

THE
BRODIE
CLUB



ROYAL ONTARIO
MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY



BILL CARRICK
Nov. 14, 1920 - Oct. 7, 2002

THE 970th MEETING OF THE BRODIE CLUB

The 970th meeting of the Brodie Club was held on Nov. 19th in Room 432 of the Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories of the University of Toronto.

Chairman: Bruce Falls

Secretary: Oliver Bertin

Attendance: 28 members and 13 guests

Guests: Jess Carrick and Nicole Wolske, daughter and granddaughter of late member Bill Carrick, guests of the club;
Dan Gibson OC, Michael Spencer OC, Maqbool Spencer and Ellie Larsen, guests of Falls;

Chester Gryski and Glenn Coady, guests of Sandra Eadie;

Rosemary Addison, guest of Ed Addison;

Henri Sellers and Joyce Peterson, guests of Claire Muller;

George Fairfield, guest of David Hussell; and

Eleonora Bertin, guest of Bertin

The minutes of the 969th meeting were approved as written.

NEW BUSINESS:

Falls said he has found speakers for most of the meetings this year. The December meeting will be held on Dec. 10, one week earlier than usual because of the Christmas holidays.

Jock McAndrews said the British Natural History Museum is sponsoring an exhibition entitled *Dino Birds: The Feathered Dinosaurs of China* until May 5, 2003. The exhibition features 13 fossils discovered in 1996 in northeastern China that reportedly prove that dinosaurs developed feathers and then flight as they evolved into birds. The museum is in London, England.

Corresponding member George Peck would like to keep members aware of the Ontario Nest Records Scheme, which he co-ordinates. The volunteer monitoring program has accumulated 125,000 nest records since 1956, making it the largest of the six Canadian programs. He has sent the club a copy of the annual report, a handbook and sample nesting cards for those who are interested in participating.

REMEMBERING BILL CARRICK

The meeting was devoted to late member Bill Carrick, who died in an unfortunate accident at his wildlife studio in Pickering on Oct. 7, 2002, just short of his 82nd birthday.

Falls said Carrick became a naturalist as a young boy when he combined his enthusiasm for birds and the school camera club with his agility when climbing trees. He learned many of his photography skills from his friend, Toronto Star bird columnist Hugh Halliday. It was a mutually beneficial relationship. Carrick would climb trees to collect birds for Halliday to photograph. In return, Halliday taught him to use the camera.

Carrick spent five years in the RCAF during the war, serving as armourer and then student pilot all over Canada. While in the air force, he acquired a 16-mm Kodak movie camera, an obsolete design with interchangeable long and short lenses. That camera changed his life.

After the war, he became a still photographer for the Royal Ontario Museum, shooting illustrations for numerous books and ROM publications. That encouraged him to apply to the National Film Board, where he shot a film on woodpeckers in exchange for free film. That film was so good, he was asked to shoot other films for the NFB. It also led to a series of wildlife films for the Carling Conservation Club, Ducks Unlimited and Arctic footage for the famous Walt Disney film *White Wilderness*. He continued to work in the film industry until recently. He supplied beavers for the Pierce Brosnan movie on Grey Owl and made an hour-long film on beavers for KEG.

One of his most widely respected films was *World in a Marsh*, a 1956 classic that showed remarkable shots of birds, muskrats and insects, even a Pied-billed Grebe laying eggs on her nest and a bullfrog confronting a garter snake. "That was always a favourite with my students," Falls said. "There's lots of sex and violence, and besides it is a beautiful film."

During this period, Carrick developed the faunal equivalent of the gardeners' green thumb, allowing him to raise wild animals and take remarkable close-up shots of wild animals, seemingly unaware of his presence. He specialized in waterfowl, beavers and other marsh animals, often raising them for his films or just for pleasure. In later years, he became fascinated with so-called imprinting of birds. He trained them to follow him on foot, in his motorboat and later beside an ultralight aircraft that he sponsored.

He was the longest serving member of the club, having joined in March, 1947, the 44211d meeting. He as a very active member of the club and will be sorely missed.

Falls showed a KEG film biography of Carrick, from the *Profiles of Nature* series. An entertaining and informative film, it showed scenes of Carrick, his photography and his children over a period of many years.

