

In Memoriam

Jeanette A. Thomas

(1952–2018)

by Robert M. Timm

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How did a girl growing up in western Illinois become one of the world's leaders on marine mammal behavior, communication, and education? Through exemplary service and dedication to students of all ages, to teaching, and to her profession, including her long-term editorship of this journal, *Aquatic Mammals*. She played an early role as a senior female mentor when younger women began graduate school and throughout her professional career. She left her mark on innovations brought to the fields of marine mammalogy and education.

Jeanette A. Thomas (age 66), professor emeritus at Western Illinois University–Quad Cities, a past managing editor of *Aquatic Mammals*, and Past-President of the Society for Marine Mammalogy, passed away unexpectedly at her home on 16 July 2018. One of the world's experts on marine mammal communication, sensory behavior, using bioacoustics as a population assessment tool, and behavior enhancement of captive animals, Jeanette was a member of the faculty of WIU for 25 years. She also served there as the founder and director of the Laboratory of Sensory Biology and as Chair of the Faculty Council (1999–2002), and she initiated and coordinated their program offering graduate certificates in Zoo and Aquarium Studies. Not only was Jeanette passionate about her work as an award-winning educator and researcher, she also relished her role as a mentor and friend to her students.

Jeanette was born in LaHarpe, Illinois, on 23 March 1952. She attended high school at Northwestern High School in Sciota, Illinois, graduating in 1970, and began her undergraduate work at nearby Western Illinois University that fall. She earned a Bachelor's degree there in 1973 with a double major in Zoology and Botany.

She began her graduate studies in the Department of Ecology and Behavioral Biology at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, in the Master's program in the fall of 1973. Minnesota was a very intimidating place for graduate students in that era; the U of M was a huge university with tens of thousands of

students. As a new graduate student, she was quiet and kept to herself. It was very obvious early on, however, that this was a smart woman. Her interests were in mammal behavior and communication but were not focused at that point. Elmer C. Birney, a mam-



malogist with a joint appointment in the Ecology and Behavioral Biology department and in the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, was a logical advisor in that he was developing his program in mammalogy, had only been on the faculty there for a few years, and was actively taking on new students. At that time, Elmer was researching the population dynamics of microtine rodents. Although he wasn't skilled in the sorts of questions Jeanette was interested in, they worked out a mutually acceptable Master's project for her. Jeanette's Master's thesis was published in 1979 in one of the top-ranked journals (Thomas, J. A., & Birney, E. C., [1979]. Parental care and mating system of the prairie vole, *Microtus ochrogaster*. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, 5(2), 171–186). Prairie voles have an interesting and seemingly flexible parental care system in which in some cases there is a monogamous mating system and the male is actively involved in care of the offspring and in some cases not. Her Master's thesis was the first quantitative assessment of male parental care in this species and a landmark study for small mammals. Jeanette developed and polished her skills in careful observations of behavior through this Master's project, and it no doubt helped her in advising new students in developing their research

projects. In that era, it was common for all students seeking a Ph.D. to do a Master's degree first, even if they knew that they wanted to go on for a Ph.D. That led to far better trained students, with stronger, more diverse backgrounds than the current system in most universities of having Ph.D. students complete their Ph.D. in five years after receiving a Bachelor's degree.

Elmer was a demanding advisor, and his personality was conducive to developing comradery among his students. He expected high-quality, polished research to be undertaken and published. He was an excellent editor, and his students learned the fine art of crafting manuscripts for publication—skills that served Jeanette well over her career. Upon completion of her Master's program in 1977, she continued at Minnesota in the Ph.D. program, transferring to Donald B. Siniff's lab.

Minnesota, in that era, had an exciting program for graduate students—there were active faculty and excellent graduate students with whom to interact. John R. Tester, a faculty member in the department, was one of the founders of the field of radio telemetry. He ran an extensive laboratory that was actively developing the equipment to track the movements of free-ranging animals. A close friend and departmental colleague of Tester's, Don Siniff, had an active program in Antarctica working with seals at that time. Working together, Tester and Siniff, with skilled technicians and enthusiastic graduate students, worked out the equipment to track a wide array of terrestrial mammals and birds and then Antarctic seals. Jeanette undertook her dissertation in their laboratory, assisting in developing the equipment and then the techniques to quantify the movements and vocal repertoire of free-ranging Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) in McMurdo Sound,

Antarctica. She received her Ph.D. with Siniff serving as her advisor in 1979. She was there in the beginning stages of radio telemetry and in using the rapidly developing technology to better understand marine mammals in their environment. She had found her niche.

