

Vale Dr Lindsay Barton Browne

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By Gary Fitt, Deputy Chief, Entomology



As one of Australia's leading scientists, Lindsay Barton Browne will be remembered for his outstanding contributions to the Australian and international scientific community and as one of the best mentors of young scientists we have had in CSIRO.

Lindsay was born on 8 May 1928 in Adelaide. He graduated from the University of Sydney with First Class Honours and a University Medal, a rare honour, in 1951 and then completed his PhD at the University of Sydney in 1954. His PhD studies on the mating behaviour of the Queensland fruit fly, set the stage for a long string of subsequent PhDs which explored the behaviour and genetics of this insect.

In the same year, he joined CSIRO Entomology in Canberra to work on the behaviour and sensory physiology of insects and quickly developed an international reputation for his work. As early as 1958, he was awarded a Fellowship to Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA, and in 1959, an eminent overseas colleague described him as an 'outstanding behavioural physiologist'.

Whilst in Baltimore, Lindsay married Judy on March 8 1958 – establishing a lifelong relationship which saw Judy also become one of the CSIRO family and which in subsequent years saw the birth of their three children, Allison, Fran and Peter.

Through his career, Lindsay became an internationally recognised leader in the field of insect behaviour, driving considerable innovation and outcomes through his significant contributions on the Queensland fruit fly, Australian sheep blowfly, pasture insects, Australian plague locust, dung beetles and, in his retirement, the cotton bollworm, a major cotton pest.



The study of insect behaviour has generated a number of the 'growing points' in modern applied entomology, and for many years Lindsay's research into the intricate details of feeding, maturation, mating and oviposition behaviours of pest species was world leading.

His pre-eminence and impact is reflected through his prodigious publication record and the extensive collaborations he developed with other global science leaders in his field, among them Professor Harry Shorey, University of California,

Riverside; Professor Vincent Dethier, Princeton and Dr Reg Chapman, University of Arizona.

Lindsay was always rigorous in his research, original in his thought and had a sound critical faculty which he passed on to many others through his extensive mentoring of young scientists, me included. Lindsay voluntarily devoted much time and energy to assisting young scientists in CSIRO and in other institutions with the interpretation of their research results and with setting the direction of their future research. This contribution to Australia's scientific future will be a lasting legacy. His personal attributes of openness, compassion, determination and focus on excellence in all aspects of his life only added to the influence he had on others. He was always available to colleagues and, in encouraging them to look beyond the boundaries of their discipline, helped them to solve many questions in their research. A lasting memory for many will be Lindsay's encyclopaedic knowledge of the literature and his legendary reference card system, along with the thrill of morning coffee in the 'fly lab'.



After a long and distinguished career, Lindsay retired in 1987 having attained the level of Chief Research Scientist in CSIRO. During the late 1970's and early 1980's he served as Assistant Chief of Entomology, during the reign of Dr Doug Waterhouse as Chief, but he then returned to where he preferred to be, in the laboratory doing his research.



Lindsay's contribution to Australian science did not stop with his retirement in 1987. He continued as an Honorary Fellow in Entomology, both in Canberra and at CSIRO's Long Pocket Laboratories in Queensland, until 2005 when ill health forced him to resign his Honorary Fellowship. While an Honorary Fellow he continued his research on insect physiology in collaboration with several distinguished overseas scientists as well as his Australian colleagues, and continued to publish. During this time, he also made significant contributions to two of the early Cooperative Research Centres, Tropical Pest Management and Temperate Hardwood Forestry, served as President of the Entomological Society of Queensland and coordinated a course in insect physiology at the University of Queensland.

Dr Max Whitten, former Chief of Entomology, noted that 'While it was Lindsay's outstanding intellect, knowledge and experience that enabled him to develop his own successful career as an internationally renowned biologist, it was his willingness to share this expertise and to help others that drew young



scientists to him. Lindsay's willingness to help other scientists, both young and established, without tangible reward makes him one of Australia's genuine unsung heroes'.

Lindsay touched the lives of many people in the science community but particularly in CSIRO's Entomology unit. His loss is sorely felt by his many friends and colleagues who will always appreciate the honour of having known him.