern bog lemming, a boreal relict, is in press. Eckerlin's collecting efforts discovered an unknown population of the federally endangered Northern flying squirrel in the "sky island" spruce forests of Highland County, Virginia.

When the All Taxa-Biological Inventory began in 1998 in Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Eckerlin was there to survey ectoparasites. Several trips, usually made over Thanksgiving holiday, spring break, or during the summer, were taken to sample small mammals and their parasites in the high-elevation spruce and fir forest. These resulted in the addition of numerous ectoparasite species to the list of those known from the park and the discovery of a new species of flea. Small grants from the National Park and from the Discover Life in America Foundation provided a stipend to the students who accompanied Eckerlin.

Dr. Eckerlin took a one semester sabbatical in 1998 to participate in an expedition to Guatemala and Honduras. The purpose of the expedition was to collect small mammals and their parasites from high-elevation cloud forest sites on mountaintops. Little is known about the mammal communities in those locations in Central America and virtually nothing is known of the parasite fauna. The expedition was funded by the National Geographic Society and the US Food and Drug Administration. Five and a half months were spent in the field living in a tent, eating freeze-

dried food, and hiking mountain trails seven days a week. Almost a thousand small mammals were collected and huge numbers of parasites. From that collection publications have resulted on mammal biogeography in Central America, and the description of new species of shrew, louse, fleas, and protozoan.

Eckerlin is a flea specialist. Many have asked, "Why study fleas?" Fleas are anatomically interesting animals in their own right. They are ecologically diverse, and their distribution and host preferences give insights about zoogeography and host evolution.

*"Dr. Eckerlin is one of the top flea experts in the world. He is involved with scientists in the United States and several other countries. The running joke in the Biology Department is that all road-kill must be delivered to Ralph so that he can find any parasite, internal or external.*

*Dr. Mary Vander Maten, Associate Dean for Biology, Annandale Campus, NVCC*

### KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

"Hybrid vigor" is the term used to describe the fact that the offspring may be more vigorous than either of the parents. Eckerlin believes that combining teaching and research produces "hybrid vigor," resulting in a better teacher. Research demands and teaches the individual to be an observer, to pay attention to detail, to be honest and ethical, and to ask good questions. These are qualities that he tries to instill in his students as they practice the scientific method. Dr. Eckerlin frequently visits Central America where he does field research. He takes many photographs of the fauna and the flora. These photos and anecdotes about his experiences are integrated into lectures he gives in his General Biology course.

Dr. Eckerlin is a co-author of the laboratory manual in use at his campus since the 1970's in the General Biology course. In this way he has an impact on the learning of more than two thousand students each year! The lab manual has been a successful way for him to convey his knowledge of biology to others. The lab manual is now in its 7<sup>th</sup> edition, and improvements are constantly being made. Eckerlin has integrated his knowledge and love of fleas into one of the laboratory exercises. The exercise is about taxonomy, and one of the objectives is to learn to use a taxonomic key to identify organisms. Using a picture key to the fleas found on rats, students learn to key out a number of "unknown" fleas to a correct species name. Eckerlin has prepared hundreds of the unknown fleas on microscope slides that are used in the exercise. Students learn insect anatomy, observational skills, and the use of a taxonomic key.

One of the enjoyable ways to integrate knowledge is something that Dr. Eckerlin does in his Human Anatomy and Physiology class. He gives an "enrichment" slide show and lectures about the parasites found in the body system most recently studied in class. He gets a chance to teach about his beloved parasites, and the students learn histologic anatomy, pathology, and a little parasitology. No notes need be taken, and no questions on the exam are asked.

Dr. Eckerlin attended a week-long workshop about the Chesapeake Bay that was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). It was intense! There were lectures, laboratory experiences, museum visits, and best of all, a working cruise on a research vessel. The Solomon's, Maryland, site was a perfect setting. Based on that workshop, a slide show was generated about the Bay and its ecological health. One of the directives from NSF was for the workshop participants to use the slide show and spread the word to others. Eckerlin did so. He has lectured about the health of the Chesapeake Bay at an NVCC Science Seminar, at a local retirement home, at a meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and as a keynote address at a meeting of the Virginia Association for Biological Education.

Dr. Eckerlin has organized two symposia that were well attended and whose results were successfully published. Both were held at the Blacksburg campus of Virginia Tech. The first was entitled "Land Use and Effects on the Biota of Virginia." Eckerlin edited the manuscripts and the symposium proceedings were published as a special number of the *Virginia Journal of Science*. More recently, the symposium entitled "Appalachian Biogeography" drew fifty scientists from all over the United States who were interested in the unique plant and animal communities of the Appalachian Mountains. Eckerlin organized the symposium, generated the funding, moderated, and edited the proceedings, which were published by the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Papers in that volume continue to be cited in the scientific literature.