There were clips from his first NFB film and ground-breaking movies that showed just how innovative Carrick was, right from the beginning. In that film, he used split-screen techniques to show a Tree Swallow on the outside of a bird box feeding her youngsters inside. Other clips from a Carling Breweries film on largemouth bass showed him using a homemade periscope to film underwater. Both techniques revolutionized wildlife photography.

The film showed Carrick in his younger days, sitting patiently in a blind for hours at a time, waiting for the perfect shot of a bird laying eggs or two bullfrogs fighting. Sometimes, he would lash two canoes together and erect a tripod across the thwarts.

His son James helped him build birdhouses with a sliding wall that allowed him to film the activities inside. If necessary, he would build an aquarium in his house so he could film dragonfly nymphs catching fish or giant water bugs laying eggs. Later, he learned to raise wild animals, allowing them to build their nests, catch their prey or mate in their natural setting in perfect view of his camera. One remarkable scene showed two porcupines in a confrontation that started with head bumping and ended with them back to back, batting each other with their spiny tails.

The film described Carrick as a "dedicated conservationist" who raised all kinds of wildlife. There were shots of James as a teenager in a Beatle haircut building birdhouses and cavorting with a semi-wild fox, his daughter Jess playing with birds and Carrick with his boat and his ultralight as Canada Geese flew beside.

Cinematographer and sound recordist Dan Gibson and NFB producer Michael Spencer spoke warmly of their 50 years making wildlife films with Carrick.

Spencer reminisced about his first meeting with Carrick soon after the war. Carrick had appeared on his doorstep one morning offering to do wildlife films for the NFB. By coincidence, Carrick arrived shortly after a fierce old ornithologist, Dr. Harrison F. Lewis, had demanded somebody to photograph birds. Spencer found the perfect solution. He persuaded Lewis to donate 2,000 feet of 16-mm colour film so Carrick could make his first nature film.

Gibson met Carrick in the late 1950s. He told a story of them trying to film a Ruffed Grouse in Algonquin Park. They followed a trail of seats through the bush until they found a drumming log. Carrick set up his camera while Gibson handled the sound. In his quiet, unassuming way, Carrick suggested that the microphone was a little too close to work, but Gibson insisted he knew what he was doing and forged ahead. Two or three hours later, the grouse appeared. It jumped onto the tree at the very spot Carrick had picked and promptly started to drum. Carrick got a perfect film of the grouse, but Gibson's microphone was far too close, and recorded nothing but the sound of whistling wind. "I told you so," Carrick said.

Gibson was grateful for the lesson: "He taught me about wildlife photography and recording. He showed me lots of good techniques ... We had many, many adventures together."

Later, Carrick encouraged the picture to come to him, rather than the other way around. He started raising his subjects at home, so they would be comfortable with him and his camera. But the animals sometimes embarrassed him. Gibson told one story where Carrick encouraged him to raise three goslings for a film. The problem came after the movie was finished. The fully grown geese were donated to the Niska-Kortright Waterfowl Centre near Guelph but the birds were so used to human contact that they would sometimes flyaway from the park and strut around downtown, tying up the traffic, infuriating the police. Eventually, Carrick solved that problem by donating the geese to the nature school on Toronto island.

Carrick was also a great help to Gibson's disabled son. "He was like a second father to him," Gibson said.

Spencer acted as producer or scriptwriter on many of Carrick's films. Like others, he praised Carrick for his great patience and the painstaking way he worked. He remembers working with him on *World in a Marsh*, a film that was shot in 1956 near Palgrave, just north of Toronto. "We waited patiently for hours, bitten by mosquitoes, waiting for the picture he wanted. He was an excellent photographer."

But not all film-makers were as patient as Carrick. Spencer related one story about the filming of a movie for Ducks Unlimited. Carrick dropped Spencer on an isolated island in the middle of the St. Lawrence River with instructions to film Black Ducks. "Be patient," Carrick said. "The ducks will come." The ducks came, but there was no sign of Carrick. "He didn't come back for 24 hours," Spencer grimaced.

Such stories were common, but they didn't detract from their admiration for Carrick. "He made a great contribution to the film industry," Gibson said. "He will be very much missed."

Member Bill Rapley met Carrick in the 1960s in the zoology department of the University of Guelph. At the time, Carrick ran the Kortright centre nearby. They used to go up to Lake Opeongo in Algonquin Park searching for eggs which they would bring home and incubate. "He understood nature," Rapley said. "He had so many species at Kortright. "

Rapley graduated from the Ontario Veterinary College in 1971 and was the first vet hired by the brand-new Toronto Zoo. It was a trying time because the staff had to shut down Riverdale Zoo in downtown Toronto, open the new zoo and quarantine dozens of foreign animals in farms all over southern Ontario. "Carrick was a great help," Rapley said.

