Dedication to Lionel Numa Eleuterius

12.25.1936 – 04.24.2011

Patrick Biber

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Obituary

Lionel Numa Eleuterius, died at sunrise on Easter morning, Sunday, April 24, 2011. He was born on Christmas day in 1936, to Lionel Adam and Martha Tiblier Eleuterius in the Point Cadet area of Biloxi, Mississippi.

Lionel attended Biloxi schools and had especially fond memories of his classmates in the 1956 graduating class. At Biloxi High School he received the DAR Good Citizenship award and was voted Most Handsome. As a teenager he and his brothers helped his father in the family boat building business. After high school graduation he attended Perkinston Junior College and in 1988 was inducted into the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Hall of Fame. In 1960 he attended basic training for the Mississippi Army National Guard and served for 18 years achieving the rank of major. At the time of Hurricane Camille in 1969 he was commander of the National Guard unit in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. After basic training, Lionel worked at the United States Forest Service in Gulfport, Mississippi. Lionel then completed his bachelors and masters degrees in biological sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi and later his doctorate in Botany at Mississippi State University.

In 1968 he was hired by Dr. Gordon Gunter at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. He established the first Botany Research Section at the Lab and carried on extensive research on marsh plants and seagrasses. Dr. Eleuterius wrote and published over 200 scientific publications on all areas of botany with emphasis on marine botany, including his book, Tidal Marsh Plants. He is remembered best for his pioneering work in transplanting seagrasses in the Mississippi Sound and his planting of seaoats for erosion control along the beaches of Mississippi. He always credited his grandmother, Frances Bosarge Tiblier, for instilling in him his love of plants because she included him at a young age in her gardening. After retiring from the Gulf Coast Research Lab, Dr. Eleuterius operated Wetlands Inc., an environmental consulting business. Lionel was an artist, an avid reader, gardener and builder. He especially enjoyed doing genealogical research on his Greek and French ancestors. Lionel's most precious time in his life was the years he spent with his grandson Samuel gardening and building wooden toys, especially model boats.

Published in The Sun Herald on April 27, 2011

Summary of Selected Publications

- 16+ seagrass papers 1971-1990
- Earliest: Eleuterius, Lionel N. "Submerged Plant Distribution in Mississippi Sound and Adjacent Waters." Journal of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences 17(1971): 9-12
- Most accessible: Eleuterius, Lionel N. "Seagrass Ecology Along the Coasts of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi."Proceedings of the Symposium on Subtropical-Tropical Seagrasses of the Southeastern United States, editors Michael J. Durako, Ronald C. Phillips, and Roy R. Lewis, III., 11-24, Florida Department of Natural Resources, 1986. http://research.myfwc.com/engine/download_redirection_process.asp?file=fmrp042_0015_3246.pdf&objid=36564&dltype=publication
- 22+ papers on black needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*)
- PhD dissertation: 1974. An autecological study of *Juncus roemerianus*. Mississippi State University, Dept Botany, Chair Dr. Sidney McDaniel

Other important publications

1976

MARINE EDUCATIONAL LEAFLET NO. 7

published by
Marine Education Center
Biloxi, Mississippi

a branch of
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

A State Institution of Higher Learning

Thalassia testudinum

THE SEAGRASSES AND MARINE ALGAE OF MISSISSIPPI SOUND

Mississippi Sound makes up a large portion [illegible] square miles of the territorial marine waters under the jurisdiction of the State of Mississippi and also is part of the coastal waters of Alabama. This body of water is partially separated and protected from the open Gulf of Mexico by a chain of barrier islands. Petit Bois, Horn and Ship Islands of this chain and their adjacent waters belong to the Gulf Islands National Seashore, part of the national park system.

More than half of the sea bottom of Mississippi Sound is composed of mud, especially near the mainland; toward the barrier islands, the bottom becomes sandy. Shell reefs occur in both the eastern and

organisms for the larger fish may result in the populations of certain sportfishes shifting to other locations.

Thus, large recurring weather cycles are important to the environmental conditions affecting these beds of vegetation. In past years, seagrasses and marine algae may have occupied much more sea bottom than that recorded in 1969. During periods of drought, when coastal waters are maintained at relatively high salinities, seagrasses and marine algae are probably more abundant with a consequent increase in the community of marine animals and concentrations of species sought by recreational fishermen.

Seagrasses do not become established as readily as terrestrial plants however, man may assist their re-establishment. Suggested by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory has developed techniques that could be used to extend these productive plant and animal habitats to less productive, barren areas of sea bottom. Simple anchoring devices constructed from wire mesh and iron rods were used to hold portions of seagrass to the bottom and they became established.

