
MEMORIAL

KEITH PRESTON YOUNG (1918–2004)

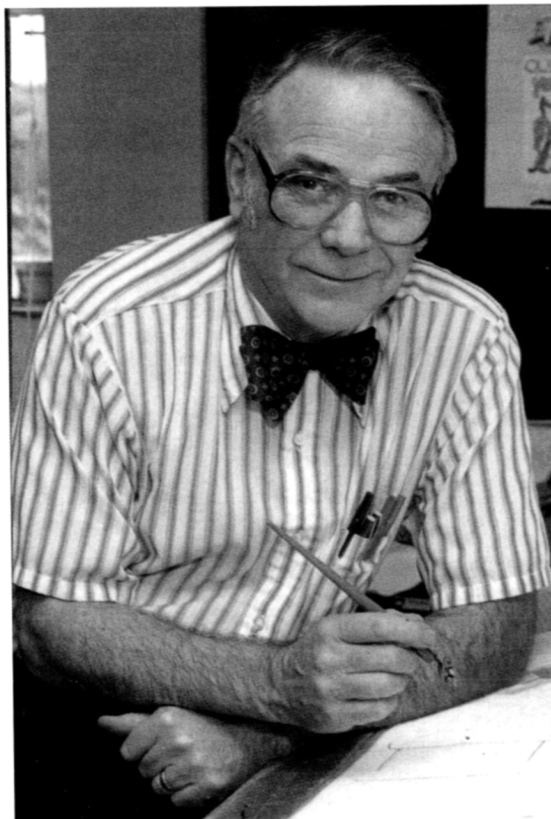


Photo: courtesy Jackson School of Geosciences.

“With the death of Keith Young . . . , we have lost the leading worker of his generation on the Cretaceous of the Gulf Coast region.”

J. Kennedy, Oxford University,
United Kingdom, August 2004

Keith Young published over 100 papers and contributed to numerous symposia and field guides dealing with Mesozoic biostratigraphy. He supervised 50 graduate students, many of whom went on to work in geology-related industries or in academia. A significant number of the type specimens in our collection were described by him, and his contribution to these collections is enormous. In addition he found the time to teach numerous courses within the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin.

Keith was the honoree at the Seventh International Congress on Rudists (Austin, early June 2005, <http://www.tmm.utexas.edu/npl/Rudist2005/>). Although his publication record on rudists was limited, his research interests and that of many of his students generated several theses and dissertations. Together they amassed a large rudist collection (amounting to about 10,000 specimens

and acetate peels) from field research throughout Texas and northern Mexico. This entire taxonomic collection is searchable via computer; eventually, as with other parts of the collection, it will be available on the Web.

Keith was fully aware of the importance of provenance data and the cataloguing of specimens for later reference. In contrast to many segments of our collections, we have an excellent catalogue for specimens that have passed through his care. Ten catalogue volumes and almost 90,000 records, covering between one and two million specimens, were organized by him. Specimens that bear the *UT* or *WSA* acronym do so because of his diligence, a practice passed on to his students. That same rigorous research created an incredible 60,000-card reference index of Mesozoic ammonites, their suture patterns, and cross section profiles, a reference library that we shall try to make accessible to others in some Web format.

My introduction to Keith Young was not only as a student but later as the ‘keeper of non-vertebrates’ at the Texas Memorial Museum (TMM). He was a most helpful and fascinating mentor. We retraced the lively history of geological research in Texas. Long hours were spent in his laboratory on the old 4th (new 5th)

floor of geology and later in the Non-vertebrate Paleontology Lab as we sifted through the nuances of the collections and probed into the lives of the collectors. Each specimen seemed to have an intimate history and each collector an intriguing characteristic. Keith knew it all, and was prepared to share his knowledge with a novice. Without his guidance, I would certainly have struggled to work with these collections for I lacked the vital perspective that Keith had developed through his love of geology, his sense of history, and his appreciation of literature.

“The Keith and Ann Young Endowed Fund for the Curation

of Non-vertebrate Collections” in the University of Texas at Austin Geology Foundation is a tangible tribute to the immense legacy that Keith Young has left in our trust.

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