

## Obituary

### Robert Graeme Boutilier (1953–2003)

2003 was not a good year for Bob (Boots) Boutilier. He returned to Cambridge from the February ICCPB meeting in Australia with a respiratory ailment. Then in the early spring Bob had a fall in the office and hurt his back and leg, which he indicated was a slipped disc. He was not well through the summer and was rushed to hospital in late August with kidney failure and general edema. He was in the general ward in Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, for about 2 weeks and on September 8th was put into intensive care. During the next few months he oscillated between being critically ill and recovering, having several sessions in the intensive care unit. Bob died on 21st December 2003; he was only 50 years old.

Bob Boutilier was a master of integration. He understood animals at all levels, from the relationship of the whole animal to its environment, to the interaction of molecules within the mitochondria. He described how animals survive adverse conditions at the behavioral, organ, tissue and molecular levels, and produced insights into the functional significance of the observed responses. He achieved a general understanding and recognized the significance of metabolic depression in animals. His thinking was acknowledged by the Comparative Physiology community from his earliest days as a student at Acadia University.

Dr Robert Boutilier was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada on September 8th 1953. Bob received a BSc (First Class Honours) in 1976 and an MSc in 1978 from Acadia University under the supervision of Dan Toews. He continued his doctoral studies with Graham Shelton at the University of East Anglia in England, receiving a PhD in 1981. He was a post-doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, where he formed a lifelong friendship with Norbert Heisler. He subsequently worked at the Gulbenkian Institute in Portugal (1980) and, after a research trip to Tahiti with another life-long friend, Chris Wood, he worked at the University of British Columbia (Izaak Walton Killam Fellowship, 1982–84) with me, becoming a NSERC University Research Fellow in 1983, first at UBC and then at Dalhousie University in 1984. He became an Assistant and then Associate Professor at Dalhousie University, and the Chairman of the Department of Biology in 1990. In the same year he received the President's Medal in Animal Biology from the Society of Experimental Biology. In

1992 Dr Boutilier returned to England as a lecturer in zoology at the University of Cambridge and co-editor of *The Journal of Experimental Biology*. Dr Boutilier received an MA from Cambridge University in 1995. He was honoured with a DSc, *honoris causa*, degree from Acadia (1996) and became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2000. In 2002 he was very pleased to be awarded the 'Fry Medal' of the Canadian Society of Zoologists. During his time in Cambridge Bob was a fellow of Sidney Sussex College, where he was a tutor and Dean of Students. He became Reader in Comparative Physiology in 2000. Unfortunately, his promotion to Professor by the University of Cambridge was announced a few days after his death, too late for him to celebrate.

I think Bob could have enjoyed a life in the music industry but he was persuaded by his father to enter Acadia University to continue his formal education. There he studied biology and developed his abiding interest in Comparative Physiology. He had a very keen interest in films as well as following golf and Formula One racing; he was knowledgeable about the cars and drivers. One of his dreams was to hold a JEB Symposium in Monaco, overlooking the race course! Dan Toews, a close friend and mentor of Bob for more than thirty years, said "*Bob was without question a consummate scientist, friend and teacher. He had a wonderful gift of telling stories, of making music, and of making people laugh.*" Bob was a heavyweight, both physically and mentally. I remember Bob singing and playing his guitar, moving rocks and soil to stop my house moving down the hill, playing squash, talking about science and life, and me laughing in the top bunk in a cabin in Bamfield Marine Station (I was not brave enough to let Bob sleep in the top bunk over me) as Bob told me about the imaginary Lord Thursbury and his good friend, Lord Marmsbury. I remember Bob floating in the ocean off Tahiti, one of the few times he was really comfortable with his weight. I enjoyed his wit and intelligence and miss him greatly. Bob Boutilier is survived by his mother Anne, sister Brenda and her husband Mark, numerous nieces and nephews and many friends.

**David Randall  
 Hong Kong  
 25th October 2005**