She continued her work with seals upon graduation, conducting post-doctoral research at Minnesota (1979-1980) with Siniff and at the Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute (1980-1985) in San Diego, California, where she was the director of the bioacoustics laboratory. At Hubbs-Sea World, she undertook research using a towed array of hydrophones for the U.S. Tuna Foundation, measuring the underwater hearing of beluga whales, examining responses of beluga whales to noise from oil platforms, and conducting studies on the rehabilitation of sea otters fouled with crude oil. From 1985 to 1989, she was a senior scientist at the Naval Ocean Systems Center in Hawaii, studying echolocation and masked hearing abilities of false killer whales and the hearing of the Hawaiian monk seal.

Perhaps first and foremost, Jeanette was a committed educator. Her 1994 publication, co-authored with Daniel Odell, "Strategies for Pursuing a Career in Marine Mammal Science," was the standard reference for students wishing to pursue a career working with marine mammals; it also provided excellent advice for students wishing to pursue a career in other fields in the natural sciences. It was published as a supplement to *Marine Mammal Science* (10[2]), April 1994; see link for career advice: <https://www.marinemammalscience.org/for-students/how-to-become-a-marine-mammal-scientist>). She returned to her alma mater, Western Illinois University, in 1989 as an associate professor of Biology. There she taught a variety of courses on campus and at



the Shedd Aquarium, established the Laboratory of Sensory Biology, was recognized as her College's Outstanding Researcher in 1994, and was named Distinguished Faculty Lecturer in 2005.

In addition to her teaching duties at WIU, Jeanette began teaching courses at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. What started off as individual courses grew into a variety of classes for both WIU students and staff at the Aquarium and other Chicago area zoological parks. She was on the Shedd Aquarium's research committee for a major new exhibit entitled Oceanarium, and that led to her teaching Marine Mammalogy I and II there in early 1991. Under Jeanette's leadership, the program evolved from being just classes offered at the Shedd Aquarium into a Master's degree program and a post-baccalaureate certificate program in Zoo and Aquarium Studies, the first of its kind in the nation (www.wiu.edu/graduate_studies/flatsheets/ZooAqua-PBC.pdf). Her work first with the Shedd Aquarium, and later with the Brookfield Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo, and Niabi Zoo (in nearby Coal Valley, Illinois), as well as other institutions, provided the coursework and first-hand experience to enhance both the careers of students, employees, and volunteers in the field zoological parks and to provide visitors to the institutions with a greater in-depth experience. One of the outgrowths of this collaboration and partnership with WIU was the Shedd Aquarium's initial investment in video-conferencing so that Chicago-based students could participate in courses only offered in Macomb (and vice versa) to complete their requisite graduate

coursework. Besides the many classes Jeanette taught, she also served as advisor to a number of Shedd employees in earning their Master's degrees through WIU. She was both highly professional and insightful, and her students also found her to be exceptionally humble and welcoming.

She was a dedicated editor for journals and for her students' papers, and she worked hard to improve the final product for the many papers she handled. Her editorial comments were always detailed and constructive, and papers that passed through her care always came out more rigorous, focused, and better written. Jeanette served as the managing editor of *Aquatic Mammals* for ten years and as the associate editor for marine mammals for the *Journal of Mammalogy* beginning in 2012. She was the senior editor of four books and the co-editor of one book on sensory abilities of marine mammals, as well as the author of numerous scientific papers.

She was a member of the Acoustical Society of America, American Society of Mammalogists (Life Member), Animal Bioacoustics Technical Committee, Association for Women in Science, European Association of Aquatic Mammals, International Marine Animal Trainer's Association, Phi Kappa Phi, and the Society for Marine Mammalogy, and she served as a scientific advisor for the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission for ten years.

