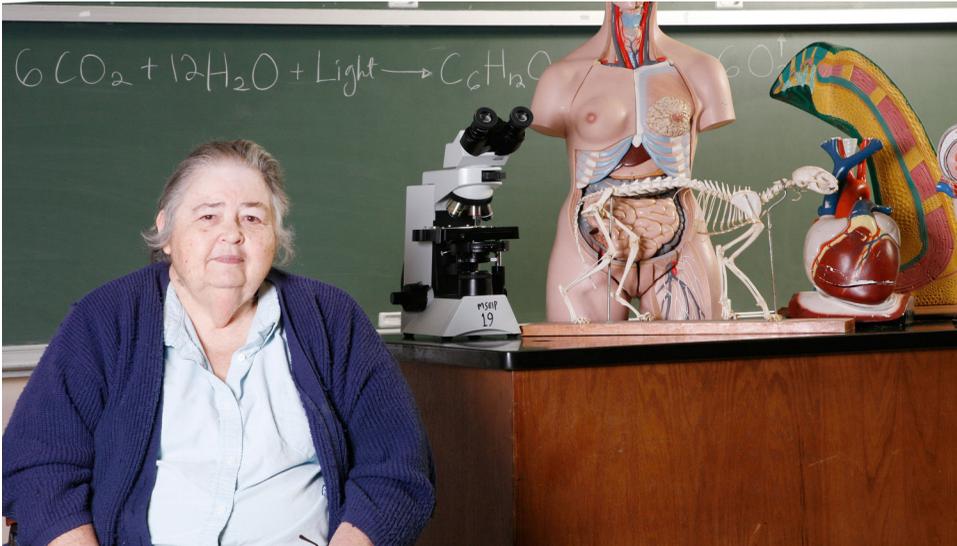


Obituary: C. Lynn Raulerson



Dr. Lynn “Doc” Raulerson, curator of the Guam Herbarium and University of Guam Professor of Biology, died on 21 August 2012, at the age of 75. Her departure is a significant loss for Pacific science education and Micronesian botany.

Few faculty at the University of Guam (UOG) have had such a prolonged and profound effect on their programs as Lynn. During the over forty years of her service to UOG, she advised the nearly 300 graduates from the biology program. Many of her students became teachers, doctors, lawyers, business people, research scientists, and, of course, university professors. Both of us have had the fortunate opportunity to know Lynn from both sides of the lectern. We are graduates of the undergraduate biology program at UOG and later, returned to join her as biology faculty colleagues at UOG.

Lynn Raulerson was born in Arcadia, Florida in 1937 and grew up in and around the Lake Okeechobee area. As a child, she had a strong inclination for biology. Once when she was but five years old, she kept a clutch of sea-turtle eggs under her bed until they hatched. She eventually released the hatchlings into the sea, but she was mortified when the sheriff visited her parents that night, fearing that she might be arrested and hauled off for her trans-species parenting. As the daughter of a military officer, she moved around a lot during World War II, finally settling in Georgia. She enrolled at Stephens College where she received an A.A. and then entered Emory University where she completed her Master’s studies in 1960. She then taught for several years at what would eventually become Samford University just outside of Birmingham, Alabama in the early 1960’s. However, she would

soon enter the storied ecology program at the University of Georgia (then home of the famous ecologist Eugene Odum), where she received her Ph.D. in 1970, investigating respiration and nutrient cycling in freshwater oligochaete worms.

In 1971, she was hired by the University of Guam to both teach and train students and to assist with research on the crown-of-thorns starfish, then devastating Guam's coral reefs. A self-described generalist, she found that the tropics offered an endless number of biological questions ripe for the asking. She was also involved with a number of organizations in the community, including work with the Guam Science Teachers Association, various horticultural and environmental groups, as well as numerous musical productions. By the 1980's she had assumed the mantle of teaching the foundational introductory biology course for the undergraduate biology program and also took over as curator of the collections of UOG's Guam Herbarium. With her long-time friend Agnes Rinehart, she also wrote two classic books: *Trees and Shrubs of the Northern Mariana Islands* and *Ferns and Orchids of the Mariana Islands*. She also founded the Herbarium's report series *University of Guam Herbarium Contributions*, which recorded many of her botanical expeditions, often with students, around Guam and to other islands of the Marianas. Towards the time of her passing, she had also been working on a revision of Benjamin Stone's classic *Flora of Guam*, first published as a volume in *Micronesica* in 1970.

As a coda to these achievements, in the last year of her life, she worked to create the Raulerson Charitable Trust to address two primary concerns of hers: Improving animal welfare on Guam and increasing our understanding of the flora of the region through the Guam Herbarium. Among her final projects was the renovation of the Herbarium which, under Lynn's tenure, had blossomed from 7,000 to over 61,000 mounted specimens. We regret that Lynn was not able to see these changes completed. But her legacy will live on in the spirit of both her students and her friends and through a strong and viable university.

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Photo by Herman Crisostomo for University of Guam.