## SERVICE

Service to the college and the campus takes many forms. Participating in the personnel selection process to ensure high quality instruction is one of the most important duties. Eckerlin has served on, and often chaired, numerous screening and selection committees. These committees have been instrumental in the hiring of many of the successful faculty members in his division not only in biology but also chemistry, natural science, and geology. Other committees that he has served on include Professional Development Committee, Committee of Review, Accident and Safety Committee, Library Liaison for Biology, Textbook Selection Committees, and Laboratory Manual Committee. Dr. Eckerlin founded the Science Seminar in 1992 and served as the one-man organizer of the series for twenty years. He has personally given seven seminars on various subjects during his tenure at Annandale. For several years Eckerlin was the advisor for the Science Club at the Annandale Campus, and he has served on the Campus Council.

Less formally, but equally important, he serves the students of NVCC by spending many hours advising. Eckerlin is one of the professional school advisors for his Division. He keeps current on admission criteria for medical, dental, pharmacy, and veterinary schools and counsels many of the students interested in professional careers. Because many of the students in his upper level Anatomy and Physiology class are interested in health related careers, Eckerlin writes numerous letters of reference for them each year. In other college-related functions, he has served as a co-organizer of a critical thinking workshop, participant in a writing across the curriculum workshop, mentor to numerous BIO 299 student researchers, and an Educational Foundation phonathon volunteer.

In all the years at NVCC Dr. Eckerlin has taken field trips to sites in Virginia to expose his students to the wonderfully diverse biota of Virginia. These trips are optional and are of low cost because they are camping trips. Two standard trips were one to the mountains of Highland County in the Fall and another to Dismal Swamp in the Spring. Much camaraderie was developed between students and between students and faculty members who attended. Always there were salamanders to collect, birds to see, mammals to trap, fleas to catch, and campfires to enjoy. The fall trip enabled him to identify potential Biology majors.

Dr. Eckerlin's service to his discipline is extensive. He is a member of fifteen scientific societies, and he has actively served many of them in one way or another. Among Virginia societies he has served as President of the Virginia Association for Biological Education, Treasurer of the Virginia Academy of Science, and a co-editor of *Banisteria*, the journal of the Virginia Natural History Society. He has held every office in the Helminthological Society of Washington including the presidency in 1986. Similarly, he has held every office in the Tropical Medicine Association of Washington and was its President in 1983. He was President of the Entomological Society of Washington after serving for years on various committees. Eckerlin

has served on the editorial board of the journal of the Helminthological Society of Washington, now called *Comparative Parasitology*, since 1984, a period of twenty-four years. For five of those years he was the journal editor. Despite the time and the effort required by those duties, Eckerlin feels that he should be the one to do them because he does them well and because he is not at a major research institution. Let the researchers do the research and he will help to see that their work gets peer review and publication, if worthy. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Ransom Memorial Trust Fund, whose principal function is the support of publication costs for authors who do not have grant support for page charges for papers in the journal *Comparative Parasitology*.

Two prestigious museums have honored Dr. Eckerlin by making him a Research Associate. One is the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, and the other is the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he is an Associate in Mammalogy and also Invertebrate Zoology. These honors result from the service that he has provided to the museums. Eckerlin supports the mission of the museums by adding to their collections, by identifying specimens in their care, by participating in museum symposia and public events, and with monetary support.

He is frequently asked to give lectures to local groups. Over the years he has done so at Poe Middle School, Lake Braddock Middle School, Annandale High School, Powdermill Nature Reserve, George Washington University Department of Microbiology, Phi Theta Kappa honor society at the Annandale Campus, and retirement homes in Northern Virginia.

One of the honors of which Dr. Eckerlin is proud is his nomination to membership in the Washington Biologists Field Club. This is a small society of mostly Smithsonian scientists who do research on Plummer's Island in the Potomac River. The Club also supports biological research, particularly in the form of small grants to students. Eckerlin serves on the Research Committee which awards up to \$15,000 annually in research grants. He also is Chairman of the Membership Committee and of the Biological Survey Committee. The latter committee was instrumental in getting together sufficient review-type papers on the biota of Plummer's Island to be published as a separate volume of the *Bulletin of the Biological Society of Washington* in 2008.

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

“Most men lead lives of quiet desperation” wrote Henry David Thoreau. I do not. I enjoy what I do, and what I do mostly is **Teaching**. I have been a professional teacher for more than forty years. I have taught at the community college level for thirty-seven years, the university level for twenty-eight years, and even two years as a visiting professor of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology at a medical school. After all these years it is still a pleasure to get up in the morning and go to work. Teaching surrounds me with interesting young students and interesting colleagues. Some of my students are fresh out of high school, some are older but still first time college students, while some older students have prior degrees but seek a career change. It is at the community college that we see the broadest spectrum of ages and abilities. The challenge for me is to try to reach all of them.

I believe that I am an effective teacher because my students tell me so by their anonymous comments on annual evaluation forms. Student nominations led to my receiving two prestigious teaching awards, one from the Student Government Association and the other from the NVCC Alumni Federation. I am always gratified when students return after leaving our college and tell me of their success. Many students that I have taught have gone on to complete baccalaureate or graduate degrees. Some today are nurses, environmental scientists, high school teachers, and physicians. I am proud to have played some small part in their success. Through the biology laboratory manual that I have co-authored, I have touched the educational lives of many students. The *Biology Experience* lab manual has been in use at our campus for over thirty years. Through the lab manual I have contributed to the biological education of more than 25,000 students.