She is survived by her husband, Rael Slavensky, children, Galen and Julienne Thomas-Ramos, her family and friends, and an incredible number of former students and colleagues whose lives she touched for the better.



Memories of Jeanette

Galen Thomas-Ramos

In putting together my mom's memorial, I learned quite a few things about her and how much of an impact she's had on other people's lives. I've had my own ex-girlfriends, her old grad students, and my own close friends—all of them, female or male—explain what a source of inspiration she was to them and how she impacted their lives, how they changed what they wanted to do with themselves and their future. Anyone who had the privilege of knowing her, even if only for a short time, wouldn't find this hard to believe. If you had talked to her for 5 minutes, you'd know you were talking to someone special. She was a generous, genuine, intelligent, willful spirit. You couldn't compare her to anyone else.

She was such a dutiful parent. I don't have a family yet, but I can only imagine how difficult it is to attend every choir concert, soccer game, and church event her kids were involved in. But she always made it work, even in the face of having such a busy professional life. She loved having a family so much.

I would like to share a couple of my favorite memories I have with her.

I remember being a little boy in Macomb, shortly after we had moved. She had just become a professor at Western Illinois University, and we didn't have a lot of money for a while. We couldn't afford the daycare center at the university, so I would accompany my mom as she taught her undergrad courses. I would lie in the back of the classroom while she taught, wrapped up in my sleeping bag on the floor, surrounded by my books. I was in heaven. My mom was in the front of the class leading a group of adults (or so I thought back then), and everyone had such respect for her. I think it was during these moments that I determined how I saw myself in the future, that I would like to pursue higher education.

Fast-forward to a Christmas break just a few years ago. I was home from grad school and had a big project that I needed to work on. I remember us sitting silently for hours just working away at our laptops. After a while, she put down her laptop, looked up at me, and told me how happy she was in that moment, just working together silently. In a lot of ways my mother was a reserved and humble woman. For her to have shared that feeling with me, in that moment, was atypical, but I'm so glad she did. I'm so glad I was able to make her that happy.

My mother's ideals in life have long been my own, but now with her passing, I will make sure to pass on those ideals to my own family, whenever that happens.

I love you mom, and we all miss you terribly.



Kathleen M. Dudzinski, Ph.D.
Managing Editor, *Aquatic Mammals*
Director, Dolphin Communication Project

Jeanette Thomas was my predecessor at *Aquatic Mammals* journal; she was the 4th managing editor of our journal. I started collaborating with her as Book Review Editor, then co-editor, and then assumed her mantle for the journal in 2010. I knew I had dedicated, hard-working, compassionate shoes to fill! Early in our collaboration, Jeanette became a mentor who morphed into a colleague and friend. We attended a few conferences together in Europe and the United States to promote the journal as well as our own research programs. Discussions with Jeanette were lively, often with varying viewpoints offered equal consideration and time. Jeanette was inclusive and highly collaborative; it was rare to see a publication with only her name as single author. Jeanette has not been far from my thoughts these past few weeks. Emotions have run wild as we receive and read the various tributes from colleagues that share a glimpse of what Jeanette meant to them. Still, every now and then I realize that I won't again receive her insightful comments or suggestions or advice and this leaves me more than a bit sad. But then I remember Jeanette's throaty laugh and realize she'd prefer those of us reminiscing about her to laugh and relish in our time together rather than weep at her death. Thank you, Jeanette, for being a guiding force for me with the journal as well as in how research collaboration allows all of us to achieve a better understanding of the world in which we live and of the animals calling our planet home.

Dr Christina Lockyer
Age Dynamics, Norway

Apart from Jeanette's many accomplishments, she really got *Aquatic Mammals* on the journal map. My contact with her through the journal and also through the Society for Marine Mammalogy where I worked closely with her for some years was a great experience. She was a wonderful person and will be very much missed—not just by her family and friends, but by a large and diverse population.

Heidi E. Harley
New College of Florida, Sarasota, Florida

I first met Jeanette Thomas when I was a graduate student in Hawaii and we both worked at what was then called NOSC—the Naval Ocean Systems Center—in Kaneohe Bay. I was relatively young and naïve, and Jeanette was a successful scientist with a Ph.D. and two young children. She had also co-edited a book I revered (*Dolphin Cognition and Behavior: A Comparative Approach*), was collecting data at multiple sites, and was respected for her productivity and unruffled demeanor. All to say, I was primed to be intimidated by her.