Much later, in 1989, Carrick and Rapley became involved in many projects, ranging from Sandhill Cranes, to swans at Falconbridge and even a trip to Indonesia where they watched a Komodo dragon stalk deer. Carrick also brought some baby beavers from Argentina to suit the filming schedule for the recent Pierce Brosnan movie on Grey Owl. The film-makers needed baby beavers six months out of season, and Carrick hit on the idea of using animals from the southern hemisphere. "He was a good friend," Rapley said. "He taught me a lot about photography and nature."

Member Harry Lumsden met Carrick after the war when he was still a photographer for the ROM. They worked together on several film projects and became involved with the restoration of Trumpeter Swans.

Around that time, Carrick discovered that swans would follow a bicycle or a truck, in fact anything that moved. That trait has often been referred to as *imprinting*, but Lumsden said the term was incorrect. "It is different from imprinting. It is a newly recognized behaviour that keeps the brood together."

Whatever the name, Carrick used that discovery to make better films on his favourite subject, birds. He trained Canada Geese to follow his motorboat on Lake Scugog at 30 mph, filming all the while, and then experimented with aircraft. He found a graduate student who was willing to study this behaviour and together they raised a flock of geese. They imprinted half of them, leaving the others to grow up semi-wild. They found to their surprise that non-imprinted birds flew far better than the others. "We could not fly imprinted birds."

His ideas were picked up by Bill Lishrnan, who wanted to fly with the birds. Lishrnan ran into a host of problems and repeatedly gave up. But Carrick would come to his rescue every time and steer him right. That liaison eventually led to Lishrnan's famous movie *Fly Away Home*. Lishrnan got most of the credit, but it was Carrick who was responsible for the original idea and who brought it to execution.

Carrick was a great help with Lumsden's Trumpeter Swan experiments as far back as the 1960s. He found that swans would keep laying eggs if the old ones were removed, and he was always there with an incubator to hatch the eggs and feed the newly hatched cygnets.

They flew to Alaska one year to try and solve a persistent problem with the hatching rate of Lumsden's Trumpeter Swans. Lumsden was worried because he was getting only 57 per cent hatchability, far less than the 94 per cent that was achieved in Britain. They suspected the problem was too much in-breeding in the flock so they decided to bring in some new stock from Alaska. That solved a good part of the problem, giving them 74 per cent hatchability.

Claire Muller met Carrick in 1982. She remembered Carrick saying that as a teenager he used to ride his bicycle from his home in Leaside all the way to Erindale carrying a sack of grain to help Roy Ivor maintain sick birds.

Much later, Muller and Carrick drove to Ajax in search of an injured swan, a story that illustrated Carrick's remarkable knowledge of birds. The swan wouldn't let them come near so Carrick took a bag of grain out of the car and spread several handfuls on the shore where the bird would see it. "We waited for an hour and sure enough, the bird came out and fed, and then returned to the water. Then we waited another 10 minutes. The bird fell asleep and Bill paddled out in his canoe and picked it up in his arms." Carrick's secret: The grain was laced with sleeping medication!

Carrick gave Muller a good piece of advice when working with birds. He told her to move at a uniform pace, keep her arms down and never ever wave them. That was the worst thing she could do.

Ed Addison related how he and his wife Rosemary were live-trapping beaver for an academic project and needed a place to keep them. They asked Carrick if they could leave them penned at the Kortright centre near Guelph where Carrick worked. Carrick was worried that a beaver would escape and destroy the trees, but Addison assured him there was no chance that could ever happen. Just as Carrick suspected, one beaver did escape from the pen. Worse, it took out a large and prized maple tree that used to shade the water's edge. "He talked to me again 15 years later and said he had forgotten all about it," Addison said. "He was a very accommodating gentleman."

Bertin also suffered from Carrick's disapproval. Carrick once caught him smoking - an industrial hazard in newspapers -- and gave him a stiff lecture. "I will never hire a smoker," he said and barely talked to Bertin for the next five years. Carrick eventually relented after Bertin shot some animal photographs at the Toronto Zoo. "These aren't bad," Carrick allowed, and started talking to Bertin again.

