

DEDICATED TO

## KENNETH J. LAZARA

(1939–2020)

I began work on The ETYFish Project in 2009. For the first five years I collaborated with Ken, who provided much of the mundane but necessary library work during his tenure as a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Every week or so I sent Ken a list of original descriptions I did not own nor could find online. He would then visit the Museum's library, scan the papers, and email them to me. He also helped translate some of the non-English texts, or found colleagues at the Museum to translate them for me. He served in this capacity for five years. For these contributions he was credited as co-author when the first edition of the The ETYFish Project went online in October 2013.

Ken and I first met each other via email when I was researching and writing the five-part "Annotated Checklist of North American Freshwater Fishes" for the North American Native Fishes Association (2005–2009). Ken particularly enjoyed the etymology sections I included, and helped me track down the meanings of some of the more enigmatic names. When I told him about my idea of researching the etymologies of all fish species, he immediately volunteered his library and research services.

I met Ken in person only once. It was during the early years of the Project, and even then I could see that he was frail. Amazingly, despite his declining health, he somehow managed to visit the Museum in Manhattan from his Brooklyn home and continue to scan papers for

me. Eventually his visits became less frequent. Then they ceased altogether. He never told me why but I knew.

Ken remained a steady correspondent over email. I sought his counsel on difficult names and some of the more speculative explanations I was proposing. But then he stopped replying. I called and left messages. He never returned the calls. I suspected his health had taken a serious turn for the worse. Through a contact at the American Killifish Association I learned that it had.

Before he retired, Ken was a physics professor at the United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. During his spare time, and during the early years of his retirement, he was a celebrated and influential killifish hobbyist with a keen interest in taxonomic minutiae. He contributed several important articles on killifish taxonomy to the journal *Copeia* (now *Ichthyology & Herpetology*) and described three new killifish species — *Maratecoara lacortei*, *Spectrolebias costai* and *Plesiolebias aruana* — in 1991. He collaborated on the description of *Aphaniops stiassnyae* in 2001, the same year he published his magnum opus, *The Killifishes: An Annotated Checklist,*

*Synonymy, and Bibliography of Recent Oviparous Cyprinodontiform Fishes*, also known as *The Killifish Master Index* (4th edition).

I miss Ken's superb bibliographical detective work, his sharp editorial eye, and his passion for nomenclatural arcana.

I wish we had begun our collaboration 10 years earlier.

— Christopher Scharpf



Ken Lazara with this 2002 Killifish Hobbyist of the Year award from the American Killifish Association.