Turns out that wasn't my fate. Not because Jeanette didn't have the CV to do it (she did), but because some alchemy in Jeanette's practical, no-fuss style suggested she was just waking up in the morning and doing what had to be done, just what anyone would do if they found themselves in her situation. Of course, it wasn't true. Most folks don't study seals in remote (and freezing) places, co-edit multiple books, plan conferences all over the globe, have the opportunity to turn down prestigious jobs to be closer to their families, lead professional societies, write funded grant proposals on planes and trains, serve on national commissions, take responsibility for keeping traditional journals alive and lead them to flourish, found new academic programs, support a diverse range of students to their chosen next steps, and have fulfilling and interesting personal lives to boot. Nevertheless, there was something about Jeanette's understated competence that drew others to feel like they too could do what needed to be done—which turned out to be true if they were working with Jeanette.

Although I didn't see her often, I will miss Jeanette's being alive in the world. I'd like to be part of another conference she organized, contribute to another book she edited, share another student we mentored. I'd like to accept another journal or scientific society committee membership assignment from her while we were in the Women's Room. (Yes, it's true, she's one of the powerful women who confirmed for me that lots of organizational and professional opportunities really do happen in gender-specified spaces.) I'd like to have a meal with her and thank her for being such a great role model, for sharing her children's clothes and toys with me when I had my first child, for enriching my life.

But while I will miss talking to Jeanette directly and hearing her laugh, I am grateful that she will continue to do "that Jeanette thing": to quietly and capably continue to enrich my life—and our field—with her capacious and formidable legacy: her science, her service, and her students.

Aloha and mahalo nui loa, Jeanette!

Ron Kastelein
SEAMARCO

Why am I writing this tribute? Because I knew Jeanette for a long time, and she played a very important role in my life.

I met Jeanette when, as a student in 1983, I arrived in San Diego, USA, for an internship at Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute at the beginning of my lifelong research on marine mammals. She picked me up at Lindbergh Airport, and for the first few nights I slept at her family home. Together with Frank Awbrey, Jeanette and I conducted a 1.5 year research project on the effects of offshore drilling noise on belugas. This project consisted of two studies: (1) a behavioral audiogram and (2) a behavioral response study. Then, after a short period in which I worked for Steve Leatherwood on Commerson's dolphins, Jeanette hired me as an assistant to work for one year on a sea otter oil spill mitigation study with Terrie Williams and Randy Davis. After I met my wife Brigitte during a Christmas holiday in the Netherlands, I moved back home to be with her in 1986.

Jeanette and I stayed in contact as we were involved in organizing three symposia on sensory systems in aquatic mammals (in all cases, Jeanette took the initiative and was the driving force). The first one was in Rome, Italy (August 1989) where, thanks to lobbying by Jeanette, we were able to offer scientists from the USSR and Asian countries funding for travel and lodging. The second symposium was in Moscow, USSR (October 1991, organized with Alexander Supin), and the third one was in Harderwijk, The Netherlands (April-May 1994, organized with Paul Nachtigall). Each of the three symposia resulted in a book, which Jeanette, Paul, Sasha, and I edited.

For a long period, Jeanette was the editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Aquatic Mammals*. Through her hard work, the quality of the journal increased; and for many years, I was co-editor (first officially and later unofficially). In those pre-e-mail years, all correspondence had to go by regular mail or by fax, and it felt as if Jeanette and I sent each other a million faxes. Apart from improving it, Jeanette also advertised the journal and so increased the number of subscribers and the global distribution. During many biennial conferences of the Society for Marine Mammalogy, Jeanette rented a booth in which the journal was displayed. Jeanette and I "manned" the booth during the conferences, and it became popular with marine mammal scientists who wanted to sit down, have a coffee, and chat.

What did I learn from Jeanette? Jeanette taught me to give credit to those who deserve it and to never take the sole credit for teamwork. Even while I was a student, when we had meetings with the quality control boards for projects I worked on as her assistant, she gave me the opportunity to present the preliminary data. In this way, I got to know a lot of scientists and began to build up a network (although that word was not used in those days, and it was a passive phenomenon). When I started doing research in the Netherlands, this U.S. network helped me tremendously in getting research done and having manuscripts reviewed by friendly peers before I sent them to journals.