Fred Bodsworth was a cub reporter on the Toronto Star in 1943 when he went birding with Hugh Halliday and a tall lanky kid in RCAF uniform.

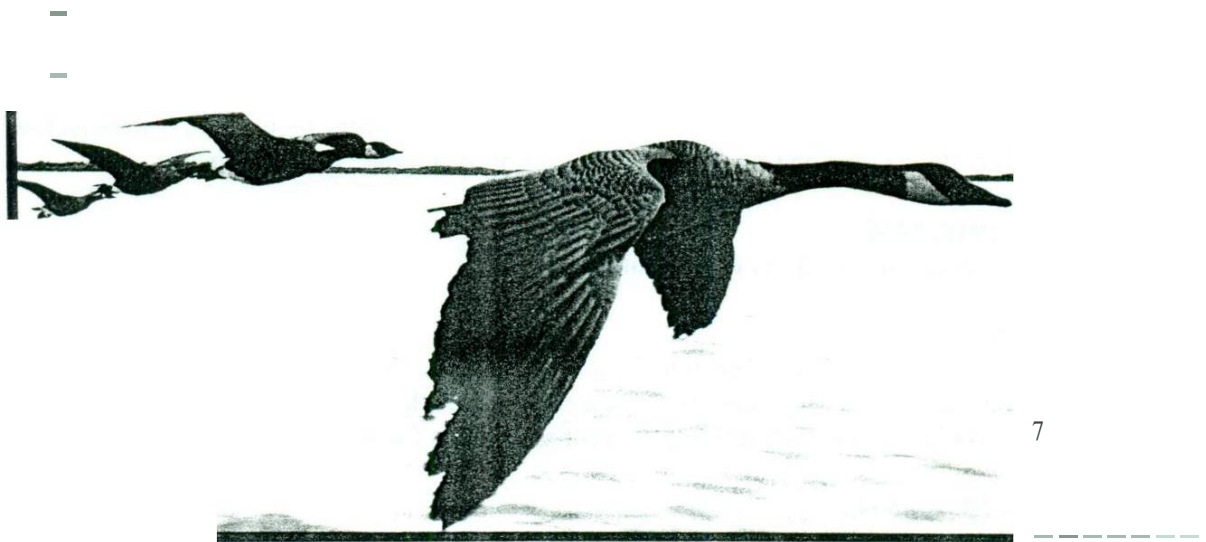
He described Carrick as a mechanical genius who used a car engine to build a wind tunnel at his wildlife studio in Pickering. The tunnel was built in the 1970s for Budge Crawley, a noted film-maker who owned the rights to Bodsworth's book *The Strange One*. The film was cancelled when Budge suddenly died, and the wind-tunnel was never used for the movie. It was, however, used on-and-off for metabolism experiments on birds.

Bodsworth gave Carrick credit for coming up with the wind-tunnel idea, a major film innovation. "We'd just turn on the fan and the geese would start to fly," Bodsworth said. Despite reports to the contrary, "no bird was ever injured in that wind tunnel."

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Dec. 10 -- one week earlier than usual -- to accommodate the Christmas holidays. Dan Brooks of the UofT Dept. of Zoology will speak on biodiversity in Costa Rica.

Members are invited to bring Christmas goodies.



Bill Carrick's Presentations to the Brodie Club
Compiled by Sandra Eadie

One illustration of Bill Carrick's dedication and importance to the Brodie Club is the number of presentations he gave to us and they are listed here. He's been closely associated with the club since at least the 409th meeting on April 17, 1945, when he had just returned from five years in the RCAF. At that meeting, he presented films and slides, mostly of nesting birds in Newfoundland and Churchill, Manitoba.

Less than two years later, at meeting #442, on March 18, 1947, he was elected a member along with York Edwards, Douglas Miller, Randolph Peterson, J.B.C. Runnings, and W. Bev. Scott.

By my count, he made formal presentations at least 19 times, sometimes bringing a baby bird or beaver. He was also secretary, treasurer and archivist for many years. This record does not count his innumerable observations. At his first meeting as a member, for example, he reported on a Great Homed Owl nest which he had under extended photographic monitoring from a blind. He was surprised to see crows swooping down on the nest and attacking the owls. Most recently on June 9, 2002, he hosted the Brodie Club field day at his property near the Zoo.

"He was a really important person to this club," Eadie said.

