
Norton G. Miller

Miller, Norton G. SYRACUSE Dr. Norton G. Miller, emeritus curator of bryology and quaternary paleobotany at the New York State Museum, died in Syracuse on December 7, 2011 following a 20-year battle with prostate cancer. Norton was born in Buffalo on February 4, 1942 and completed a bachelor's of arts in biology at the University of Buffalo, now the State University of New York at Buffalo, in 1963, graduating with high distinction in biology. Growing up in rural western New York, Norton was an avid outdoorsman learning as much as he could about the environment around him. As a boy he kept a flock of bantam hens, roamed the woods with the family dog, Nipper, became an avid birder, and studied many natural history subjects with Mabel James, a local naturalist who was his first mentor. He developed an intense interest in botany leading to lifelong knowledge of many types of plants. As a teenager, Norton served as Miss James' assistant on several of the Buffalo Museum of Science Conservation Caravans that she led to locales in the Northeast. During this time he was active in the Boy Scouts of America, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. He developed an interest in bryophytes and spent several summers apprenticing with Dr. Stanley J. Smith, a bryologist at the New York State Museum, in whose footsteps he would follow several decades later. He graduated from Holland Central School in 1959. Following completion of his undergraduate degree, he enrolled in [Michigan State University](#) to pursue a PhD in botany. The topic of his dissertation, completed in 1969, was glacial and postglacial vegetation change in southwestern New York State, also published as a New York State Museum Bulletin. Dr. Miller's research interests included plant systematics and floristics, especially of bryophytes and seed plants; quaternary paleobotany and paleoecology and the tertiary and quaternary history of the bryophyta. His field work in these areas led him to explorations throughout the northern latitudes from New York and New England to Michigan, Colorado, the west coast, the southeast, Alaska, Russia, Scandinavia, Scotland, Iceland, Greenland, Canada and Japan. He authored more than 100 scholarly publications, gave many presentations, taught a variety of courses at multiple institutions including [Harvard University](#) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, collaborated with colleagues throughout the world, provided leadership to numerous professional organizations, including the American Bryological and Lichenological Society, and served on the editorial boards of ten journals. He is survived by his wife, Heather Swan Miller; son, Dr. Andrew David Miller and his wife Dr. Allison Miller; and granddaughter, Natalie Rose Miller. A celebration of his life may be held in the spring. Contributions in his memory may be made to the New York Botanical Garden.

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