Jeanette also taught me to be politically sensitive. Before she acted, she always put herself in the position of others and thought about how she would experience a certain remark or action. Science is conducted by people, and when people are involved, politics are involved. I would not have had this awareness or sensitivity without Jeanette's great example. When Jeanette was president of the Society for Marine Mammalogy (1994-1996), I was always proud to see her address members of the Society from the lectern. Jeanette worked hard and was very dedicated, and she had a wonderful laugh which stimulated me to make jokes when I was with her (the description "friendly power women" comes to my mind).

Jeanette was my first mentor in the marine mammal field, and I could not have wished for a better one. She taught me a lot in a very pleasant atmosphere. She was like a wiser, older sister to me. I was very happy for Jeanette when she met Rael, who became her husband, so she could share life's experiences with him and enjoy her time outside science (such as taking care of alpacas). I feel sorry for his loss. It was a privilege and joy to have worked with Jeanette. I am very glad I knew her, and she will always be in my memory.



Elio Vicente
Zoomarine Portugal

Professor Jeanette Thomas, our dearest Jeanette, was one of the most extraordinary, inspiring, intelligent, and hard-working women I ever had the pleasure and honour to meet, learn from, and work with.

Already at first glance, you could tell that Jeanette was built of a different fibre and ran on a different kind of energy . . . she was truly unique! She had warmth, enthusiasm, a delightful humour, and a stamina that was very hard to match. She was highly motivated and driven, extremely organized, and, all in all, a very, very delightful person to be with.

I can proudly say that Jeanette, with whom I had the great honour of organizing, at Zoomarine in 1998, an extremely memorable Biological Sonar Conference, and to create and implement the original EUZoos-XXI project (2009-2012), was not only an amazing colleague but also a friend and a mentor. She taught me, she inspired me, she motivated me, and she made me aim higher and try to become a better marine biologist and researcher. And if one can consider oneself happy and blessed when one has special friends, then I can say that, through Jeanette's generosity, vision, and passion for science and for education, I certainly became a happier and better person and professional. And I do know that dozens more (former students, colleagues, and friends) can make quite similar tributes to our special Jeanette.

Jeanette's passing is a very painful loss not only for those who loved and admired her, but also for those who work, worldwide, in science, education, and conservation. Her professional and scientific legacy, her leadership and her work ethic, and her generosity and vision are special qualities for which those who met Jeanette must be very thankful. As such, thank you so very, very much, Jeanette, for all you did, for all you accomplished, and for all of those you inspired. You will be much more missed than you could possibly ever imagine—and we were much happier with your presence and your guidance than you could ever be aware of. May you rest in peace knowing that just because you worked so hard, diligently, and professionally, you left this planet a better place and helped science become even stronger.

Rachel Bergren
Director, Education and Guest Experience
The Marine Mammal Center, Sausalito, California
Western Illinois University, M.S. '05

Dr. Thomas was a wonderful graduate advisor, teacher, and colleague. Most importantly, she was an awesome human being. Despite the odds, she forged an incredible career, all the while retaining her Midwestern sensibilities: grace, humility, and good humor. Dr. T was down-to-earth, approachable, and kind. In a word, she was "real," and I feel so fortunate to have been able to call her my friend and mentor. Thank you, Dr. T, for your incredible support and guidance.

Karen Pryor

Jeanette was a valued friend and long-time colleague in the marine mammal world. I am so sorry to hear of her death.

Gianni Pavan
Centro Interdisciplinare di Bioacustica e Ricerche Ambientali
Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra e dell'Ambiente
Università degli Studi di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

I never had the opportunity to meet Jeanette personally, but she has always been present in my professional life—as an inspirer, as the author of countless scientific works, and as an editor for whom I did some reviews. In the last three years, the relationship was tighter—as a coeditor and coauthor in the preparation of a work on bioacoustics that represents the culmination of many years of her career and that, sadly, Jeanette will not be able to enjoy. But I remember her above all as an inspirer of my first research in marine bioacoustics when the references were very few; very few used towed arrays; and among these stood out, in my greedy readings, the pioneers Jeanette Thomas and Bill Watkins.

