



Sammy M. Ray
Honored Life Member

The scientific contributions of Dr. Sammy Ray to oyster disease research are widely acclaimed, due in no small part to the diagnostic method he developed to detect the disease agent *Dermocystidium marinum*. Dr. Ray was one of a handful of investigators in the early 1950's to explore this new oyster disease found in the Gulf of Mexico. Now the disease agent is called *Perkinsus marinus* and molecular techniques can be used to specifically diagnose the protozoan pathogen. Nonetheless, the highly reliable diagnostic technique developed by Dr. Ray is still the most widely used in oyster disease studies.

Dr. Ray was born in Mulberry KS, attended Mississippi Delta Junior College, Louisiana State University, and received his M.A. (Biology, 1952) and Ph.D. (Biology, 1954) degrees at Rice University in Texas. His postgraduate career began with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Fishery Research Biologist and he joined the Texas A&M staff in 1957 at the Research Foundation Laboratory in Grande Isle, LA. He became an Associate Professor (1963) in Oceanography and Wildlife and Fisheries Science and was named Director of the Marine Laboratory at Galveston. As he reached Full Professor (1972), Dr. Ray was named Head of the Department of Marine Sciences. Since then he has held positions as Dean of the Moody College of Marine Technology and interim President of Texas A&M University at Galveston. Dr. Ray officially retired in 1990, but remains active as an advisor and coordinator of student programs and several community outreach programs.

Several academic honors have been awarded to Dr. Ray, including a Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research at Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG), the William Paul Ricker Award for Distinguished Faculty-Staff Achievement (TAMUG), a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Mississippi Delta College, and a Piper Professor Award. He was awarded a lifetime honorary membership in the National Shellfisheries Association at the 1990 meeting in Maine.

Dr. Ray has been a reliable source of scientific information and advice for the State of Texas for many decades. He remains actively engaged in the interpretation of scientific knowledge for competent management decisions related to oyster and shrimp fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. He has, over the last 10 years, participated in both the Joint Interim Committee on the Texas Shrimp and Oyster Industry and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Dr. Ray is a past chair of the Scientific and Technical advisory Committee for the Galveston Bay National Estuary Program and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Bay Foundation.



Perhaps the most rewarding achievement of this exceptional career is the initiation of Sea Camp, "a hands-on marine adventure" for summer students aged 10-16, currently sponsored by TAMUG and the Texas Sea Grant College Program. Students attending the 5-day camps are given the opportunity to explore the Galveston Island area in research vessels, visit laboratory facilities and use scientific equipment to study marine organisms. Dr. Ray served as Director of the Sea Camp until 1993 and, in a similar capacity, is the Director of the Community & Youth Program for TAMUG. Dr. Ray and his wife Charlotte, an accomplished pianist now playing organ for the St. Luke's Episcopal Church, have four children and reside in Galveston.

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