

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Vince Crichton (Doc Moose), 1942–2020

It was a very sad day for *Alces* and the North American Moose Conference and Workshop group when we learned that Vince, a near-inaugural member, a regular scientific contributor, a relentless inspirational leader, and treasured friend of so many, was taken from us at 78 years old on December 3, 2020. His presence at every meeting since 1972 was hugely important to the scientific and social development of our association. First and foremost, he will always be the beloved husband of Kim, Dad to Scott (Vita) and Susan (Craig), and Grampy to Julia.

Dr. Vincent Frederick Joseph Crichton was born November 7, 1942 in the small northern town of Chapleau, Ontario. His love of the outdoors and wildlife undoubtedly developed during his early years travelling in the bush with his father Vince Crichton Sr. who was Fish and Wildlife Supervisor of the Chapleau region. Vince earned his Bachelor and Masters of Science degrees at the University of Manitoba and his Doctorate at the University of Guelph in the field of wildlife diseases. His 40-year-career with the Province of Manitoba began in 1972 as Eastern Region Wildlife Biologist and culminated in 2012 as Manager of Game, Fur and Problem Wildlife, Manitoba Conservation, Wildlife and Ecosystem Branch.

An annual opportunity to exchange scientific information with colleagues and a

journal in which to publish it, doesn't happen on its own, especially in the absence of a formal organization. But for moose biologists, this was the case for more than 50 years, in large part due to Vince Crichton's influence. In the early days of *Alces* and the NAMCW, Vince was a key member of a small steering group, affectionately called the "Moose Mafia", who never allowed the ball to be dropped. And he continued until his last days to provide that key leadership. He was a regular scientific contributor to *Alces*, an issue Editor and a permanent Associate Editor. Vince originated and co-sponsored the antler DMB Award carved each year since 1981 by Tom Copper, AK, and now presented 36 times. He was instrumental with others in producing the acclaimed "Ecology and Management of the North American Moose" in which he has two chapters. As an aside, he initiated and co-edited the "Moose Call" newsletter intending to bring moose research and interesting stories to readers who might otherwise never pick up a journal. Assisted by Kim, they produced 27 issues. Vince organized and hosted three NAMCWs, one of which (50th), was combined with the 8th International Moose Symposium. In 1988 he received the Distinguished Moose Biologist Award, and in 2016 at the 50th, was presented with the first NAMCW Professional



Commitment and Appreciation Award. This was his 45th consecutive annual meeting, including all 8 International Symposia, the only “mooser” to have done so. Vince served as Associate Editor of *The Wildlife Society Bulletin* and was the Canadian Vice-President of the North American Moose Foundation. For these reasons he will be remembered by many colleagues from around the northern hemisphere wherever moose roam.

Vince’s unique character and persuasiveness came from his never failing pursuit of good wildlife management, not to mention his tall stature. One might presume that his outspokenness survived in the civil service only because of the principled and absolute conviction of his positions. His objective he said was to get people “into the same canoe, paddling in the same direction”.

Dr. Crichton was given an award of merit from the Province of Manitoba for 40 years of service and was the recipient of the 2014 Conservation Award from the Manitoba Chapter of *The Wildlife Society* for support of the conservation and management of wildlife and their habitats. In retirement he became an

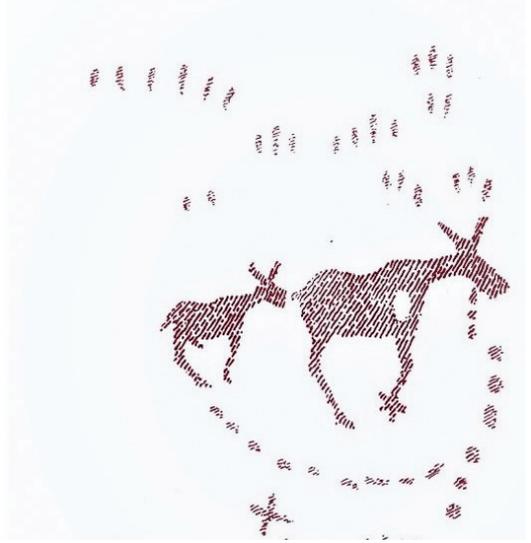
expert on the spread of CWD in North America and continued to pursue his passion for moose and caribou management as a consultant, public speaker, environmentalist, conservationist, hunter and writer. He was always ready and willing to give a talk on his beloved moose, whether to an international scientific conference, the Gynecological Association of Montreal, the Idea City symposium, Toronto, his local university, the local chapter of *The Wildlife Society*, or to a class of local elementary students. He was a recorder for the Boone and Crockett Club for many decades, measuring trophy heads at big game nights all over Manitoba, and along with others, founded the Manitoba Big Game Trophy Association. In November while hospitalized, Vince was recognized in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly “for being one of the first advocates for co-management of moose by First Nations and government and for his passion, dedication and commitment to moose management provincially, and around the world”; he was awarded the first ever honorary Manitoba moose hunting license which brought a smile to his face.

Riding Mountain National Park was Vince’s second home. In the spring and fall he

spent much of his spare time, cameras in hand and infant grand-daughter Julia in tow behind his bike searching for his “rubber-nosed swamp donkeys”. He was an accomplished photographer and was involved in the production of several videos for naturalists and hunters. On his 78th birthday, the CBC aired the documentary “Giants of the Boreal Forest” documenting his never ending passion for moose. His work has been featured on Discovery Channel (Champions of the Wild) and Animal Planet (The Man Who Would be Moose). His private entrepreneurial interests ranged from Telonics Canada, to speculating on the price of winter-dried moose pellets; that is until the bottom fell out of the souvenir stick-creature market leaving him with a garage full of pellets needing to be turned into his garden.

To paraphrase an old physicist (Newton), if we have all moved a little further in our views of moose management and of how to communicate those ideas to the public, in part, it is because we have sat with a genuine giant. Vince’s absence from future meetings of the North American

Moose Conference and Workshop will leave a hole in our hearts but he will always be there to remind us of the much needed moose research left to be accomplished and shared.



Dewdney (1957) sketch of pictographs, Darkly Lake, Quetico Pk.