

*A tribute to the memory of*  
**Jack Lee Bath**

*January 4, 1940 - August 10, 2022*

A man who loved Burrowing Owls  
and the natural world around us.



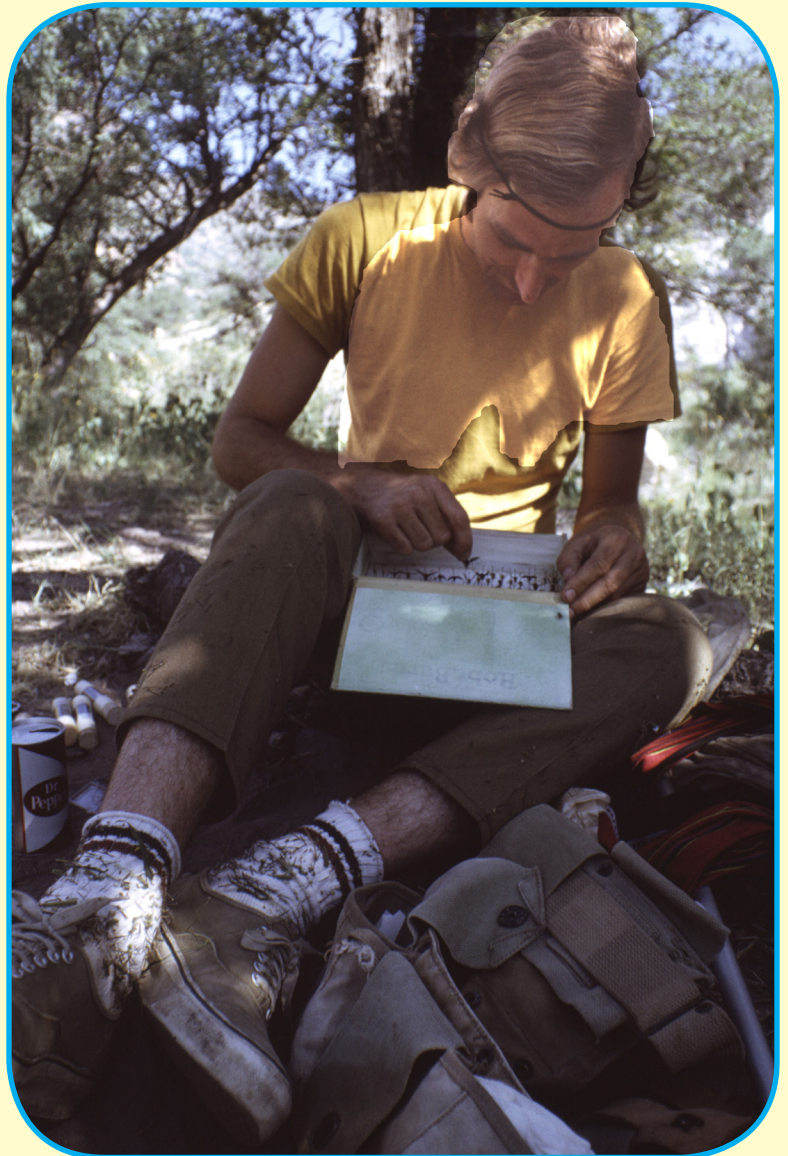
It is with sadness that we note the death of one of EHL's founding members, Dr. Jack Lee Bath, who served on the Board of Directors for more than thirty years, many of them as either Treasurer or Secretary. Jack was born in 1940 and raised in Southern California, which remained his home throughout his life. He is survived by brother James and nephews Ron, Michael and Dave.

Son of a contractor, Jack's maternal grandfather James Frank Illingworth was a distinguished entomologist working for the USDA. Grandpa Illingworth took Jack and brother Jim on walks in the woods and taught them Entomology, inspiring both to build professional careers in the field. It was once said of Grandfather Illingworth that only those with a "winged mind" could follow his thoughts, and Jack inherited this trait. When they were young, Jack's brother took him on a tour of a slaughterhouse, which caused him to become a vegetarian. A turn to Buddhism later in life seemed a natural follow on.

Both Jack and James followed their early interests in biology. Jack went to UC Davis for his undergraduate work, earned his MS at Cornell, where he studied sciomyzid flies, and then turned to the bee flies for his PhD at UC Riverside while teaching at Cal Poly Pomona. Jack remained there throughout his professional career, finally retiring as Professor Emeritus of Biology.

Although Jack's initial interest was in entomology, his attention shifted more and more toward anatomy, podiatry, teaching, and ultimately conservation and work with endangered wildlife.

*Photo dated September 16, 1971, in which a young Jack is in the field pinning bee flies.*



Over the years, he became established as one of the most knowledgeable and passionate experts on Burrowing Owls and their habitat needs. It was Jack's advocacy as a member of the Endangered Habitats League board of directors that drew attention, not only to the owl, but to the desperate plight of the San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat and the disappearing alluvial fans of the Chino-Prado Basin in which they lived, a conservation battle that continues to this day, but that would have been lost before it began without Jack's determination and persistence to right that wrong.