I have a deep concern about the great faunal extinction that is occurring. We are losing habitat and the organisms contained therein at an ever increasing rate. That is why I believe that the type of “old school” inventory and taxonomic work that I do is important. The **Discovery** of new species or the documentation of species distribution is critical to the understanding of how our planet works, how organisms are related to each other, and why they occur where they do. This discovery is exciting and sometimes is revealed in a “Eureka” moment. Sometimes many weeks of study, measurement, and comparison lead to a realization that what is being observed is indeed a unique, new-to-science species. My research has allowed me to describe four new species, and I have several more articles awaiting publication. My interest in research began when I did an undergraduate research project in parasitology at Rutgers University. My master’s degree included research and a thesis. I worked in the pharmaceutical industry for almost four years as a research parasitologist. The Ph.D. degree is, of course, a research degree, and it is tacitly understood that research will continue after the training. I am still excited by studying nature to learn and discover new information. Since coming to NVCC I have published twenty-six papers about my research in peer reviewed journals. I have published on a diversity of subjects including mammals, reptiles, beetles, fleas, lice, nematodes, and protozoans.

**Service** can occur at many levels and in many ways. All academicians are required to serve on committees of one sort or another. I certainly have served on many both at the division and the campus level. Among those that I believe are the most noteworthy are two. I have served on and often chaired numerous screening and selection committees to choose new faculty members. We have a diverse and talented faculty in our division, and I feel that I had a hand in shaping it. The other committee that gives me pleasure is the professional development committee that I chair. This committee evaluates proposals and allocates funds for attendance at conferences and meetings, and for research involving travel. I am, and have been for many

years, the pre-professional school advisor for our division. I try to keep up with the admission requirements of medical, dental, veterinary and pharmacy schools and to give current, accurate information to students.

My service to my discipline is extensive. I belong to fourteen scientific societies and have served eight of them as an officer or committee member. I have been honored to serve as president of the Virginia Association for Biology Education, The Entomological Society of Washington, The Helminthological Society of Washington, and the Tropical Medicine Association of Washington. As a recognized researcher in my field I am frequently called upon to serve as a peer reviewer of manuscripts by editors of journals. I serve on the editorial board of the journal *Comparative Parasitology* and have done so for twenty-four years. I have contributed thousands of specimens to museums and to colleagues. These specimens have been and will continue to be used by scientists doing whole-organism or molecular work in biology.

There must be a bit of the “ham” in teachers because we like to perform before an audience. I frequently give lectures to grade school or high school classes, and at retirement homes. In order to reach the audience I have to make the talk understandable for them. In a sense I am **Integrating Knowledge** from a very technical level to a more friendly and understandable level. I usually take a few props with me and show some of the animals I am talking about with specimens from our college collection. Lectures to older audiences work better by being illustrated by a slide show. Here, the changes in technology have caused me to abandon the slide projector and use PowerPoint presentation.

Some of my field research in Virginia has been in the beautiful mountains of western Virginia. I am astounded at the large number of boreal species, literally left over from the last ice age, that occur at high elevations in the Appalachians. Accordingly, I helped organize a symposium on the biogeography of the Appalachians. The symposium was attended by more than fifty scientists from all over the United States and the talks given touched on a huge range of topics. I edited the papers, and the symposium proceedings were published as a special publication of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. I still see papers from that issue being cited in the professional literature.

On looking back, it is obvious that I was trained to be a researcher and did in fact work as one for a while. The bulk of my career has been as a teacher. I have been fortunate to be able to balance the two and each has made the other stronger. If my students continue to describe me as effective and successful, I will continue teaching for a few more years.

**ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITAE  
RALPH PETER ECKERLIN**

**EDUCATION**

Ph.D.	1975	Zoology/Parasitology	University of Connecticut
M.S.	1962	Zoology	University of Miami
A.B.	1960	Biological Science	Rutgers University

**PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS**

1960 University of Miami – Research Assistant  
1961-1962 University of Miami – NIH Parasitology Training Grant  
1962-1966 Lederle Laboratories, American Cyanamid Co. – Research Parasitologist  
1966-1967 University of Connecticut – Teaching Assistant  
1967-1968 University of Connecticut – American Cyanamid Co. Educational Fellowship  
1969-1970 University of Connecticut – Teaching Assistant  
1970-1971 University of Connecticut – Assistant Professor of Biology  
1971-present Northern Virginia Community College – Instructor to Professor of Biology  
1980-2004 George Washington University – Professorial Lecturer in Biology

**SELECTED HONORS**

1967-1968 American Cyanamid Co. Educational Fellowship  
1992 Listed in American Men and Women of Science  
1993 Anniversary Award – Helminthological Society of Washington  
1995 Student Government Association Most Outstanding Faculty Award  
1995 Member Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society  
1997 Cecil Shuler Open Moment Scholarship  
2003 President's Sabbatical  
2007 NVCC Alumni Federation Outstanding Faculty Member – Annandale  
2008 NVCC Educational Foundation Outstanding Faculty Award