Darlene Ketten

How to put into words the grief at the loss of an extraordinary scientist and friend, especially as it is made all the more profound because of the remembered joy from decades of education, mentoring, and true friendship that Jeanette gave to so many.

I had the privilege of knowing Jeanette first as a role model and eventually as a cherished colleague and friend. My first introduction to Jeanette's generosity was when I was a post-doc. I sent an e-mail asking if I could attend a symposium she was organizing on marine mammals at the Fifth International Theroeological Congress in Rome in 1989. To my surprise, I shortly received a phone call from her in which she said not only was I welcome to attend but could I present a paper? I believe I stammered about not knowing enough, etc., but she persuaded me to do it and the rest, as they say, is history. That was my first international meeting, my first glimpse at how scientists exchange ideas and at the same time have fun doing it, and my first chance to meet Jeanette in person. She made me welcome despite my being a tyro, and it was only later that I came to realize that this is how great scientists can also be great teachers, through open-hearted inclusion and gentle prodding, bringing established scientists together with the "newbies," encouraging open discussion and exchanges of ideas.

Jeanette was the absolute master of mentoring as well as one of the most productive scientists in marine mammal research. Further, she was a natural leader and organizer, having organized some of the most important meetings on marine mammals and biosonar over nearly four decades, all of which resulted in books that are classics in the field. The energy, enthusiasm, and encouragement that she provided to each of us who had the privilege to know her is what kept many of us in the field, even when work became difficult and funding lagged.

Others will speak more eloquently to her leadership and achievements, but for me, beyond her professional achievements, the true gift she gave was her humor, an unflagging smile, and genuine warmth. We met infrequently, usually in association with professional meetings, but when we did, we spent wonderful hours catching up and brainstorming about the next great idea, often over a glass—well OK, maybe two—of wine. Those moments, and the memory of her laugh, are what I will keep uppermost in my mind now. She gave us her best, and we are all better for her example of integrity and fortitude tempered with kindness, consideration, and a *joie de vivre* that was unmatched and will be greatly missed.

Jim Robinett, Shedd Aquarium (retired), Chicago, Illinois

When I first met her, Jeanette had a wonderful professional relationship with the Aquarium, teaching a class at Shedd with earned credit for students through WIU. Students who enrolled in those classes found them rewarding. With her bioacoustics background, she expressed interest in conducting an acoustic survey of Shedd Aquarium's relatively new marine mammal pools. I was thrilled with her generous offer of help. With animal extremists falsely claiming unusually loud conditions in the pools, the Aquarium welcomed a non-biased scientific study of noise levels in the animals' environments. Dr. Thomas's findings indicated noise levels were below those recorded in nearshore oceanic environments where Shedd's collection of animals were predominantly found.



**Lenin Oviedo, Ph.D., Research Associate
CEIC Centro de Investigación de Cetáceos de Costa Rica**

I just wanted to express my condolences on our loss. Dr. Jeanette Thomas was pivotal in my development as a marine mammalogist in Latin America. I learned the “do”s and “don’t”s of publishing in peer reviews under her advisement. I wish I could have known her more.

**Diana Reiss, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Director,
Animal Behavior & Conservation MA Program, Hunter College, New York**

Jeanette was one of the first women in our field of marine mammal science, and her enthusiasm and tireless work as a leader, editor, and scientist served as a role model for so many other women in our field. Jeanette possessed the wonderful attributes of being an excellent scientist, a dedicated teacher and mentor to her students, and a person who deeply cared about the welfare and conservation of the animals she studied with such dedication. I will miss her science and her humor. And, personally, I will miss her as a friend. Our field has greatly benefited from all that Jeanette contributed.

**Bernd Würsig
Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University**

Jeanette first came to my attention in the early 1980s when she was a young scientist doing cutting-edge research on Weddell seals in the Antarctic, work she had begun during her Ph.D. career and continued afterwards. While she was a superb marine mammals scientist and educator, her greatest influence on me was probably the excellent edited books she championed on aspects of sensory systems of aquatic mammals. Many of those contributions formed an integral part of courses taught on marine mammal biology from 1990 on.

