



John Neuhold

Courtesy of USU Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library

Dr. John M. Neuhold, professor emeritus of Utah State University's Quinney College of Natural Resources and first director of the Ecology Center, passed away on June 29, 2020, at the age of 92.

Mathias Johann Werchnig Neuhold, aka John Neuhold, was born on May 18, 1928 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Mathias and Johanna Neuhold. Both of John's parents were Austrian immigrants who came to the United States after World War 1. Mathias was a construction worker and Johanna was a cook and housekeeper for wealthy families in the Milwaukee area.

REMEMBERING

Dr. John Neuhold

Dr. John Neuhold was a distinguished professor in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department at Utah State University. We will miss his strong conservation ethic and his great sense of humor.

Chris Luecke, Dean
Quinney College of Natural Resources

After graduating from high school in 1945, John joined the army and became a paratrooper at Fort Briggs, North Carolina. His division never saw combat, but was instead stationed stateside to protect against potential invasion during the Cold War.

John was an avid hunter and fisherman, traditions that were taught to him by his father and passed down by both his grandfathers. His maternal grandfather was a gamekeeper for Austrian Royalty and was responsible for managing the wildlife populations on one of the royal estates.

John's daughter, Faith Neuhold, explained, "His grandfather did that and that's what [Dad] always wanted to do. I think that was his main drive."

John was eager to get a start on his education and enrolled into the Forestry Program at the University of Wisconsin as soon as his military service was complete. He was persuaded to attend Utah State Agricultural College during his time as the president of the Forestry Club at the University of Wisconsin.

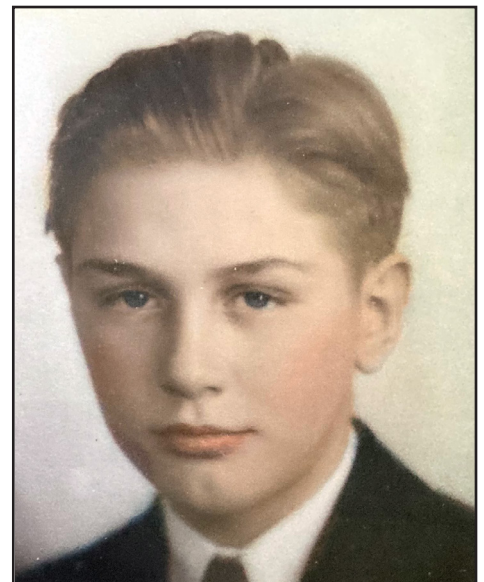
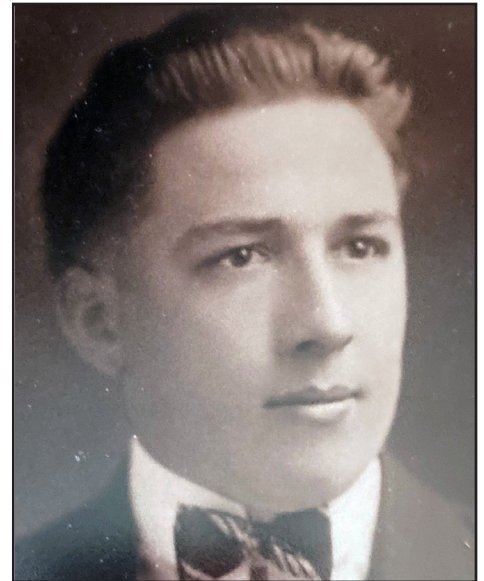
"As president it was my responsibility to bring together, once a month, a speaker," John once said. "One of the speakers I brought was the Regional Forester for the US Forest Service in that area. After he gave us a talk...I took him aside and said, 'Where would you suggest would be a good place to go to school in the forestry or natural resources area?'"

He said, 'Well, you ought to consider my alma mater, Utah State. Of the nine regional foresters seven of them are Utah State graduates and the head of the Forest Service in Washington is also a Utah State graduate.'


So, I said, 'My God. With that kind of reputation, I'd come out here and go to school. And I did.'"

John earned a BS in Wildlife Management in 1952 and an MS in Fisheries Management in 1954 from Utah State Agricultural College. John also started a family during that time. He married his sweetheart, Ruth Ann Serres, in 1952 and they had their daughter one year later. John was a family man and always asserted that his proudest accomplishment was his daughter, Faith.

After completing his MS, John worked for the US Fish and Game Department in Salt Lake City for four years. He then returned to the newly rechristened Utah State University as a doctoral student. John earned a PhD in Fishery Biology in December 1959, finishing after just two years of study. He was the third person ever to receive a PhD from the College of Natural Resources and was hired as a faculty member in the College beginning January 1960.



From top to bottom: Mathias Neuhold, John Neuhold, Johanna Neuhold.



John had numerous professional achievements. He was the President of the Bonnevillie Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, a member of the Department of Energy board of consultants, a science advisor to the Environmental Protection Agency, a consultant with the National Science Foundation, and both a committee member and chair of the Ecological Society of America. John was also instrumental in the establishment of the Fish Health Policy Board which helped to stop the spread of whirling disease. Additionally, he influenced the management of SITLA state lands in Logan Canyon to further conservation and to raise money for Utah's Public Education System.