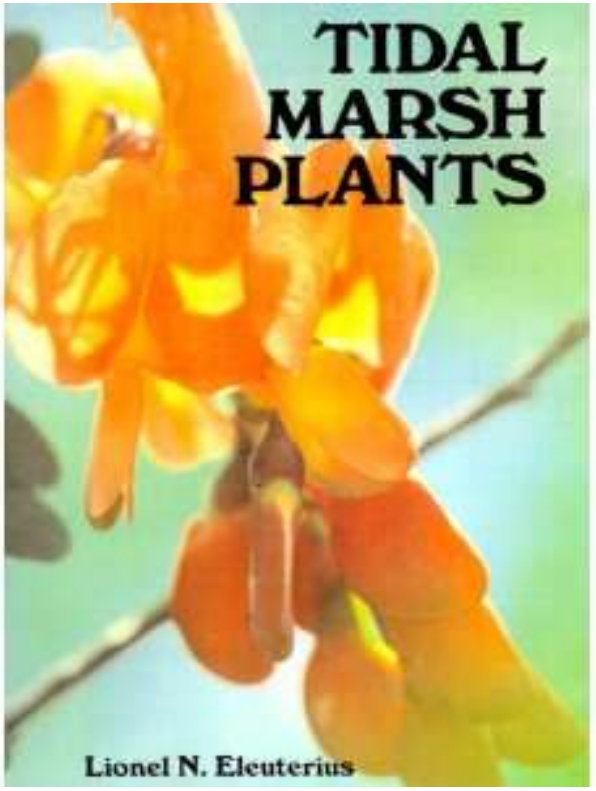
There are limitations at present to the application of these techniques, however, considerable potential exists for management of seagrass and algal beds. It may be feasible to transplant certain species of plants in areas disturbed by channel maintenance, pipelines and other coastal engineering projects, in addition to areas destroyed by natural disasters.

To suggest that man's efforts can produce results that mimic nature would be bold. But the natural establishment of seagrass can be significantly aided and put into motion by man through transplanting programs which should contribute beneficial effects on the marine environment. 11/76

GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Educational Leaflet Courtesy of
Friends of the Marine Education Center

1990



http://www.amazon.com/Tidal-Marsh-Plants-Lionel-Eleuterius/dp/1565545656/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_1

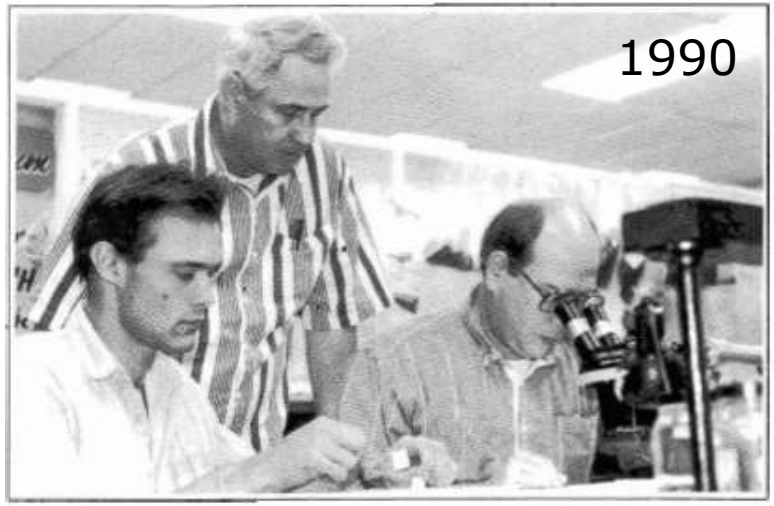
Notable events

Dr. Joseph T.A. Verhoeven, an ecology instructor at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, collected seeds of local plants of the genus *Ruppia* during November when he was hosted by Dr. Lionel Eleuterius, head of the botany section of the Laboratory. Verhoeven and his wife Marja are traveling in the United States for nine weeks. He is working on nutrient cycling in freshwater wetlands and the taxonomy of *Ruppia* around the world.

1984

GCRL herbarium useful in teaching and research, says Eleuterius

Research needed to protect vanishing seagrass beds



Thaddeus Galle (technician), Dr. Lionel N. Eleuterius (section head), and J.D. Caldwell (research associate) of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory botany section.

Retires from GCRL May 1993

Lionel's contributions to SAV research in the northern Gulf of Mexico

- Began research program in marine botany at the GCRL
- First published map of SAV in Mississippi Sound.
- Important contributions on vegetation impacts from Hurricane Camille
- Restoration and transplanting of seagrasses to mitigate losses.