

In memoriam - Kraft von Maltzahn

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In memoriam - Kraft von Maltzahn

Dr. Kraft von Maltzahn died peacefully at age 87 on April 3, 2013, after sudden illness, in the kind care of the cardiovascular unit at the Halifax Infirmary, QEII.

Born in Rostock, Germany, Kraft was son of the late Heinrich Freiherr von Maltzahn and Marie-Luise, born Graefin von Bassewitz. Following studies at the universities of Cologne and Zurich, Kraft completed his doctorate in biology at Yale (1954). He came to Halifax in 1954 as assistant professor (botany) in the biology department at Dalhousie University.

When he arrived, the biology department had only two faculty members and Dalhousie had only 2,000 students. The department was split into zoology and botany, and Kraft was appointed as the botanist. He experienced Dal's enormous 1960s expansion as head of the department, where he hired new faculty and advocated for more space. Under Kraft's leadership, the biology department started a PhD program jointly with the medical sciences departments. Kraft also started planning a new building - what is now the Life Sciences Centre - and sat on a working committee for the Aquatron along with the chairs of psychology and oceanography.

Kraft was known for fostering a collegial environment within biology, where weekly science journal meetings had full attendance. Kraft was respected for his decisiveness; if something needed to be done, he would do it.

A George S. Campbell Professor of Biology at Dalhousie, Kraft joined the faculty of the University of King's College as Carnegie Professor in 1979. He also worked to open the King's foundation year programme to science students. He lectured in that programme for many years. In 1991 he retired as Inglis Professor and Professor Emeritus at King's. He was also Professor Emeritus of Biology at Dalhousie.

In 1948, Kraft met his wife, Anne McCallum, in Zurich, Switzerland, where they were both studying. They married the following year and enjoyed life together first as students and then through the decades of professional and family commitments in Nova Scotia. Kraft's commitment to education was especially deep and included his contribution as one of the founders of the Halifax Grammar School.

In mid-career, Kraft became ever more interested in the human experience of nature, which is reflected in his book, *Nature as Landscape: Dwelling and Understanding* (1994). His studies, reading and writing on how we live in nature occupied him happily also in his retirement. He loved going for walks, a great part of his life from his youth to his old age.

Kraft was predeceased by his brothers, Hasso and Ekhard. He is survived by his wife, Anne; his brother, Ruediger; his children, Christopher (Karen), Margaret Kirby (Torrance), and Nicholas (Sarah); his grandchildren, Maia (Sam Stewart), Alex and Anna von Maltzahn, Elizabeth and Kate Kirby, Clara and Isobel von Maltzahn; his sisters-in-law and brother-in-law, Uta Freifrau von Maltzahn, Ingeborg Freifrau von Maltzahn, Alison and Don May, Carolyn McCallum; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service for Kraft will be held in The University of King's College Chapel, 6350 Coburg Rd., Halifax, at 3pm. Saturday, April 13. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to The University of King's College Scholarship Fund or to The Halifax Grammar School, Advancement Office.