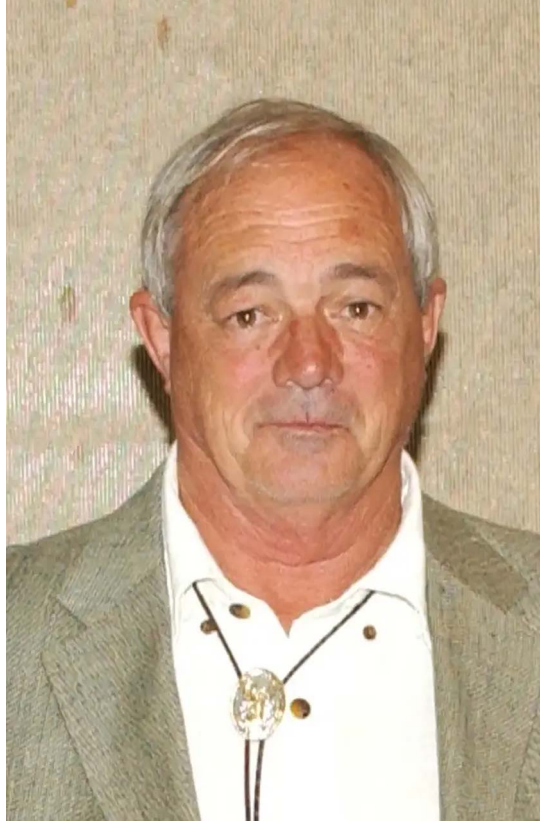


OBITUARY

LANE DOUGLAS FOIL 1949–2025



Lane Douglas Foil of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, passed away on June 22, 2025, at the age of 76, following a short illness. Lane was born to Ray and Emogene Foil on June 16, 1949, in Union, Mississippi. He lived in various southern towns, including Shreveport, Louisiana, and Laurel, Mississippi, where he attended high school and played basketball for the Laurel Tornadoes. Lane graduated from Auburn University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Zoology in 1971. At Auburn, he was a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity. After graduation, he moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where he was employed as the zoologist for the Jackson Zoological Park. This job led to many interesting encounters with exotic animals, including raising baby animals at home. One locally famous story involved Lane's raising a baby wallaroo (*Osphranter* sp.) for seven months. The story was followed by *Southern Living* magazine and Jackson's newspaper, the *Clarion-Ledger*, and resulted

in an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. He once told another story about an encounter with a tiger; the experience led him to conclude that working with zoo animals might not be his life's work.

Lane continued his education by earning a Master of Science degree in Preventative Medicine with a minor in Microbiology from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in 1975, and his Ph.D. in Entomology from Mississippi State University in 1978. His doctoral dissertation research investigated the venom of the Brown Recluse spider, *Loxosceles reclusa* (Gertsch and Mulaik). This involved collecting spiders from long-deserted shacks in the Mississippi countryside. Once sheriff's deputies mistook him for a person who had been stealing government checks from locals, and he had to exit a ramshackle empty home (with his spiders) at gunpoint.



After graduating from MSU, Lane began his long and distinguished career as a Professor of Veterinary Entomology at Louisiana State University. During his more than 45 years at the university he taught and mentored students, mentored postdoctoral associates, obtained numerous research grants (more than 30 totaling approximately \$7.7 million), and obtained four US patents in areas such as vaccinating companion animals for ticks. Lane's graduate students and postdocs have gone on to have successful careers in education, research, administration, industry, and government (civilian and military). His research productivity was outstanding; he published 12 book chapters and invited contributions, 171 publications in refereed journals, 20 trade magazine articles, and 64 extension publications. Lane was an invited speaker at more than 30 meetings, including once presenting the Highlights of Veterinary Entomology to the Entomological Society of America. Lane was perhaps best known for his work on horse flies and deer flies. His research included laboratory and field studies that spanned the spectrum of biology, from reproductive physiology to host-seeking behavior in the field. His work incriminated against horse flies as vectors of bovine leukemia and equine infectious anemia viruses. He and his coworkers examined attractiveness of a number of chemicals to horse flies. Partitioning of hosts by Tabanidae, diel feeding patterns, seasonal distribution and relative abundance, effects of insecticides on horse flies, and novel methods of trapping were investigated. Lane's work was very highly regarded, and colleagues in Africa and South America sought him out for collaborative studies. Moreover, he collaborated with scientists in the Nuclear Science, Veterinary Science, and Zoology Departments at Louisiana State University.

In addition to his work on horse flies, Lane studied insecticide resistance by horn flies, control of fleas, disease organisms transmitted by fleas, biting midges (both as pests and as vectors of filarial worms), control of stable flies, control of fire ants, control of sand flies, ticks, and mosquitoes, and

growth and development of caterpillars. Lane's work spanned a breadth of research experience unusual in most entomologists' careers. In 2006, Lane received the LSU Ag Center's Doyle Chambers Research Award for meritorious contributions to agriculture. An article in the 2019 issue of *Louisiana Agriculture* stated, "Foil has been recognized for a career marked by a sometimes 'unconventional approach' to research that has yielded practical solutions that have been adopted across the globe." In 2013, Lane was named to the Pennington Chair for Wildlife Research at the Bob R. Jones Idlewild Research Station in Clinton, Louisiana. As the recipient, Lane focused his research on developing solutions for problems that affect the health and abundance of wildlife, such as hemorrhagic disease in deer. Lane continued his brilliant career in studying insect vectors as pathogen carriers and their economic costs. He was still working until a few months prior to his passing, indicating his commitment to research, science, and mentoring the next generation to carry on his legacy. In 2025, Lane was posthumously awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Livestock Insects Workers' Conference in recognition of his many years of research on insects affecting animals and the pathogens transmitted by those insects.

Even though he was a dedicated scientist, Lane found time for fun. Friends knew him as a down-to-earth, fun-loving companion with a dry wit and passionate love of the outdoors. Most who met him outside of academia never would have guessed his education or achievements. Those of us who worked with him knew that under the casual, easy-going demeanor lay a brilliant mind.

As a young man, Lane enjoyed hunting in Mississippi and Louisiana, particularly for duck and geese. He participated in field trials with his champion labrador retrievers, Itch and Tink. Lane also was an enthusiastic fisherman. He holds the Louisiana state record for a mako shark caught on rod and reel (765 pounds), caught in 2006. While on a trip to Venezuela with his daughter, he accomplished the Marlin Grand Slam (catching three

different species of billfish, including a marlin, within a single 24-hour period).

Lane is survived by his daughter, Allison Foil; his grandson, Benjamin Lane Foil; his brother, Mike Foil; his niece, Hadleigh Foil; and his long-term partner and colleague, Claudia Husseneder, Professor of Entomology at LSU. The family requests that colleagues who want to honor Lane’s memory do so by donating to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

Larry Hribar
Florida Keys Mosquito Control District
Marathon, Florida

Işik Unlu
St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District
Slidell, Louisiana

Allison Foil
Foil Equine Sports Medicine
Ocala, Florida