

In Memoriam

BARRY C. BISHOP

1932-1994

Noted climber, scientist and scholar Barry C. Bishop was killed in a one-car accident on September 24, 1994. He lost control of his car outside of Pocatello, Idaho.

When I try to paint a picture of my father, I am at a loss; there are so many parts to him and my emotions wash over me to confuse my thoughts. However, the more I reflect on my father, the more I come back to a quote by René Daumal, of which he was so fond:

*You cannot stay on the summit forever;
You have to come down again . . .
So why bother in the first place?
Just this: what is above knows what is below,
but what is below does not know what is above.*

*One climbs, one sees. One descends,
one sees no longer, but one has seen.*

*There is an art of conducting oneself in the lower regions
by the memory of what one saw higher up.*

When one can no longer see, one can at least still know.

Barry's life was always influenced by the memory of what he saw higher up. He had a tremendous amount of integrity. There was a pure element to my father that came from another era; he stood by his word and let you know how he felt about issues. You may not have agreed with him, but at least you knew where he stood and the reasons for that stance. It is my belief that this attribute came from the time he spent in the mountains and the lessons he learned in such an environment.

Barry was always fascinated with climbing. At the age of three, he rode on my grandfather's shoulders to the top of Mount Mitchell in North Carolina. From that point on, it was ever upward. Summers found him in the Tetons and the Colorado Rockies. In 1951, at the age of nineteen, he summited Mount McKinley via the first ascent of the West Buttress. His love for the mountains took him to the Himalaya where he made the first ascent of Ama Dablam in 1961. He then summited Everest in 1963 with the first American team. A prolific number of achievements considering the era in which these took place!

However, Barry never overtly brought attention to these crowning achievements. His love for the mountains went much further than the glory that came from standing on summits. Barry's love was science and the mountains. He had

an undergraduate degree in geology from the University of Cincinnati and a master's degree in geography from Northwestern University. The title of his thesis was *Shear Moraines in the Thule Area, Northwest Greenland*. As a result of this paper, he was selected to serve on Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd's staff in the Antarctic. My father received his Ph.D. in geography from the University of Chicago. His dissertation, *Karnali Under Stress: Livelihood Strategies and Seasonal Rhythms in a Changing Nepal Himalaya*, is still the paradigm for research of this type.

Barry's love of the mountains and science took him in 1959 to work for the National Geographic Society. He started as a picture editor and worked for the organization until his retirement in 1994 as a vice president and Chairman of the Committee for Research and Exploration. He had a deep interest in directing scientific research all over the globe. He worked closely with such renowned scientists and explorers as Jane Goodall, Mary Leakey and Sir Edmund Hillary. He left his stamp on the scientific and exploratory community with his enthusiasm, unfailing standards and joy of science. His own scientific projects took him on over twelve expeditions to the Himalaya and he wrote more than a score of published articles.

Barry received numerous awards for his exploration and scientific research. He was the recipient of the Association of American Geographers Honors in 1993, the Explorers Club Medal in 1987, the National Geographic Society's Hubbard Medal in 1963, the Society's Franklin Burr prize in 1961 and the William Howard Taft Medal from the University of Cincinnati in 1963, among other awards.

As I read back over the previous paragraphs, I have captured about Barry what can be found in any synopsis of his Curriculum Vitae. What is missing is a glimpse of his indomitable spirit. Barry personified the old mountaineer persona. He smoked, loved a good drink and was always the first to tell a bawdy joke or make a bad pun that would have the whole group rolling their eyes. His idea of getting into shape was the approach to the climb, not time in a gym. There was always a spark to my father, something mischievous and rebellious. He no doubt caused numerous headaches at the National Geographic by surfing on the waves he created in the bureaucratic environment. He pushed the limits and always had enormous respect for those who could also join him.

Time spent in the mountains made Barry incredibly tenacious and tough. When goals were set, there was no stopping him; obstacles were overcome or just pushed aside. Who else would have driven his family in an International Harvester from Rotterdam to Kathmandu in 1968? My father lost all his toes from frostbite on Everest in 1963. Not once in my life do I recall his complaining about his feet even though the pain and discomfort must have been debilitating at times.

Barry's love of mountains provided an avenue for friendships that spanned the globe. Growing up, I remember a constant stream of house guests from all parts of the world. Each of these get-togethers always started as a party of friends reminiscing about the past but invariably turned into the planning stage

for the next adventure. For Barry, there was always another project, another adventure, another bridge to cross or another mountain to climb. Barry was never content to rest on past laurels. I'm still finding out from his friends about projects he was planning that no mortal man could have finished if he lived to be 150 years old.

Nothing was more fun than talking about past climbs or future projects with him while drinking a beer. He and I talked about everything together. We were best friends. As a child, he was my hero, and he still is today. As a youngster, I can remember climbing at Seneca Rocks in West Virginia and how proud I was to be out with him. That pride never faded. It was an honor to follow his footsteps on Everest: an experience that brought me closer to him and gave me immeasurable respect for his achievements. The apogee of the climb for me was not the summit, but being able to call my father from Base Camp and relate both success and safety.

A quote from Barry's desk read, "A man should not be judged by the height he reaches but by the distance he climbs." My father covered great distance, and he did it with integrity. We all miss him.

BRENT BISHOP

WILLIAM OSGOOD FIELD
1904-1994

It was 1941 when I first met Bill Field, a geology graduate of Harvard's class of 1926. He had already spent some fifteen years pursuing his consuming interests of photographing, recording and cataloguing coastal glacier termini in Alaska. He invited me, then a geology undergraduate at Harvard, to join him and his team as a field assistant on a summer of mapping the rapidly disappearing tidal glaciers in Glacier Bay.

I marveled during those weeks of vigorous surveying how meticulously and precisely Bill triangulated, photographed, observed and recorded ice-front details . . . as he would continue to do over periodic return visits to Alaska during his long and distinguished career. During that summer so long ago, I learned of his comfortable humor and his quiet, yet persistent enthusiasm for the exploration he planned and carried out so well. He took much joy in new discoveries, such as our finding John Muir's 1874 cabin in the heavy alder thickets covering the shore of Muir Inlet.

After serving as an officer in the Signal Corps in World War II, Bill returned to New York and the American Geographical Society (AGS), where in 1946 he established the Department of Exploration and Field Research, which he was to head until his retirement in 1969. That same year, I found my way to a desk as a research associate during my graduate school days at Columbia University. He gave me encouragement in my vision of a long-range interdisciplinary program on the Juneau Icefield, Alaska to investigate the total system of these