

**In Memoriam  
Barbara J. Stahl, Ph.D.  
1930-2004**

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I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Stahl, and it is hard to believe that more than a year has passed since she lost her battle with breast cancer. Dr. Stahl was a world-renowned expert on fossil holocephalians, and her peers did not hesitate to recommend her for identifying specimens. In honor of Dr. Stahl's contributions to paleoichthyology, a new species of chimaeroid, *Callorhynchus stahli*, was named for her (Kriwet and Gaździcki, 2003).

My first exposure to Dr. Stahl's work came when, as an undergraduate, I read her book "Vertebrate History: Problems in Evolution". We had the chance to meet at the 1999 Society of Vertebrate Paleontology meeting in Denver, shortly after the publication of her (long awaited) monograph "Chondrichthyes III: Holocephali", which is part of the Handbook of Paleochthyology series. In 2003 we began collaborating on a project focusing on a Mississippian chondrichthyan assemblage from Alabama, but I was unaware of her situation. Throughout the year we sent many emails back and forth, and only once or twice did she hint that she was battling an illness. It was not until SVP 2003 that I found out how serious her condition was. After returning from vacation in early 2004, I was deeply saddened to learn from her husband, David, that she had passed away. It turns out that our project was the last (of many she was working on) that she had the opportunity to complete.

Dr. Stahl's dedication to her work in the face of adversity will leave a lasting impression on me. I benefited immensely from our discussions, and in the past year there were several times I wished that I could contact her for her expertise. I know friends and family miss Barbara, and several of her colleagues were kind enough to share with me some of their experiences with her. These are paraphrased below...

"It was a rewarding experience to know her personally, collaborate with her, and exchange letters and emails. She was always very kind and courteous as a human being, but rigorous and meticulous as a scientist in Romerian tradition. I miss Barbara as a friend and colleague." Dr. Sankar Chatterjee

"Barbara and David were incredibly gracious hosts. Barbara helped me enormously...giving me a crash course on chimaerid anatomy and relationships. Barbara had sacrificed precious energy and time for

me, but acted as if I were the one who had honored her by my visit. I learned much about fossil chimaerids during my visit, but much more about grace and courage." Dr. Stephen Cumbaa

"When thinking of Dr. Stahl I guess the things that come to mind are first, her unending dedication to her students. She truly delighted in helping her students succeed and she threw all of her considerable energy into teaching, mentoring, and just being a friend to the students she contacted. The second notable quality was her unending desire to learn...both for her own research but more importantly so she could continue to provide her students with the best education possible. Lastly, she was a wonderful friend. Always enthusiastic, always happy, I never once, ever heard a single complaint from her. Barbara was the kind of person about whom I could honestly say that I am better off for knowing her and am proud to have had the opportunity to work with her. I hold close many happy memories of visits with her and her husband, David." Dr. Dominique Didier Dagit

#### **Additional Biographical Information**

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