Jeanette and I worked together closely in the early to mid-1990s when we were both involved with administration of the Society for Marine Mammalogy. She took over as president of the Society in 1994, and I quickly came to appreciate her always thorough, thoughtful, caring, communicative ways as we navigated the myriad different opinions inherent in membership of such a large and diverse organization. She had more patience than did I, and I thank her for it.

My wife Melany and I got to know Jeanette as a friend, visiting with us in Texas during SMM board meetings, and during several outings related to conferences. It was always a joy to see her as Jeanette was a kind and funny colleague. We miss her.

**Michel Vély, DVM
Chairman, MEGAPTERA**

I feel so sorry about Jeannette Thomas passing. All my sympathy goes to her family and colleagues. Marine mammals as us all will miss her.



Douglas Wartzok
Provost Emeritus, Emeritus Professor of Biology
Editor Emeritus, *Marine Mammal Science*

I served on the Board of Governors during Jeanette's terms as Chair of the Membership Committee, President-Elect, and President of the Society for Marine Mammalogy. I know her dedication to the Society and particularly to the students. She was always ready to provide advice and guidance and contributed greatly to the development of a guide to careers in marine mammal science.

Jeanette's commitment to marine mammal science and students is also reflected in her establishment of research opportunities for students at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Her university, Western Illinois University–Quad Cities, was a three-hour each way commute, but Jeanette saw the importance of exposing students in land-locked western Illinois to marine mammals, and she labored diligently to make sure it worked.

I experienced Jeanette's skill as an editor when I contributed two chapters to the book she and Ron Kastelein edited, *Sensory Abilities of Aquatic Mammals*, and when I reviewed manuscripts for her during her editorship of *Aquatic Mammals*. She was a careful editor and a meticulous writer. I learned to appreciate her robust understanding of underwater acoustics and animal behavior when she was a member of a panel of experts that I chaired reviewing "Marine Mammal Acoustics Exposure Analysis Models Used in U.S. Navy Environmental Impact Statements."

Whether the occasion was academic or social, it was always a pleasure—as well as informative—to spend time with Jeanette.

John Anderson, Marine Filmmaker

I first met Jeanette when the *Aquatic Mammals* journal's Historical Perspectives (HP) series was in the process of being born. I suggested adding a video component to the series, and we were off to the races. That was ten years ago. In 2014, Jeanette became the 69th video interviewee in the HP series to share her thoughts and stories about being one of the founders and original women scientists in the marine mammal science community (to see a few clips from her interview, visit the *Aquatic Mammals* website: https://www.aquaticmammalsjournal.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=147). While I didn't know her that well on a personal level, I could tell that Jeanette loved what she was doing and was proud of what she had accomplished. She will be missed.

Jack Terhune

Jeanette pioneered many fundamental studies of Weddell seal vocal behaviour at a time when oscilloscope tracings were photographed using Polaroid cameras and when flights to the field (to McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, from New Zealand) had a point-of-no-return. She generously contributed her editorial skills on many occasions and in a wide range of venues. Jeanette, along with her students and colleagues, pursued a wide range of studies that advanced our understanding of the biology of many mammalian species. Her intellect and hard work left a large legacy.

Ed Heske, Editor-in-Chief
***Journal of Mammalogy*, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque**

Editorial work is a labor of love, and Jeanette gave unstintingly of her time and energy to help make the science that appeared in the *Journal of Mammalogy* the best it could be. She was an Associate Editor for six years, beginning in 2012, and was considered a terrific member of the *Journal's* editorial team. She was an excellent editor and worked hard on making sure everything in a manuscript was exactly right. Her primary responsibilities were marine mammals but because of her diverse expertise, she also handled a variety of bioacoustic papers, including many papers on acoustic surveys of bats. Not only did she handle all the marine papers before two new associate editors for marine biology were added in 2016 (she had something like 20 active manuscripts at that time), she always was friendly and supportive when I needed to call on her. She was happily retired and keeping busy at her home in Illinois when not also staying busy editing for several different journals, continuing to share her expertise. We will miss her on the *JM* team, and I will miss her.