



Dr. Thomas G. Barnes, 1957-2014

Tom Barnes passed away on October 12 after a long battle with illness. This is a great loss to the KNPS family and the conservation community of Kentucky as well as to his loved ones. Tom was not only a former KNPS president, but also a generous man who gave freely of his time and talents to this and many other conservation organizations. He regularly led field trips and gave presentation on biodiversity issues to groups of all types, from local garden clubs to the KNPS Wildflower Weekends. In many ways, Tom personified the KNPS; he was a respected academic whose invasive species management research influenced land managers in Kentucky and throughout the nation, including the graduate students he mentored, but his real passion was educating the general public about biodiversity issues. He truly loved nature for its beauty, as well as understanding its scientific importance. An accomplished photographer, his photographs appeared in books, websites, calendars, magazines, and other outlets all over the world, including at the Chicago Botanical Garden, the Audubon Aquarium, the Smithsonian and the Bronx Zoo—but he allowed groups like KNPS free access to his photos provided they were used to educate the public on biodiversity issues.

As the wildlife extension professor in the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky, Tom authored more than 50 scientific research articles, 60 cooperative extension publications and 100 magazine articles, most of which focused on native plants and natural areas. His research emphasis has been on the restoration of native grasslands and his extension programs focus on the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife management. Tom may be best known for his natural history books, many of which were co-sponsored by the KNPS. His book, *Kentucky's Last Great Places*, was nominated for the Kentucky Literary Award in non-fiction. Other published books include *Gardening for the Birds*, *The Wildflowers and Ferns of Kentucky* with Dr. Wilson Francis, *The Rare Wildflowers of Kentucky* with Deborah White and Marc Evans, *The Gift of Creation—Images from Scripture and Earth* with Norman Wirzba, and *How to Find and Photograph Kentucky Wildflowers*. His most recent book, *Kentucky, Naturally: the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund at Work*, was just published in July 2014. In 2003 *Kentucky's Last Great Places* also inspired the Kentucky Educational Television production of the same name, the most popular program in the network's history. Tom created and hosted another popular KET program focusing on native plants in 2007, *A Walk Through Kentucky's Wildflowers*.

A devout Catholic, he contributed to *The EcoTheo Review*, a nonprofit effort to unite the environmental and religious communities. A memorial Mass was conducted at the [Holy Spirit Parish Newman Center](#) in Lexington. His wife, Jamie Barnes of Barbourville and two children, Jeremiah and Michaela Barnes both of Lexington, survive Tom.

- by Zeb Weese