



Max E Bell

November 19, 1927 - October 8, 2023

Max E. Bell, 95 of Englewood, Florida (also: Kirksville MO, Fairbanks, AK) fell asleep in death on October 8, 2023. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 60 years, Marian J. Bell. He was the last surviving member of his generational family. His father Robert C. Bell and mother Rhoda Elva Bell. Sister Geneva Bell, and brothers Marshal Bell, Clayton Bonar Bell, and Jay Q. Bell. He is survived by his son James R. Bell (Marla), and daughters Jeannie M.

Schlepphorst (Doug) and Janet B. Hinkle (Aron). Seven grandchildren Kendra O'Neill (Danny), Logan Bell, Emily Bell, Matthew Vosler, Sean Vosler (Victoria) Max Hinkle and Drake Schlepphorst. Four Great Grandchildren Renley and Theodore Vosler and Quinn and Declan O'Neil.

Dr. Max E. Bell was the professor of Botany at Truman State from 1954 till retirement in 1991 when he transitioned to Emeritus Professor of Botany. His passion for teaching and connecting his students to the natural world was infectious and his story-like teaching style brought many of the subjects he taught

to life. He was a wealth of information and could identify most plants on the planet by just looking at them. He was affectionately known as the "Sodfather" to

many around Kirksville and even had a radio program of the same name where

folks could call in for a "car talk" style conversation about the health of

people's

plants. He will echo on through these stories and the passion for life that he shared with so many. Max E. Bell is beloved and Honored by all who knew him .

He will be sadly missed, but his legacy will go on.

A celebration of life will be on Dec. 30th for family and friends at Little Gasparilla

Island in Florida. Other celebrations of life will be announced at a later time for family and friends in Iowa and Alaska. If you get a chance, go out and sit with a

plant and remember the lessons, laughs, and most importantly, the stories he shared so willingly in his long and wild life.

Tribute Wall

PS

“ I just saw where Mr Bell passed away. I had him as a professor in the 80's for a botany class and an electro microscopy class. A He kept his office in the electron microscope lab and his official office stayed empty so he could be near the equipment and available to his students. He let me use his unused office so I could study. (Loud room mates) and he worked with me in the lab with the electron microscopes. I spent an entire summer in that lab. He was an amazing professor and an amazing human being. It was such a pleasure to work with him and to get to know him. He was so proud of his family, and was so proud of his work at Truman (then NMSU). Of all the people that I have met that I wanted to live forever he would be one of them. So sorry he passed away but the world was blessed with him for almost 100 years Still not enough. Pat sarkar

pat sarkar - July 01, 2024 at 01:39 AM



“ I only met Max once, but Janet is a special person and I know he was too! God bless you all ,and know you will all see each other again in Heaven

JoAnne Cashman - October 20, 2023 at 03:50 PM

“ *In Loving Memory of Max Ewart Bell*

November 19, 1927 - October 8, 2023

Beneath the tranquil skies of Milton, Iowa on a chill November day in 1927, the world welcomed Max Ewart Bell, who would soon traverse a life deeply rooted in love, exploration, and education. His falling asleep in death on October 8, 2023, at nearly 96 left behind a world enriched by his wisdom, courage, and insatiable curiosity.

Through his early days, Max absorbed the lush Iowan landscapes, planting seeds for a lifelong love of the natural world. His academic path sprouted, earning him accolades and degrees from Parsons College, Iowa State University, and expanding his horizons with graduate studies at the venerable Cold Spring Harbor Research Center and Washington State University. His work as Professor of Botany at Truman State University didn't merely illuminate a career but also illuminated countless hearts and minds that crossed his path.

Max found a companion for his life's journey in Marian Jean Bell (née Dysart), whom he married in August 1952. Their love story, deep as the ocean and sturdy as Florida's longleaf pines, gave life to three wonderful children: James Robert, Jeannie Marie, and Janet Ruth Bell. The family settled in Kirksville Missouri where he assumed his professorship in Botany . He taught at Truman State until his retirement.

Max's legacy reverberates through grand- and great-grandchildren, shaping branches of a family tree that stand as steadfastly as Max once did amidst the captivating wilderness of Alaska and the serene shores of Florida.

Through tumultuous hurricanes and close encounters with the wildlife of the Alaskan frontier, Max embraced life's adventures with open arms and an unshakable spirit. From the tranquil home on Little Gasparilla Island, Florida to the distant, wild frontiers of Fairbanks, Alaska, Max and Marian carved out pockets of paradise where memories were cultivated amidst the backdrop of nature's brilliance.

But it was not only the fierce and wild elements of nature that Max encountered with curiosity; he mirrored the very essence of life's

untamed beauty in his teaching philosophy.

Known affectionately as “The Sodefater” on his KIRX radio program, Max gently nurtured the minds entrusted to him, intertwining intricate stories with crucial lessons in a manner that captivated and inspired. Much like Mr. Rogers, as one of his students remarked, his slow, deliberate speech and his ‘how-dee-do,’ accompanied by a spirited smile, drew you into a world where education was not merely a process but a delightful journey.

Max believed that his stories in class and around the dinner table weren’t merely tales, but seeds of wisdom sown into the minds of his students and family. Stories that soon germinated into the lessons and wisdom he sought to impart. Max’s love for his work, an endless source of motivation, etched lasting impressions on every person fortunate enough to encounter his teachings.

As we remember Max, we strive to remember him, perhaps, venturing into the great unknown with Marian and his loving children at his side, searching out new adventures, and exploring uncharted territories with the same twinkling enthusiasm and boundless curiosity that defined his incredible journey here with us.

His teachings, adventures, and memories stand forever painted in the hearts of his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and countless students who were fortunate to engage with his wit, wisdom, and love.

In the gentle rustle of leaves, the sweet fragrance of wildflowers, and the serene whisper of distant waves, Max’s memory lives on, forever inspiring, forever teaching, forever loved.

Rest in peaceful adventure, Max Ewart Bell.

The world is much better for having you, your impact will never be forgotten; it lives on in those you mentored, cared for, sheltered, and loved.

Janet - October 20, 2023 at 02:42 PM

MM

“Max was a great teacher. I think back to the days when my future wife and I were attending KSTC... Later, a good friend, although we were only rarely together. We hunted bullfrogs in our farm ponds. In later years Virginia and I, together with Max and Marian, would watch the Truman Homecoming parade from upstairs windows in the Student Union building. I have good memories of Max... Morris McNabb

Morris McNabb - October 20, 2023 at 12:26 PM

JS

Yes.

Jackie Settlege - October 25, 2023 at 07:37 PM

PG

From a biology undergrad 1987 NEMO: Max Bell was a classic. An understanding & thoughtful teacher, with his iconic bolo ties and mannerisms, I spent many microscopy labs in his old science room to the new science wing. For exchange of learning to use the scanning electron microscope during the renovation, he entrusted me with the scope transport/transfer. Wheeling its assemblage across the campus, he didn't tell me until afterwards it was a half million dollar tool toting about in my cart. I'm glad I didn't know and the machine was reassembled and worked properly as I examined the micro and macro world of life. I still have microscope slides now as a nostalgic memory from days in Dr Bells class. After my 30-some years of teaching science, I still remember his enthusiasm, his hands-on approach to science. his kindness and his energy to teach students. Many of my past students now, are productive citizens, go-getters and a legacy to my own teachings. But the recognition should go to teachers like Max Bell, from whom, my meager beginnings began and now generations of students benefitted. True legacy. True classic.-Paul Gustafson NMSU 1987.

Paul Gustafson - June 20, 2024 at 02:02 PM