**COURSES TAUGHT**

General Biology BIO101-102  
Supervised Study BIO 299 (Tropical Ecology in Costa Rica)  
Health Science NAS 161-162  
Body Function and Structure BIOL 130  
Invertebrate Zoology BIOL 214-215  
Human Anatomy and Physiology BIO 231-232  
Parasitology BIO 141 (At George Washington University)

**SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

Eckerlin, R. P. 2006. Checklist of the fleas (Siphonaptera) of Guatemala. *In* Enio Cano (ed.) Biodiversidad de Guatemala Ch. 32 pp. 453-456. Univ. del Valle Guatemala

Bulmer, W., R.P. Eckerlin, and E. Thompson. 2005. First records of the Rock Vole (*Microtus chrotorrhinus*) in Maryland. *The Maryland Naturalist* 47:21-24

Cook, J. A., E. P. Hoberg, et al., and R. P. Eckerlin. 2005. Beringia: Intercontinental exchange and diversification of high latitude mammals and their parasites during the Pliocene and Quaternary. *Mammal Study* 30:33-44

Eckerlin, R. P. 2005. Fleas (Siphonaptera) of the Yucatan Peninsula (Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan), Mexico. *Caribbean Journal of Science* 41:152-157

Lewis, R. E. and R. P. Eckerlin. 2004. A new species of *Hystrichopsylla* Taschenberg, 1880 (Siphonaptera:Hystrichopsyllidae) from Guatemala. *Proceedings of the*

- Entomological Society of Washington 106:757-760
- Hastriter, M. W. and R. P. Eckerlin. 2003. *Jellisonia painteri* (Siphonaptera: Ceratophyllidae), a new species of flea from Guatemala. *Annals of Carnegie Museum* 72:215-221
- Duszynski, D. W., R. P. Eckerlin, and T. J. McCarthy. 2003. *Eimeria* species from *Cryptotis* shrews (Insectivora: Soricidae) with description of a new species. *Journal of Parasitology* 89:974-977
- Patterson-Kane, J. C., R. P. Eckerlin, E. T. Lyons, and M. A. Jewell. 2001. Strongyloidiasis in a Cope's grey tree frog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*). *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine* 32:106-110
- Durden, L. A. and R. P. Eckerlin. 2001. *Polyplax guatemalensis* sp. n. (Phthiraptera: Anoplura), a new sucking louse from *Peromyscus grandis*, a montane cloud forest rodent from Guatemala. *Folia Parasitologica* 48:69-72
- Eckerlin, R. P. and H. F. Painter. 2000. New records of fleas from West Virginia. *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington* 102:969-974
- Eckerlin, R. P. 1999. *Appalachian Biogeography* (Editor). Virginia Museum of Natural History Special Publication Number 7, Martinsville Virginia. 258 pp.
- Eckerlin, R. P. and H. F. Painter. 1995. First record of *Tamiophila grandis* (Insecta: Siphonaptera) from Virginia. *Banisteria* 6:24-25
- Eckerlin, R. P. and H. F. Painter. 1993. The Star-nosed Mole, *Condylura cristata*, a new host for *Leptinus orientamericanus* (Coleoptera: Leptinidae) in Virginia. *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington* 95:639
- Eckerlin, R. P. 1993. Helminth parasites from two populations of the Delmarva fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger cinereus*) in Maryland and Virginia. Pages 53-56 in Moncrief, N. D., J. W. Edwards, and P.A. Tappe eds. *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on Southeastern Fox Squirrels, Sciurus niger*. Virginia Museum of Natural History Special Publication Number 1
- Eckerlin, R. P. 1991. The herpetofauna of George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Virginia. *Catesbeiana* 11:11-17
- Pagels, J. F., R. P. Eckerlin, J. R. Baker, and M. L. Fies. 1990. New records of the distribution and the intestinal parasites of the endangered northern flying squirrel, *Glaucomys sabrinus* (Mammalia: Sciuridae), in Virginia. *Brimleyana* 16:73-78

### **SELECTED SERVICE TO COLLEGE**

- Founder of the Science Seminar Program - 1972
- Committee of Review – 1974
- Annandale Campus Safety and Accident Committee – 1975
- Annandale Campus Council – 1977
- Co-organizer Critical Thinking Workshop 1992
- Mentor to BIO 299 students (numerous)
- Chair or member of numerous screening committees to hire new faculty and staff
- Chair or member Division Professional Development Committee 2001- present
- Division Library Liaison for Biology 2005- present

### **SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

- President – Tropical Medicine Association of Washington 1983
- Editorial Board – Comparative Parasitology 1984- present
- President – The Helminthological Society of Washington 1986
- Editor – Comparative Parasitology 1988-1993
- Ad hoc reviewer for 20 journals (1982-present)
- President – Virginia Association for Biological Education 1995

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT (EXCERPTED)