John was a pioneering advocate for the environment and conservation. His research on fluoride pollution successfully identified factory emissions as the cause

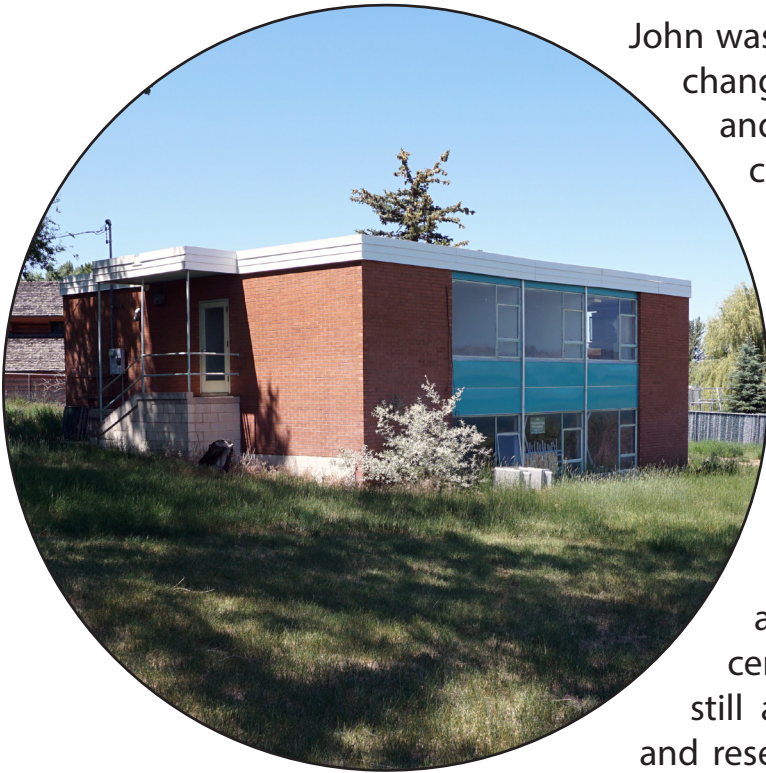
of fish kills in western United States watersheds.

“Our findings basically caused the Environmental Protection Agency...to put limits on...the steel mills,” said John of his own research. “[They] had to put up capture devices to keep the fluoride from going out. And the same thing was true with the phosphate plants...Fluoride intoxication was pretty well put under control.”

John completed three sabbaticals: one in Oak Ridge, Tennessee; one in Washington, DC; and one in Duluth, Iowa. During John's sabbatical in Oak Ridge, aka “The Atomic City”, he participated in Project Cannikin. Project Cannikin was one of a series of underground nuclear weapons tests that took place on Amchitka Island, Alaska. John's role was to research the effects of radiation on freshwater ecosystems and document the ecology of the island.



Amchitka Island, Alaska



John was also responsible for facilitating important changes at USU. “A group of us got together... and began to discuss the things that we had in common relating to the ecology of the area,” John once explained. “From that stemmed the concept that what we needed on the campus was a thrust in ecology. So, we made a proposal to the State Legislature and to the National Science Foundation to create an ecology program.”

These discussions led to the establishment of the USU Ecology Center, and John served as its first director. The Ecology Center recently celebrated its 50-year anniversary and still actively serves faculty, graduate students, and researchers from across approximately 12 departments and 5 colleges at USU. The Center also main-

tains several off-campus research properties, including the Bear Lake Ecosystem Laboratory which was built by John during his time as Director.



Top: Bear Lake Ecosystem Laboratory

Bottom: John and Faith at the Ecology Center’s 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2018



From left to right: USU Graduate Students - Ward Rudersdorf, John Neuhold, Bill McConnell, Merie Rognrud in 1958
Courtesy of USU Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library

John's favorite part of being a faculty member at USU was advising his graduate students, and he had lots of experience. During his approximately 25 years at USU he mentored over 70 students.

"You know," said Faith of her father, "I think the thing he liked best was the students he produced. He just loved that fact that he sent out young men and young women...and they turned into some of the top people in their field. He has just been thrilled about that."

John's commitment to education lives on in the Mathias & Johanna Neuhold Wildlife and Fisheries Scholarship Endowment.

The scholarship was established by John in 1987 and was named in honor of his parents. The scholarship is available to undergraduate students with records of excellence in the fields of fisheries and wildlife.

Emmanuel May, a scholarship recipient and recent USU graduate, said of the award, "Mr. Neuhold's scholarship helped me... decline additional student loans. [His] willingness to invest in my future motivated me to focus harder on my studies and ensure that I achieved the expectations that come with winning a scholarship. I hope one day I can give back just as Mr. Neuhold did."





Beyond his professional accomplishments, John Neuhold was also just a good man. He was fun loving and welcoming. He had a way of bringing people together from all origins and backgrounds. Karin Kettenring, professor in the Department of Watershed Sciences and the Ecology Center, and John's next door neighbor, described him as "a pillar of community" and a surrogate grandfather to her daughter (see photo below).

Chris Luecke, Dean of the College of Natural Resources, said of John, "[He] was a distinguished professor in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department at Utah State University. We will miss his strong conservation ethic and great sense of humor."

When asked if there was anything she wanted people to know about her father, Faith said, "He was an Aggie through-and-through. He loved being an Aggie."

Anyone interested in donating to the Mathias & Johanna Neuhold Wildlife and Fisheries Scholarship Endowment can do so by following this link: <https://www.usu.edu/advancement/johnneuhold/> or by contacting the Utah State University Advancement Office at (435) 797-1320.



John and his neighbor, Linna Taylor Kettenring



John and Ruth Neuhold