



NEWS RELEASE

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Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame News: Becker, Earley, Hine are 2010 Inductees Ceremonies April 24 in Stevens Point

Two Madison women who blazed new conservation trails and a Stevens Point man who combined science and citizen activism will be inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame this year.

The inductees are:

- George Becker, longtime biology professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, author of "Fishes of Wisconsin" and environmental activist who fought for clean water and other causes.
- Emily Earley, a citizen conservationist who remains active in her 90s. She has been involved with many organizations, including the state chapter of The Nature Conservancy. She helped that organization develop a stewardship plan to care for properties it acquired.
- Ruth Hine, who edited and wrote scores of technical reports and other publications in more than four decades at the Department of Natural Resources. She is credited with raising awareness about endangered species in the state and the development of efforts to protect endangered species.

The trio will join 66 other inductees to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in ceremonies at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 24, at the Sentry Theater in Stevens Point. The public is invited.

"We're happy that this year's inductees include two women who had important roles in protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and opened doors for others," said Earl Spangenberg, Conservation Hall of Fame executive secretary. "George Becker's contributions to science, teaching, environmental and social causes paint a picture of a life well-lived."

Becker, a Milwaukee native, was a biology professor at Stevens Point for more than two decades. Becker's "Fishes of Wisconsin," published in 1983, was a massive work, cataloging the status, distribution, habitat and biology of the state's fish species. It was the product of more than three decades of research.

An outspoken and sometimes contentious advocate for the environment, Becker drew attention to the pollution of the Wisconsin River and led efforts hold industries and municipalities accountable for their discharges. He tangled with the Department of Natural Resources over the agency's strategy of using poison to eliminate rough fish in water bodies, claiming that rare species were also wiped out. He was also an outspoken advocate of population control, criticizing religious leaders who opposed it. He died in 2002.

Earley's tireless work for a number of conservation groups cemented her legacy. She raised three children in Madison before becoming active in conservation causes. She worked as a program coordinator and editor of technical publications at UW-Madison's Institute for Environmental Studies for 15 years.

She joined the board of trustees of the new Wisconsin chapter of The Nature Conservancy in 1964 and has remained active in various capacities with the group since then. She worked to assure that the chapter took an active role in managing the lands it acquired. She created and chaired the chapter's Stewardship Committee for 10 years and led volunteer efforts to accomplish land management projects. Earley encouraged TNC to devote more funds to managing properties and hiring paid stewardship staff.

Earley was also a member of the founding board of the Sigurd Olson Institute, a public outreach program at Northland College in Ashland, and a charter member of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, a group that promotes wise land use. In her roles with state and local conservation groups, she advocates for research and education at natural areas and environmental education for all citizens.

Hine was the first woman to obtain a PH.D. in zoology at UW-Madison. She worked for four-plus decades at the DNR's Bureau of Research, holding positions that included technical editor and then chief of the Research Information and Publications Section of the bureau. She oversaw publication of hundreds of research reports and other publications, seeking to make them relevant not only to scientists, but to policy-makers and citizens.

At a time when the natural resources field was dominated by men, Hine's quiet leadership and strong work ethic helped open doors for other women. A 1959 *Milwaukee Journal* article on Hine proclaimed in a headline: "Woman finds place in conservation work."

She played a key role in developing the Wisconsin endangered species program, leading efforts to study the disappearance of plants and animals in the state. She chaired a committee that developed the state's first endangered species list. She worked to keep endangered species issues in the public eye, and the Legislature eventually established a DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources.

Hine also pioneered the state's annual frog survey. In a recent interview, she noted: "Frogs were essentially overlooked." The importance of these amphibians as indicators of ecological health has since become well known worldwide.

Sentry Theater is located at the Sentry Insurance Headquarters, 1800 North Point Drive. The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame is located at Schmeckle Reserve in Stevens Point. More information is on the Web at www.wchf.org.