

Stanley Howard Weitzman 1927-2017

Stanley Howard Weitzman, Research Scientist and Curator of Fishes Emeritus in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C., died on February 16, 2017 after a brief illness. He was 89. Stan developed a keen interest in keeping and breeding native and tropical freshwater fishes as a youngster; this passion remained with him throughout his life and informed his research career. Stan was perhaps best known to those in the aquarium hobby and trade as an influential expert on the comparative anatomy, systematics, and biogeography of the characiform fishes of South America, particularly the small, colorful tetras. But he also had an abiding interest in killifishes, especially the South American annuals which he adopted as a research model to study senescence while teaching anatomy at Stanford University in the early 1960s. With Stanford colleague John Wourms, he described an extraordinary endemic Venezuelan species of annual killifish, *Terranatos dolichopterus* (Weitzman and Wourms, 1967).

Stan was born on March 16, 1927, in Mill Valley, California. He received his Bachelor's (1951) and Master's (1953) degrees in biology from the University of California, Berkeley, and his PhD (1960) from Stanford University as a student of the venerable killifish expert, George Sprague Myers. Stan began his long and distinguished career as a Curator in the Division of Fishes, National Museum of Natural History, in 1962. That year he moved from California with his wife Marilyn and their two children, Anna, now of Potomac, MD, and Earl, of Arizona. Stan and Marilyn were best friends and life partners. They lived, worked, and travelled together throughout 69 years of marriage (figure 1). An engaging review of their life together was published by Fish Division colleague David G. Smith (*Copeia*, 2007(4), pp. 1030–1045).

Stan's PhD dissertation included a detailed, well-illustrated study of the skeleton of *Brycon meeki*, a representative characiform fish, which set the professional standard for fish osteology. Stan's extraordinary skills as an artist were revealed in his meticulous illustrations and photographs. His outstanding research was recognized by his peers: he received the Robert H. Gibbs, Jr. Memorial Award for Excellence in Systematic Ichthyology for an outstanding body of published work in systematic ichthyology from the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in 1991, and was honored at an international symposium on neotropical fishes in Brazil with an award for his "Invaluable Contributions to Neotropical Ichthyology" in 1997.

Stan officially retired from his Smithsonian position as in 2007 but still maintained an office/lab space in the Division of Fishes while he continued his research and regular interactions with other staff and visitors, especially students and professionals from South America and his many friends and colleagues in the aquarium hobby and trade. He was a regular speaker at local aquarium society meetings. Stan loved to display and otherwise share his illustrations and photographs of aquarium fishes. Many a visitor would leave not just with a story or two about the discovery of a new species or a new morphological character, but with an even more valuable memento: a colorful fish photograph autographed by Stan.

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Figure 1: Stan and Marilyn Weitzman next to the fish tanks they maintained in the Division of Fishes, National Museum of Natural History, March 2007. Photo copyright Sandra J. Raredon, Smithsonian Institution.