I have known Ralph for a number of years, both as a colleague and a friend. We have spent many hours together in the field in Guatemala, often under less than ideal conditions. He is exactly the kind of person whom I would have wanted as a teacher when I was an undergraduate, because he helps make the hard work enjoyable. As a scientist, Ralph is meticulous. As a world expert on Siphonaptera (fleas), his work is relevant both because of the potential importance of mammalian ectoparasites to human health and well-being and because of the relatively few specialists on fleas that exist worldwide. Ralph's knowledge and appreciation for other areas of parasitology are almost as impressive. In addition to his many publications on fleas, his work includes numerous papers and presentations on helminths, lepidoptera (parasitic beetles), anoplurans (lice), coccidia (an internal parasite), cimicids (parasitic true bugs), mites, and internal nematodes. These all represent relatively poorly-known groups of organisms that are of potential interest for human health. Beyond this, Ralph has also published on amphibians and reptiles and mammals, thus showing a breadth of ability that is rarely seen among modern biologists. Having taught full time for a number of years at predominantly undergraduate institutions, I understand the value of an active research program for keeping current in one's field and maintaining an interest that is transferable to one's teaching. Ralph's breadth of knowledge served him as a co-author through five editions of a college textbook of biology, and it makes him an invaluable asset to his students. He is invaluable to his students, both by being accessible and as a role model, setting a positive example of scientist, teacher, and mentor.

*Dr. Neal Woodman, Curator of Mammals, Smithsonian Institution*

Dr. Eckerlin is an example of the true scholar-researcher. He is one of the most respected faculty members in the college, by students, staff, and fellow biologists. Dr. Eckerlin is a student advisor who spends many hours assisting students who intend to go to professional schools. He keeps in contact with state medical schools and other professional schools to be sure his information is correct and up-to-date. Dr. Eckerlin is a most popular instructor. He brings models, stuffed animals and birds, and animal and human skeletons to illustrate points in lectures. He is always walking down the hall with a tray of materials just before a lecture. He uses wonderful examples of his many escapades during field research to enliven his classes. Dr. Eckerlin is one of the top flea experts in the world. He is involved with scientists in the United States and several other countries.

*Dr. Mary Vander Maten, Assistant Dean of Biology, Annandale Campus, NVCC*

Dr. Eckerlin has been teaching at NOVA since 1971. During those 37 years, he has taught lecture and laboratory courses in General Biology, Health Science, Human Anatomy and Physiology, and Invertebrate Zoology. He has developed two new courses which are being taught throughout the Virginia Community College System. In my capacity as the division dean, I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Eckerlin on numerous occasions as well as observe him teaching in the classroom and laboratory and interacting with students in a variety of other academic settings. Dr. Eckerlin's academic qualifications and unique professional attributes in teaching, research, publication, service to academic circles and the State of Virginia are unique. Dr. Eckerlin possesses a rare combination of an incredible intellectual capacity, incomparable work-ethic, vast knowledge and experience, personal humility and modesty, a hands-on attitude and serves as a natural everlasting teacher. Students, faculty and staff equally respect and seek to emulate him. For the period of 37 years Dr. Eckerlin has consistently received stellar evaluations from his students, colleagues and administrators. He is admired and appreciated by his colleagues.

*Dr. Abbas Eftekhari, Dean Division of Mathematics, Science and Engineering, NVCC*

I began work at the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College as an instructor over 25 years ago. And, as an instructor, I was in the same division as Dr. Eckerlin. Dr. Eckerlin has the reputation as an excellent faculty member and a wonderful colleague. Winning the Annandale Student Government Association Most Outstanding Teacher Award in 1995 and the Alumni Association Annandale Faculty Member of the Year in 2007 are just two of the testaments to this reputation. I understand that he also won the Honorary Golden Key Award at George Washington University where he taught for 25 years as an adjunct professor. This does not surprise me. Dr. Eckerlin began his work at NOVA as a lecturer, wrote his Ph.D. while here, and rose to the rank of Professor. I also began as a lecturer and received my Doctorate of Arts while teaching here. I know firsthand how difficult it is to teach full time and work on an advanced degree and I commend those that are able to do so. Beyond his participation in instruction and professional activities, Dr. Eckerlin has shared his research with colleagues and students. In 1998 he received a sabbatical to do field research in Honduras and Guatemala. When he returned, he gave a presentation about his research to the college community at Convocation. Not only did I find his research and delivery of information interesting to listen to, but Dr. Eckerlin has a great sense of humor. Dr. Eckerlin's list of contributions is extensive and contains many examples of his professionalism, service and teaching. He is truly an outstanding faculty member and I am proud that he is a member of my campus and College.