April 17, 1945, Meeting #409

Photographic Souvenirs: Many beautiful slides and reels of motion pictures of nature subjects in Newfoundland and Churchill, Manitoba, taken while the speaker was a member of the RCAF. He showed many birds nesting. Bill was not yet a member.

Jan. 6, 1948, #454

Duck Studies at Delta, Manitoba: An account of the progress being made in waterfowl research at this unique station together with aerial photographs of the territory

Feb. 3, 1948, #456

Motion pictures of the Delta Duck Station.

Nov. 23, 1948, #467

Duck Research at Delta Research Station, Manitoba. An illustrated talk on the latest developments at this important Manitoba station, which is yearly adding invaluable data to our knowledge of conservation and control methods for waterfowl.

Jan. 16, 1951, #504

Spoke on Pelee Island.

Oct. 7, 1952, #525

Showed films on Point Pelee

Jan. 24, 1956, #555

Photographing of Polar Bear & Walrus on Southampton Island.

April, 19, 1960, #590

Film Night: Ducks Unlimited, World in a Marsh, and Wildlife in the Rockies

Nov. 17, 1964, #628

Waterfowl. He worked with Ontario Waterfowl Research Foundation at the time

April, 20, 1971, #687

"Springtail": Life History of the Pintail

1973, #710

Safari to Zambia: photos

OcL 17, 1978, #753

Man's Domestication of Animals

May 19, 1981,

#778

Water World

Nov. 18, 1986, #826

Wildlife Photography

Jan. 16, 1990, #855

Swans, Geese and Other Topics: films

Dec. 10, 1996, #917

Work on Training Cranes, Geese, & Swans to follow aircraft, boats etc.

Feb. 17, 1998, #928

Peter Whelan and Bill Carrick, The effect of the ice storm of 1998 on birds. Bill also showed excerpts from some of his films

April 20, 1999, #939

History of induced migration in Trumpeter Swans, Canada Geese and Sandhill Cranes

May 16, 2000, #949

History of Wildlife Filmmaking

Wildlife photographer set standards for nature films; kept beavers in his home

WILLIAM CARRICK

He made the animals say 'cheese'

(outline) William Carrick with the tools of his trade:
'One of the most significant people in the business
of wildlife photography,' said Farley Mowat.

BY BILL GLADSTONE
(for The Globe and Mail)

Bill Carrick, a Toronto-area naturalist and wildlife photographer who coaxed beavers, ducks, fish, geese, polar bears and other animals into acting naturally in front of the camera, has died after an accidental fall on the rural property he rented in suburban Toronto. He was 81 years old.

An award-winning nature cinematographer whose short National Film Board of Canada production *World in a Marsh* (1956) set standards for nature films and was televised around the world, Mr. Carrick became known as a skilled animal wrangler who could tame, train and otherwise prepare a wide range of species for work in film and television.

To many, the slight, unassuming naturalist seemed more at home around animals than with people; he literally made them part of his family. He proved a doting parent to generations of geese who followed him around as though he was their father, and at various times took polar bear cubs, beavers and other animals into his home.

He was the first to discover that geese that had lost the migratory instinct could be trained to fly south in autumn alongside an ultralight aircraft, a phenomenon that inspired the popular 1995 movie *Fly Away Home*.

Limber and energetic even as an octogenarian, he had been planning to retire to write his memoirs. He was dismantling a film set in his big barn-sized studio when he fell from a lighting grid on Oct. 2. He died in Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital five days later.

Author Farley Mowat, who met him through a bird watching club in the late 1940s, still expresses regret that a lack of funding prevented him from joining the tundra adventure that was the basis of his celebrated book, *People of the Deer*.

"I thought then, and I think now, that he was one of the most significant people in the business of wildlife photography, and continued to be throughout his life," Mr. Mowat said.

Born in Toronto in 1920, Mr. Carrick grew up near the city's Monarch Park, where he often went birdwatching as a boy; he also belonged to a camera club. He attended Northern Vocational School, trained as a machinist as his father had done, and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force at 19.

Stationed in Newfoundland, he was part of a party sent to salvage a wrecked plane in Labrador. Marooned for nine days because of high seas, they survived on a diet of jack rabbits.

While in the air force he trained as a pilot but never got to fly, and designed a bomb hoist for aircraft that remained in long use.

