

# Stearns, a leading ecologist, taught at UWM

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Forest W. Stearns, an internationally known ecologist who taught at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for two decades, died of natural causes Sept. 8 in St. Germain. He was 80. Among his research interests were urban ecology, and marshes and aquatic plants.

He was past president of the American Institute of Biological Sciences and the Ecological Society of America and had been botanical editor for the official publication of the Ecological Society and for the Journal of Ecology.

He also was past chairman of the Wisconsin Scientific Areas Preservation Council, which advised the Department of Natural Resources.

He had a close relationship with his students and, after a field trip, 15 or 20 of them might find themselves having dinner with the professor and his wife at their home, according to a friend, Thomas Schuck, who is laboratory manager for biological sciences at UWM.

Stearns was born Sept. 18, 1918, in Shorewood, the son of a lawyer. He graduated from Shorewood High School and got his undergraduate education at Harvard University. He received a master's degree and a doctorate in 1947 from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, writing his thesis on the hardwood forests of northern Wisconsin.

After 10 years on the faculty of Purdue University, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service in Vicksburg, Miss., and at its North Central Forest Experiment Station in Rhineland. He joined the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1968 and was chairman of the botany department in the mid-'70s. After he retired in 1987, he was made an emeritus professor. He is survived by his wife, Ruth, of Rhineland; two daughters, Carlin Hibbard and Andrea Stearns, both of Eau Claire; and a son, Jay of Virginia. Another son, Timothy, died in 1972. No funeral will be held.