



Original works of art surround the artist and NSA Honored Life Member, Herb Hidu, at his home in Alna, Maine.

Herbert Hidu Honored Life Memeber

Herb has traveled an unusual and convoluted path to distinction in American shellfisheries science. He was born in 1931, the son of a German immigrant and a 2nd generation Hungarian farmer and estate manager. The family never had the slightest inclination for academia. He spent his youth hunting, fishing, and observing the pleasantries of living on a Connecticut rich man's estate as a cottage inhabitant. He joined the army in 1951 and for 2 years was a paratrooper with the 82nd airborne division, which gave him his mindset for later years. After his hitch, his drinking buddy made him aware of Korean G.I. Bill eligibility. Entering the University of Connecticut, he majored in fisheries management and forestry (B.S., 1958). Along the way he had the opportunity to resume his parachuting paranoia, working a summer as a smokejumper at the United States Forestry Service base in Winthrop, Washington, during which time he made four fire jumps.

At UConn, Dr. Slater of the Entomology Department convinced him to pursue a graduate degree in the biological sciences. He received a MS degree in Zoology in 1960 from Penn State University, working under the tutelage of Dr. Edwin L. Cooper on population structure of largemouth bass in a farm fish pond.

Then, for some unexplained reason, Herb accepted a job in the alien science of shellfisheries biology, working for Dr. Victor Loosanoff at the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries shellfish laboratory in Milford, Connecticut. His position entailed conducting bioassays with shellfish larvae. The 3-year experience taught him the intricacies of shellfish hatchery culture and, perhaps more importantly, perseverance. Indeed, having endured the extremely confining environment created by the very intense Russian scientist Loosanoff, the world was now Herb's oyster and the oyster was now Herb's world.

The Mid-Atlantic MSX oyster mortalities of the mid-1960s provided Herb an excellent avenue for advancement. Rutgers University and Dr. Harold Haskin were in great need of workers (students) who were versed in hatchery techniques. Efforts were concentrated on the production of experimental disease-resistant stocks. This became Hidu's "bread and butter" as a graduate student, where for over 3 years he begat many of Rutgers' experimental oysters stocks at the Cape May laboratory. He used the abundant larval stocks to conduct his study on laboratory behavior and field recruitment of Delaware Bay oysters. His 1967 Ph.D thesis is cited to this day as the definitive study on Delaware Bay oyster recruitment.

After Rutgers, Hidu became a shellfisheries research biologist at the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL) in Solomons, Maryland. It was hoped that he would fill the shoes and carry on the traditions of the late Francis Beavin, the "dean" of Chesapeake Bay oyster science. With four older veteran shellfisheries biologists, he pursued, for 3 years, field shellfish surveys of Chincoteague Bay and the effects of power plant effluent on the early life history stages of Chesapeake Bay oysters. He developed the natural feeding method for shellfish hatcheries in Maryland and stimulated an early commercial hatchery (Frank Wilde, Shadyside, MD). However, he was miscast in the position at CBL, which he viewed as a mixture of research and personnel management. As an advocate of hatchery production of shellfish to augment recruitment, he locked horns with the Maryland public oyster fishery. Furthermore, his lack of contact with students at the University of Maryland's College Park campus, 100 miles distant inland, created for Herb an untenable situation and he decided it was time to move on. His lifetime break came in 1970 when the University of Maine's Darling Marine Center entered the Federal Sea Grant Program with a "Coherent Areas" grant entitled "Culture of Resources in a Cold Water Marine Environment". Hidu was offered and accepted a position that required shellfish hatchery expertise and, more importantly to Herb, allowed access to excellent students who would pursue M.S. and Ph.D degrees in Oceanography while accomplishing the Sea Grant aquaculture research.

The 15+ graduate students Hidu sponsored at the University of Maine won a record 5 NSA Thurlow Nelson Awards and contributed significantly to the shellfisheries literature: blue mussel biology, R. Lutz, L. Incze, G. Podniesinski; triploid shellfish, S. Allen, M. Lee; intertidal shellfish capacity adaptations, R. Gillmor; hatchery pathology and techniques, L. Plunket, M. Logue-Keller, R. Clime, and others. In the 1970s Hidu developed the nation's first mariculture course. That field course and the associated aquaculture extension effort helped stimulate a significant new Maine industry in oyster grow-out and hatchery production. For this, in 1990, he received the

University of Maine's Presidential Public Service Award and, in the eyes of those of us who know Herb well, he took his place as Maine's "father of aquaculture".

His own research resulted in over 75 papers, with topics ranging from hatchery techniques to field recruitment of oysters, gregarious setting, biological fouling control, triploid shellfish, air winter storage of shellfish seed, blue mussel field recruitment, effects of pollutants on shellfish larvae, and behavior of shellfish larvae. He ran the gamut of offices in the National Shellfisheries Association (NSA), becoming President in 1980. He won the NSA David Wallace award in 1991 and became an NSA Honored Life Member in 1994. Herb retired in 1992 and is now Professor Emeritus of Animal and Veterinary Science at the University of Maine.

In retirement, Herb has gravitated toward his old roots with a move from aquaculture to horticulture, maintaining a small farm in Alna, Maine at which he raises commercial Hosta plants. In fact, his farm bears a remarkable resemblance to a certain Connecticut rich man's estate, with extensive trimmed pine hedges and espaliered trees. In 2001 he was a retired smokejumper volunteer in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area of Western Montana working trails and helping build a wilderness bridge. He is active in golf, watercolor art, and woodlot management. He has been married 47 years to Judith and has 3 children and 4 grandchildren, all of whom live in Maine. He is the man to whom the author of this biography owes his career—thanks, Herb.

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