



**Honored Life Member
John N. Kraeuter
March 28, 2012**

As the son of a Conservation Officer for the State of New Jersey and a high school teacher, John Kraeuter learned much growing up about the outside world. His parents moved to Florida in the 1950's where he spent his high school years in Daytona Beach watching the birth of NASCAR, but summers were spent along the coast of Maine where his family built and then managed summer cottages. Exploring the rocky coastline, beaches and inlet mud flats in Maine during summer and the distinctly different habitats in Florida the rest of the year fueled John's fascination with science and the natural world. This led him to Florida State University where he earned a BS in Biology in 1964 with minors in geology and chemistry creating a well-rounded foundation. His curiosity nowhere near satiation, he continued by attending graduate school at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) where he completed a Master's degree under Dexter Haven - a former NSA President and Honored Life Member. John's thesis (Fecal pellets of some common invertebrates in the lower York River and lower Chesapeake Bay, Virginia) gave him the excuse to study all kinds of [stuff]. And he did. Moving to the University of Delaware he wrote a 235-page dissertation on "A taxonomic and distributional study of the Western North Atlantic Dentaliidae". It might not have made the best seller

list, but it was a fine piece of work that catapulted him into the thriving metropolis of Sapelo Island – a beautiful, isolated barrier island research station operated by the University of Georgia. There John matured into a outstanding estuarine ecologist working on “Invertebrates and nutrient cycles in salt marsh ecosystems.” But he is perhaps best known for his work with another NSA Past President and Honored Life Member, Mike Castagna, at the VIMS Eastern Shore Laboratory in Wachapreague, Virginia. Together, John and Mike perfected hard clam aquaculture methods and produced the “Manual for Growing the Hard Clam, *Mercenaria*”, a publication that has yet to be replaced as the basic bible for hard clam aquaculturists from Maine to Florida. During this time at the Eastern Shore Lab John worked his way up becoming an Associate Professor at the College of William and Mary before moving on to be the Senior Aquaculturist and Manager for Baltimore Gas and Electric where he designed a hatchery where they developed innovative methods for culturing striped bass and its hybrids using thermal effluents from power plants. While working on fish culture John remained tied to his ecological background and served for 8 years on the US Department of Interior Minerals Management Service Outer Continental Shelf Scientific Advisory Committee. Personally, John and his accomplished wife Carol were raising two young boys while continuing to make trips to Maine every summer to help open, maintain and close the family run summer maritime cottages.

In 1987, Rich Lutz, another former NSA President and Honored Life Member, convinced John to move back to New Jersey and help run the recently completed Rutgers Shellfish Research Laboratory (now the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory). Rich envisioned establishing a multispecies aquaculture demonstration facility as part of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. It would be an experimental aquaculture farm and John was just the person to get it going. New Jersey is a complicated, highly regulated state. Where many would have given up the fight, John persisted and in 2007 the Rutgers Multispecies Aquaculture Demonstration Facility began operations. It quickly ramped up oyster seed production to more than 10 million annually and is now beginning development of several other species as the New Jersey Aquaculture Innovation Center, a component of the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory. As part of this effort, John became heavily involved with state efforts to develop aquaculture as a viable economic sector and was the lead author for New Jersey’s Aquaculture Development Plan.

John retired from Rutgers in 2013 and moved to Maine to manage the cottages full time, but he remains active in shellfish research and education with a continuing Visiting Scientist position at the Haskin Lab and as an adjunct faculty member of the Department of Marine Sciences at the University of New England. John is widely recognized and respected for his work on shellfish, particularly hard clams (*Mercenaria mercenaria*, aka eastern or northern quahogs for you strict New Englanders) and this is best embodied in another great effort with Mike Castagna: “The Biology of the Hard Clam”. John’s love has been estuaries and the soft sediment fauna within, particularly clams. His research, which includes nearly 100 peer reviewed papers, dozens of technical reports that are actively used by regulators and industry members, and countless presentations, has always bent towards the applied side, often directly supporting fisheries and aquaculture. His honest and forthright manner has gained him an incredible amount of respect from shellfish growers all along the eastern seaboard. He is known for his innovative and well-designed, well-replicated experiments, even ones that include putting little buried fences around

clams, because, “hey, you just don’t know!” One of his greatest accolades is that the industry trusted John to research their problems and find answers that supported industry members in their work to farm the waters and produce good seafood.

Throughout his career, John has served on countless committees locally, regionally and nationally; on which he is particularly known for his reliability (if he says he’ll do it, you will rarely have to remind him), his penchant to play the devil’s advocate or to point out the obvious when academics stray from dealing with the problem at hand (“I mean come on folks...”); and his infectious laugh. He was an early member of the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society (AERS) where he served as President and which was a predecessor to the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF, formerly ERF). He served as Treasurer and on multiple ERF committees where he was recognized by the national office with an “Outstanding Contributions Award” in 1987. Regionally, John was a founding member and co-Chair of the Delaware Estuary Program’s Science and Technical Advisory Committee helping this five state partnership grow into a successful and productive program for managing the natural resources of the Delaware Estuary. His significant impact was recognized in 2013 as a recipient of the Jonathan Sharp Lifetime Achievement Award.

John has been a member of NSA for many years, and has certainly been an active force since at least 1990 when he was appointed Chair of the Constitution Committee to update the Constitution and By-Laws, a task long overdue at the time. The following year he served as Vice President and Program Chair for the annual meeting where he was elected to serve as President. John continued serving beyond his Presidency in various capacities without interruption through the Past Presidents Committee or simply at the request of the EXCOM. As President, John recognized the need to put the organization on sound fiscal footing and developed the plan to maintain one year’s operating funds to ensure the organization can persist through economic troubles. John was instrumental in collecting and collating materials for Mel Carriker to compile the organization’s history into the *Taming of the Oyster*. He continues to work tirelessly on the Publications Committee providing advice and oversight to the Journal, the Quarterly Newsletter and the Website. His career and service are a model for all of us. On March 28, 2012 the National Shellfisheries Association formally recognized this by making John an Honored Life Member.

David Bushek, Associate Professor of Marine and Coastal Sciences, and Director, Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, Rutgers University
Ryan Carnegie, Research Associate Professor of Marine Science, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Gef Flimlin, Professor/Marine Extension Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension