



Walter Joseph Bock

January 27, 2022

Walter Joseph Bock passed away peacefully on January 27, 2022. He was born in Woodhaven Queens, New York on November 20, 1933. He resided in Tenafly, NJ for over 55 years.

He is predeceased by his parents, Paul and Rose Bock, his brother Paul, and his wife Katharine Lippitt Bock. Walter is survived by his sisters Helen Stahl and Elizabeth Wong, his children Katie and Angelo Rosa, Susie R. Bock, and Rachel and David Bock. And his grandchildren Katharine (Kaitlin) Rosa, Corey Lacoppola, Daniel Rosa, Adam Bock, and Walter Jonah Bock. Walter made sure there were funds for all his children and grandchildren to attend college.

Walter dedicated his life to research and teaching. He graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School in 1951. He then earned his B.S. from Cornell University in 1955, and his M.A. and Ph.D., from Harvard University in 1957 and 1959. His thesis advisor was Ernst Mayr, and they remained close for the rest of their careers and lives. Walter then taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign before beginning a fifty-year career as a professor at Columbia University in the Department of Biological Sciences, retiring in 2016. The classes he taught at Columbia included comparative morphology, evolution, and the history and philosophy of science.

Walter was also a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History and compiled the definitive list of the birds of the world published by the Museum. His research was in the field of evolutionary biology, with respect to the structure and function of the feeding apparatus of birds and the origin of flight. He published hundreds of papers and was an active member of a number of international scientific societies, eventually traveling to 6 continents. He was Permanent Secretary and then President of the International Ornithological Congress.

Appreciation and conservation of the natural world were passions for Walter. He loved camping, hiking, and canoeing with his family and served leadership positions in the Tenafly Nature Center and the Palisades Nature Association. He supported many environmental causes over the years.

There will be a private celebration of Walter's life with friends and family.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Walter Bock's name to the International Ornithologists' Union. Walter believed that scientists from all countries should be able to gather and exchange ideas. The money will support scientists around the world to travel to conferences and in research projects. Donations can be made at <https://www.internationalornithology.org/donate>. Please also send an email to info@internationalornithology.org and mention your donation is in honor of Walter Bock.