*Dr. Barbara Saperstone, Provost, NVCC*

I have known Ralph Eckerlin as a friend and colleague for more than 40 years. Since Ralph and I are officemates, I can attest to his daily routine. He makes himself available 7 days per week, assisting students, adjunct faculty, or anyone entering the office area, oftentimes after normal workday hours when the administrative staff has already gone home for the day. When not teaching a class or assisting others, Ralph immerses himself in his research. Ralph studies the relationships of small mammals between Alaska and Siberia. An important aspect of this research involves the identification of ectoparasites, particularly fleas, found on the animals on both sides of the Bering Sea. Because each flea species is host specific, biological clocks can be designed to explain the origin of new world mammals via this corridor. This extremely important research with which Ralph is involved is known as the Beringian Coevolution Project. In addition to this research, Ralph has written numerous publications on fleas of Virginia and West Virginia. He has lead students on collecting trips to Highland County, Virginia, and Pocahontas County, West Virginia, for 25 consecutive years. Through his field research new state records of fleas have been recorded and new species have been described! Due to both Ralph's enthusiasm for fieldwork and his expert tutelage, he has motivated many students to continue their education to the graduate level and to pursue careers in biology. Besides his indoor laboratory expertise, Ralph is an excellent teacher in the outdoor laboratory. Ralph developed a mandatory field trip to a local nature reserve as an ecology lab. This field exposure yields rave reviews from the students and offers a nature experience to many students who have never had the opportunity to observe local wildlife firsthand.

*Walter Bulmer, Associate Professor of Biology, NVCC*

Ralph and I have collaborated on several research projects involving mammals and their ectoparasites from Nuclear Central America. We have presented the results of several research papers at scientific meetings starting in 1997. The research has resulted in a published paper concerning the geographic distribution of a relatively rare carnivore, the Olingo in Central America and one paper in press dealing with distributional pattern of Coyotes in Guatemala. Our current research projects involve studying the geographical distributions and ecology of small mammals and their ectoparasites from Guatemala. In our professional work together, Ralph has

shown himself to be a diligent, insightful, and innovative scholar. He is able to envision new ways to approach our research questions. He is always very professional and thorough in his work. His scientific integrity and scholarship are beyond reproach. Ralph has been the driving force in our field research these past 11 years. He takes the initiative to plan our field work, and, is meticulous in seeing that these plans are carried out by the field team. Without his diligence and foresight our field work would not be as productive as it has been. Ralph is an excellent science educator. In our work in Central America, we often have local students with us in the field. He is always helping them to understand field biology concepts and theories. He is able to give “spur of the moment” lecture/demonstrations of complex ideas. The students are amazed at his depth of knowledge. He takes questions very professionally from the students while being able to maintain a sense of humor. The students are very impressed with his knowledge, humor, and abilities.

*John O. Matson, Professor of Biology, San Jose State University*

When I first started teaching biology at NOVA in 1973 I had a very broad background in cell and molecular biology but my expertise in some of the traditional aspects of the field, such as anatomy, were not so strong. Dr. Eckerlin willingly and cheerfully agreed to stay after his general biology labs to bring me “up to speed” on some of the finer points of anatomy and physiology that I felt needed some strengthening. I quickly appreciated what an excellent teaching style he had and have never been surprised at the respect and popularity he has earned from his students. For several years my office was directly across the hall from where Dr. Eckerlin taught Human Anatomy and Physiology. Many were the days that I would entirely forget what I was supposed to be doing in my office and instead was drawn to just listen to his lectures. Not only does he present material in a masterful way, but he sprinkles his coverage with interesting, amusing, and fascinating details that no textbook author would think to include. No wonder at all that he has received two prestigious teaching awards from the College. Dr. Eckerlin is also an active scholar, in addition to being a splendid teacher. It is not easy to carry out an active research program at a community college, but Dr. Eckerlin has found it possible to do so. He has invested the time, energy, dedication and creative funding skills to bring his efforts to fruition. He is an invaluable member of our faculty.

*Robin W. Gorham, Professor of Biology, NVCC*

I have known Ralph personally since 1988 when I was his sponsor for a grant to study *Acanthamoeba* in the Potomac River awarded by the Washington Biologists Field Club (WBFC). For several years prior to that I had heard of the NVCC “flea man” who also taught parasitology at George Washington University. I was sufficiently impressed to second Ralph for membership in the WBFC, which is a century-old organization whose past and present membership is a veritable who’s who of prominent biologists in the greater Washington, DC area. Ralph has proven to be a willing and capable member and is currently on the Research Committee and chairs the Biodiversity and Membership committees of the WBFC. I also know Ralph in another capacity. For over ten years I have accompanied Ralph and colleagues on annual Columbus day weekend field trips to Highland Co., Virginia, and Pocahontas Co., West Virginia. These field trips, always attended by a varying number of past and present students, are part of a long-term survey of small mammals and their ectoparasites of the region. I have watched and listened to Ralph as he brushed the mammals we trapped and recovered their ectoparasite, all the while discussing and explaining the biology of the enterprise and answering questions from students. The depth and breadth of his knowledge is impressive. My two daughters (as elementary, secondary, and high school students) usually accompanied me on those outings. They often commented to me and others that Ralph made biology interesting and on how much they had learned from talking to him as he worked on his fleas.

*Alfred L. Gardner, Curator of Mammals, Smithsonian Institution*

## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Responses to questions about Dr. Eckerlin by NVCC students on the 2007 evaluation form

"Dr. E is very enthusiastic and explains the material in an easily understandable manner."

"He was knowledgeable and showed it."

"Best teacher I've had at NOVA."

"I liked that he told stories from his personal experience which were related to what we were learning."

"He has great enthusiasm."