In addition to his work with EHL, Jack was an active member of the Sierra Club and Audubon Society, and served for many years on the boards of the Tri-County Conservation League and Hills for Everyone. Through all of these organizations, Jack advocated for, and led efforts to establish dairy preserves in the region for the preservation of farmland, with its concomitant protection of some remaining grasslands and the expansion or establishment of wildlife corridors. He successfully negotiated substantial mitigation funds for these purposes and was an inspiring teacher, using his classes and field trips in the Puente-Chino hillside system to guide students toward the study and conservation of natural landscapes.

One of these students, Neal Evenhuis, is now at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, and is a noted authority on bee flies. Neal recalls, "The male cadaver we named Abra Cadaver, BTW. That was his first. I helped him start the Willed Body Program (WBP) at Cal Poly (I had a desk in his office for years as an undergrad before I got my own as a post grad. We picked up bodies at hospitals when they notified Jack of a body of a person that had signed the paperwork beforehand. When he lived with me, the red Ford Econoline van for picking up bodies was always parked outside." Neal also named a bee fly in Jack's honor. "I named a new species *Bombylius bathychromus* in honor of him. *Bathychromus* means "deep color", but also "colorful Bath" – which Jack was – he had a great sense of humor and characteristic laugh that would make others laugh when he did."



Jack in the field examining ground squirrel burrows for evidence of owls.

Photo: *Kay Stockwell*



Photos: Jack, Bob and Connie Spenger, Ken Osborne and Shirley Gregg by Kay Stockwell. Burrowing Owl by Jess Morton.



# Jack's Obituary

by family members

Dr. Jack Lee Bath was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on January 4th, 1940. The 2nd son of beautician Elizabeth I. Bath, and Darrell A. Bath, a credentialed CPA, who retired as a Union Construction Supervisor. Yes! Jack spent his terrible twos on the island amidst rationing, a barrage of air raid sirens, and the ultimate attack by the Japanese. His future would be heavily influenced by his swashbuckling grandfather, the legendary, entomologist, biologist, ornithologist, and ecologist of the South Pacific, James Franklin Illingworth.

Like his grandfather and older brother, James E. Bath, Jack earned his BS in Entomology at UC Davis, and his MS at Cornell University. His PhD was earned at UC-Riverside in Entomology, in 1974, but, genetic perfectionism prevented publication of his extensive research thesis on the revision of a Bee-Fly genus. He retired as Professor Emeritus from Cal Poly Pomona, having taught anatomy & biology into his 70s. He became a Notary to expedite participation in the willed cadaver program he established at CP-P, and an Ordained Minister of the New Life Church. His meticulous research methods were no doubt a product of his love for history; modern, natural and cosmic. The years of exposure to anatomy cadavers/formaldehyde severely damaged his nasal passages and tear ducts. He spoke four languages well, learning to read & write

Mandarin in his 60s to further enrich his Buddhist core. He did not own a television nor concern himself with appearances or societal conventions. He was a voracious reader, a connoisseur of flawless audio and rich natural imagery. His character was sculpted by the likes of Harry Potter, Alan Watts, the Bhagavad-Gita and his heroine, Joan Baez.



Jack at 6  
May 4, 1946

Jack passed away quietly at his primary residence in Chino, CA, on August 10, 2022 at age 82 with his two Chihuahuas, an adult turkey, a half dozen transient rabbits and a handful of once homeless egg-laying hens, close at hand. After a private ceremony, his ashes will be placed beneath a favorite Desert Museum tree at his Morongo home. He was a tireless voice in defense of wildlife habitats and its vulnerable inhabitants, primarily, the Burrowing Owl and California Gnatcatcher, both so easily silenced by the powerful and ignorant. His photography subjects were simple and almost always botanical, feathered, or of a striking natural scene. The past few years Jack spent more and more retirement time in Morongo Valley/Joshua tree exercising his true passion of bird spotting, while regularly sharing his

entertaining & educational experiences with ecological audiences of both young and old at the nearby Big Morongo preserve, or at Whittier Narrows. His greatest philanthropic accomplishment was revitalization of the historic Whittier Narrows Nature Center, done along with the help of so many during that 17-year effort.

Those that have known Jack for any length of time will know these three things; 1) He clocked thousands of hours & hundreds of thousands of dollars supporting movements to protect the future of our open spaces. 2) There are no certificates of achievement hanging from his walls, and 3) He would never ever have seen the value in clicking a Selfie. Yes, Jack Bath was a fearless naturalist who seeded a trail to a platform from which his spirit can continue to flourish for eons to come. If asked to describe his own life in one word, he would surely have said it was ... “Kinky ~ Haaw-haaw-haaaw” :)

## *Leaves*

In the spring of our forest time  
we learned how the trees grew  
watching through the green windows  
uncurling from every limb

The summer sun ripened us  
for the long ewers of trees  
pouring golden streamers  
through the open windows

Fall shuttered the windows  
leaving red flags for the wind  
golden bowls full of dew  
where the hummingbirds would bathe

On a path through winter trees  
we wait for the rain to come  
assured fallen leaves still live  
our hands, hallowed in the rich earth

*By Jess Morton*

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow;  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am sunlight on ripened grain;  
I am the gentle Autumn's rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
of burrowing owls in circled flight,  
I am the soft star that shines at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry.  
I am not there, I do not die.

*Poem suggested by Kay Stockwell*