Resuming civilian life, he studied biology at the University of Toronto for a year, then took a job as a photographer for Ducks Unlimited in Manitoba. In 1949, he filmed the pheasant hunt on Ontario's Pelee Island for a television show. Its huge success prompted its sponsor, Carling Breweries, to commission him to make more films on sporting subjects.

Other prize assignments followed, including several waterfowl documentaries for Ducks Unlimited and a series on the Birds of Canada for the NFB. *White Wilderness*, a prestigious Disney production shot on northern Hudson Bay, brought him into close contact with polar bears, walrus, ringed seals and narwhals.

"His main strength was that he was very innovative and he used the camera extremely well," said Michael Spencer, a retired NFB producer. "I think his extraordinary patience was one of the most amazing things about him. He would sit for hours in a blind, sometimes in a very uncomfortable position, waiting for a bird to return to its nest. You can't direct that kind of action, you have to wait for it to happen."

For *World in a Marsh*, he built an underwater housing for the camera and used the wheels and handle of an old gramophone to roll it along a track from a boat to the water. Sound engineers ventured into the marsh on rafts to record bird songs and other noises, which was then considered a pioneering technique.

Although Mr. Carrick always strove for authenticity on the screen, he once took part in an elaborate fakery that depicted lemmings committing mass suicide, a fiction that was at one time passed off as a natural spectacle.

Since the production was based in southern Alberta, far from the lemming's Arctic habitat, the team had only a few dozen of the furry rodents at their disposal. To magnify the numbers, the crew filmed the animals pouring forth in profusion as they ran along a large circular track; then showed them disappearing beyond a sharp rise to create the illusion that they were rushing over a cliff. For a parting shot, the handlers dumped some dead lemmings into the water and showed them bobbing pathetically below a cliff, apparently drifting out to sea. The deception worked brilliantly.

"It was all fiction," Mr. Carrick told friend Oliver Bertin in 2000.

"Everyone always believed he engineered that scene. It was one of those myths that becomes perpetuated," said Mr. Bertin, who is a Globe and Mail reporter. "Bill was there during filming, and probably had a part in it, but he became more uncomfortable about it as the years went by."

In the early 1970s, he and his wife brought a bevy of young beavers into their home for a proposed movie about the legendary Canadian outdoorsman Grey Owl. Not surprisingly, their toothy house guests chewed the kitchen woodwork to bits. From then on, he always kept a supply of Canada's favourite mascot on hand: His beaver shows were in great demand, especially on Canada Day. When Grey Owl was made in 1998, he supplied the baby beavers that appeared in scenes with actor Pierce Brosnan.

He had equally cordial relations with geese. Knowing that newly hatched goslings form a bond of dependency with the first living creature they encounter, he imprinted generations of geese upon himself. Then he rigged up a wind tunnel using car motors so that the geese could be photographed in apparent soaring flight from only inches away.

After the birds had become acclimatized to engine noise, he trained them to fly behind his speedboat on Ontario's Lake Scugog, which, in turn, led to the realization that they could be trained to fly with an ultra light aircraft. Bill Lishrnan, an Ontario environmentalist and ultra light pilot, later escorted several gaggles from Canada to wintering grounds in the southern United States, as highlighted in *Fly Away Home*. Mr. Carrick, who also flew an ultra-light, supplied the geese and was an integral consultant during the film's production.

Over the past decade he had attempted to apply the same induced migration technique to trumpeter swans, but the province effectively clipped his wings by cancelling his permit to keep waterfowl on his property. He soon regained the permit and continued to work on efforts to restore the trumpeter swan and the sandhill crane into areas of their former habitat in Southern Ontario.

From 1963 to 1972, he designed and managed the Cortwright Waterfowl Park in Guelph, Ont., and later helped organize the African compounds of the Metro Toronto Zoo. He also worked on several Imax productions and provided footage for shows such as the Audubon Wildlife Theatre and Lorne Greene's *New Wilderness*. His cinematic awards include a 1960 American Film Festival Blue Ribbon Award for *World in a Marsh*.

He was married in 1954 to Mary Hearst, a biologist who worked closely with him. They separated 20 years ago, but she resumed helping him with his animals about six years ago. He also leaves son James, daughter Jean Jess and sisters Bernice in Toronto, and Beverley Carrick Sanderson in Champagne, Ill.

William Henesey Carrick, naturalist and wildlife photographer; born Nov. 14, 1920, in Toronto; died Oct. 7, 2002, Toronto.