Chester Lamar Meek

DR. C. LAMAR MEEK died suddenly on 27 June 2000, while conducting a mosquito control experiment near Cleveland, Mississippi. He was 56 years old.

Lamar, as he was known to his loved ones, colleagues, and friends, was born on 16 January 1944, in Monticello, Arkansas, and attended schools in nearby Arkansas City and McGehee. He earned a B.S. in biology at Ouachita Baptist University in 1966, and was commissioned a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps. After two years of military service, he worked toward an M.S. in entomology at the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville) under the supervision of J. L. Lancaster and guidance of Max Meisch. In addition to his thesis research on the effects of rice-land pesticides on aquatic arthropods, Lamar supervised a pilot mosquito control program in a small community. After receiving his M.S. in 1971, he enrolled in a Ph.D. program under the guidance of J. K. Olson at Texas A&M University, where he researched ovipositional behavior of mosquitoes. Lamar received his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in 1975.

That same year, Lamar accepted a position as assistant professor in the Department of Entomology at the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, where he quickly rose through the ranks to full professor in 1983. His initial responsibility was in tabanid research, but, in 1978, his emphasis switched to mosquitoes. During his career, he authored or co-authored more than 125 papers and book chapters about various aspects of medical entomology including biology, ecology, sampling, identification, chemical and biological control, and resistance to insecticides. One of the strengths of his program was Lamar's ability to interact with other specialists. He cooperated with mosquito researchers in Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, California, and Illinois; and he constantly assisted personnel in mosquito control districts in Louisiana and neighboring states. He also collaborated at the Tulane Regional Primate Research Center on host compatibility to malaria.

Over the last decade, Lamar became a pioneer in forensic entomology while continuing his mosquito research. He eventually published more than 20 papers and a book chapter about necrophilous arthropods in relation to investigations of homicides and deaths of high-profile wildlife. Interaction with various agencies again was a strength of his forensics program. He testified in more than 10 criminal trials, including the case upon which the film “Dead Man Walking” was based. He initiated a popular course at LSU in forensic entomology in addition to teaching his class in medical and veterinary entomology.

Lamar received numerous awards and honors such as the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) Meritorious Service Award, the Hathaway-Ritter Distinguished Achievement Award of the Louisiana Mosquito Control Association (LMCA), the Outstanding Service Award in Medical/Veterinary Entomology of the American Registry of Professional Entomologists, and the Memorial Lectureship Award of the AMCA. He served on the Governing Board of the Entomological Society of America and on the Board of Directors of the LMCA, as Treasurer of AMCA, and as President of both the LMCA and the Louisiana Entomology Society.

The real joy of being one of Lamar’s colleagues or students was to know him as a person who had genuine concern and care for others. He was outgoing, a great conversationalist who could encourage talk from people of widely varying viewpoints. He loved a good joke and usually responded with a big, infectious laugh. He emphasized the accomplishments of his nine M.S. and seven Ph.D. students and frequently became their dear friend as well as their mentor. Lamar was very active in his church, having served as a deacon, board member, and Sunday school teacher.

Lamar Meek will be missed by his many friends, colleagues, and family members. He is survived by his wife, Kay; two sons and daughters-in-law, Dr. Bradley and Martha Meek, and Dr. Jody and Rhonda Meek; two grandchildren, Eleanor and Savannah; a sister, JoAnn McDaniel; and a brother, Robert Meek.

James R. Fuxa and David J. Boethel, (with additions by Max V. Meisch, Jimmy K. Olson, and Matthew M. Yates)
Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Baton Rouge, LA

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