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Law, biology professor Val Nolan dies

H-T Report

Val Nolan Jr., professor emeritus of law and biology at Indiana University, died Thursday at his residence in Bloomington. He was 87.

Nolan, who earned his law degree at IU in 1949, went on to serve on the faculty there from 1949 until his retirement in 1985. He was recognized as an outstanding teacher of property law by generations of law students. He served as acting dean of the law school in 1976 and 1980, and was active in persuading the Indiana Legislature to expand the IU law building.

He also held interests in ecology, evolution and the behavior of birds, principally songbirds. In 1965, he joined the department of zoology (subsequently biology) and held joint appointments in law and biology until his retirement.

He founded a tradition of bird study at IU that continues today, serving as advisor to 20 doctoral students who each year contribute new knowledge about birds and their behavior.

He served as editor of the series “Current Ornithology” and was the author of two books and numerous scientific publications.

Born April 28, 1920, in Evansville, he was the son of Val and Jeanette Nolan. After graduating from IU in 1941, he served as deputy U.S. Marshall and then as a member of the Secret Service on the White House detail protecting President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

During World War II he served in the Navy.

Nolan is survived by his wife, Ellen D. Ketterson; two sons, Val Nolan III of Bloomington and William A. Nolan of Powell, Ohio; one daughter, Ann Nolan of Bloomington; one brother, Alan T. Nolan and one sister, Kay Nolan Lobley of Indianapolis.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sycamore Land Trust or the IU School of Law.