"He knows how to make the class interesting and enjoyable."

"I like the in depth explanations and enthusiasm."

"He's funny."

"I like his teaching style. He makes Bio interesting."

"He is by far my favorite professor."

"I think he was very professional and has a great personality."

"The professor is funny and energetic. He is very knowledgeable on the subjects discussed in class and always answers student's questions."

"The teacher made the material fun and easy to understand."

"The teacher made me enjoy the material."

"He teaches well."

A condensed item analysis of the student evaluations was performed by the Division Dean on the 2007 forms. Responses of 1 were excellent, 2 very good, 3 good, 4 fair, and 5 unsatisfactory. Items 5 and 8 were directed at the instructor's performance, not the course. Item 5 – The instructor presents the material in a well-organized manner and uses examples in class. For General Biology BIO 101, 92% were excellent or very good; the class means value was 1.28. For Human Anatomy and Physiology BIO 231, 100% were excellent or very good; the class means value was 1.05.

Item 8 – The instructor conveys his knowledge of the material with enthusiasm. For General Biology BIO 101, 96% were excellent or very good; the class means value was 1.24. For Human Anatomy and Physiology BIO 231, 100% were excellent; the class means value was 1.00.

Excerpts from student letters

I have been very fortunate to have had you as my Biology professor. These past two semesters at NOVA have been my favorite because I have been in your class. You introduced me to all sorts of fascinating aspects of Biology and gave me the knowledge and confidence I needed to decide that Biology is the right field of study for me. I've learned a tremendous amount of valuable information in both BIO 101 and 102 and always looked forward to attending your class. You always had such a great way of presenting the material. I will be attending a California university to obtain my Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Biology. I have really enjoyed your class, and again, thank you for your inspiration.

*Tyllila Best*

This letter is long overdue. I have been wishing to write you for about 6 years now. I just have not been able to find such joy in learning, as I experienced during your classes. I vividly remember the excitement of awaking on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It's very easy to learn when you are having fun. I wanted to thank you for your contagious interest and love for life, as well as your inspiration to be passionate and generous. I finished my BA in Biology at UVA with

honors. I finished Medicine at UVA as well. Now I'm in Gainesville, FL, in the middle of my surgery residency. I just wanted you to know that you made a difference to me and I always remember you fondly.

*Joyce Barreda, MD*

I took a position at Dematha Catholic High School where I will be teaching Biology. I would like to thank you for being such a good teacher. It was during your Biology class that I changed my major to Biology. It was your excellent teaching that helped my interest in Biology grow. It was your help and advice (even after I left NOVA) that spurred me on to succeed at GMU. There is no way I can pay you back for all you have given me, but perhaps I can pass the gift on to my students.

*Mark Syvret, MS*

Dr. Eckerlin, I would like to say thank you for everything you have done for me this past school year, but most importantly for believing in me. I have decided to attend MCP Hahnemann for an MPH program in the fall. Your class was a major influence on my decision to pursue this path. You were one of the best professor's I have had at GWU and I will definitely carry the knowledge you have given me forever.

*Jena Lau, BS*

We appreciate your passion and dedication which you brought to the classroom every day. Your lectures impacted us much further than the classroom. You will be missed and never forgotten.

*Francis Alaniz and Mario Flores*

Thank you again so much for all of your help. I couldn't have asked for a better instructor/advisor. You have been a tremendous help to me.

*Chelsea Reamy, BS*

Few people are as well suited to the profession of teaching as Ralph Eckerlin. Colorful lectures complete with demonstrations and humorous anecdotes are the standard in his class. Outside and in the field, he shows students real life examples of lecture topics, turning a mundane log in the forest into an ecology lesson by pointing out the organisms which live inside and work to return it to the soil. When I walked into Ralph's Biology 101 class years ago I stumbled into the best thing that could have happened to my college career. Beyond the classroom Ralph is tirelessly involved with his students. If he is in, his office door is open to anyone who wants to talk biology. Many times my freshman year I went in with a question and came out not only with an answer but the story behind it as well. By using analogies involving my own life experiences he was able to make the lesson stick. Once I came into his office after I had fallen and broken my front teeth. He cheered me up by saying that I would have fit right in with a certain African tribe who deliberately inflicts a similar injury on tetanus victims, for feeding purposes. Of course I have never forgotten that a clenched jaw is a symptom of tetanus! After that first year I moved on to other biology courses but continued to seek advice from Ralph. Without fail, Ralph was there not only to answer questions and help with administrative tasks, but also to involve me in the practical side of biology. My first field work experiences involved collecting fleas for his ongoing survey and I became a member of several professional societies after he invited me to attend meetings. For all four years of my college education Ralph provided not only inspiration and encouragement but also followed through with concrete assistance. He wrote letters of recommendation for me when I applied to schools for my bachelor's degree and then for graduate school. He has offered advice on research project topics and designs, and helped me with the field work to carry them out. Above all, Ralph has been and continues to be my friend and mentor. *M. Josephine Babin, AS, BS, MS*

Excerpts of letters from academic and professional colleagues

The students have made it a point to tell me that you are a superlative teacher – students rarely come in to praise. I just thought you'd like to know that, and would like to add my personal thanks; I share the students' opinion.

