



**Dexter Stearns Haven  
Honored Life Member**

Dexter Stearns Haven may have officially “retired” from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in 1984, but a quick look at his publication list or curriculum vitae will illustrate that Dexter has far from actually retired. He has published and or coauthored over 11 papers in the intervening years. In addition, he has been involved as a Director of the York Chapter of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and can be seen selling brooms to raise funds for the York Lions Club, of which he is a Charter Member. He volunteers regularly as a docent at the Watermen’s Museum in Yorktown, where he shares his knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay, its resources, and the men who harvest them with thousands of visitors. He assists the archaeologists of Jamestown by examining and dating old oyster shells. In truth, Dexter is far from retired.

Fortunately for VIMS, Dexter is continuing his research by working with Bill Hargis, Helen E. Woods, and others on the ecology of oyster bars (reefs) of the Chesapeake Bay. This research, aided by new technology, has resulted in a number of three-dimensional posters on the reefs of the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac subestuaries of the Chesapeake system. Formal papers are expected to follow.

Dexter Haven was born in Lake Forrest, Illinois, on November 2, 1918. In 1942, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in premedical subjects at the University of Rhode Island. After receiving his degree, he served his country in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a weatherman in the 9th Weather Squadron.

At the end of his military service in 1946, he again enrolled at the University of Rhode Island, receiving a Master of Science degree in marine biology in 1948. After completing the masters degree, Dexter joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1948. In 1949, he joined the staff of the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory at Yorktown, Virginia (predecessor of the VIMS of the College of William and Mary, and now located at Gloucester Point, Virginia, just across the York River from Yorktown).

In addition to his research and teaching duties before retiring, Dexter served in several capacities at VIMS: as Senior Marine Scientist and Head of the Department of Applied Biology; and as Professor of Marine Science of the School of Marine Science. Upon officially retiring in June of 1984, he became Professor Emeritus of the College of William and Mary.

During his 35 years of service at the VIMS (and the School of Marine Science), Dexter worked primarily on the physiology and life history of molluscs, and on the natural history and sedimentology of oyster bars, or reefs.

His work resulted in over 50 formally published papers, including one paper on the precarious state of the Chesapeake public oyster resource in 1995, and another on the oyster reefs of the Chesapeake, their destruction and possible restoration period. He also authored a number (about 60) of research contract reports, some 20 to 30 VIMS papers, and over 30 VIMS data reports.

Dexter, an excellent field and laboratory scientist and teacher, worked with numerous graduate students while at the School of Marine Science and with other members of the VIMS scientific staff, including Dr. J. D. Andrews, Curtis Leigh, and Reinaldo Morales-Alamo.

In addition to the National Shellfisheries Association (NSA), of which he continues to be a member, Dexter has belonged to the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society, the Ecological Society of America, and the Malacological Society. He is also a member of the Society of Cincinnati, a group whose members trace ancestry to persons who served in the American Revolutionary War. During his membership in NSA, Dexter was President-Elect from 1974 to 1975, and President from 1975 to 1976.

Dexter and his wife, Doris Mills Haven, live in Yorktown, Virginia. They have been married since 1951 and have a daughter, Penny.

William J. Hargis, Jr.  
Gloucester Point, Virginia