*Steve Schiff, Biology Department Chairman, George Washington University*

I want you to know how much I enjoyed working with you during your five year term as Editor of the Journal of the Helminthological Society of Washington. Your professionalism and your consideration for both authors and reviewers are unsurpassed, and you have made a major contribution to parasitology by your dedicated service. We all owe you a debt of gratitude for your unselfish contribution of your time and effort, and you have made my service on the Editorial Board a genuine privilege.

*William F. Font, Southeastern Louisiana University*

I wish to commend you on the excellent job that you did as editor of Journal of the Helminthological Society of Washington. I cannot believe that it has been 5 years. Your help was greatly appreciated.

*David S. Lindsay, Auburn University (now at Virginia Tech)*

You have done a wonderful job with the journal. It is indeed a high-quality; necessary outlet for Parasitology literature, and you did a very special job increasing its worthiness. I will miss your patience and understanding.

*Robin M. Overstreet, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Ocean Springs, Mississippi*

Dr. Eckerlin has been a member of our faculty for many years. I consider him to be among the top two or three teachers on our faculty. His students consistently rate him highly, and his colleagues hold him in high regard. His Assistant Division Chairman considers him to be the "best all-round faculty member in Biology". He is a very quiet person who does not "toot his own horn," but he knows how to deliver in fulfilling his teaching responsibilities. He always can be counted upon to do more than just what is expected or required. He puts in many hours in fieldwork with our students and advises them on individual projects.

*George E. Taylor, former Chairman, Division of Mathematics and Science, NVCC*

He is seen regularly peering into his microscope on weekends and during holidays in order to broaden his database of research findings. He has been a regular presenter of these findings in meetings and journals.

*Lillian D. Berg, Associate Professor of Chemistry (Retired), NVCC*

On behalf of the students and teachers of Lake Braddock Secondary School I would like to thank you for your lecture on Parasitology. I have heard many positive comments from our students and find that they were very interested in the amazing variety of diseases which are caused by parasites. I doubt that there will be quite as many dogs that get kisses from their owners after your lecture! Our observation of Biodiversity Week and Earth Day was greatly enriched by your interesting presentation.

*Kay Mikula, Lake Braddock Secondary School*

On behalf of the Helminthological Society of Washington, I have much pleasure in informing you that you have been selected as the recipient of this year's Anniversary Award. The chair of the Awards Committee informed me that in making their selection, members of the committee noted your outstanding service to the Society in many different capacities: in holding the various

offices of the Society, in your dedication to students of helminthology, as an author of papers on helminthes, and recently, in your position as Editor of the journal of the Helminthological Society of Washington.

*Ruth Kulstad, President of the Helminthological Society of Washington*

He represents the ideal faculty member we all wish we could be. He is a master of student motivation and suggesting new horizons to be explored. His students know that he is always available for help with their course work or for career advice.

*Harry F. Painter, Professor Emeritus of Biology (Deceased), NVCC*

Your critical review of Essentials of Parasitology by Meyer/Olsen/Schmidt was extremely useful to us, and the authors would like to express their appreciation by acknowledging your help. Therefore, we would like permission to print your name in the front matter of Essentials of Parasitology.

*Mary J. Porter, Developmental Editor, WC Brown Company, Publisher*

Research Associate appointments are special; they recognize those outstanding individuals who actively contribute to the Museum's programs and collections. I am delighted to welcome you to The Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

*James E. King, Director, Carnegie Museum of Natural History*

I have known Dr. Eckerlin as a professional colleague for more than fifteen years. We met in the early 1990's and quickly discovered that we share a passion for squirrels. I study the squirrels, and he studies their parasites. His enthusiasm for research and discovery is evidenced by his many years of field work in Virginia and the New World tropics. This enthusiasm is also evident in Dr. Eckerlin's presentations, especially to groups of students. Dr. Eckerlin has been a Research Associate of the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) since 1995. This honor was bestowed in recognition of his efforts to increase and disseminate scientific knowledge of Virginia's biota. In addition to documenting his own research discoveries through publications, Dr. Eckerlin has made substantial contributions to science as a manuscript reviewer, organizer of the 1995 symposium on Appalachian biogeography, and editor of prestigious scientific journals. His ongoing involvement in these and related activities ensures that Dr. Eckerlin remains aware of the most recent advances in his field, allowing him to impart first-hand knowledge to his students. Dr. Eckerlin has also remained "current" by attending many annual conferences of international (e.g., American Society of Mammalogists) and state-wide (Virginia Academy of Sciences) organizations of professional scientists. Indeed, we first met at a VAS conference, and we have kept in touch through the years mainly through conversations and presentations at meetings of professional societies. All of these activities are admirable accomplishments for any faculty member. They are even more remarkable given the fact that Dr. Eckerlin has sustained this level of professional engagement for more than 35 years while simultaneously holding a position at Northern Virginia Community College that is 100% teaching.

*Nancy D. Moncrief, Curator of Mammalogy, Virginia Museum of Natural History*