

Nancy Smith Weber, PhD 1943 – 2020

Laura Juszczak, Editor

From the very beginning, Nancy Smith Weber's life was rooted in mycology. With mycologist Helen V. and Alexander H. Smith, PhD, as her parents, Nancy was tutored in mycology from an early age, and to her credit, embraced this lead instead of rejecting it as some children are inclined to do. We are all the richer for it.



Trajectory of Nancy Weber's Academic Career

Nancy earned all three academic degrees---BS, MS and PhD---in Botany from the University of Michigan. During the period, 1990-2004, she was Assistant Professor/Researcher at the Oregon State University Department of Forest Science, and subsequently served as an affiliate faculty member. Simultaneously, she was appointed the Forest Service's ascomycete identifier for the Northwest Forest Plan, and in 2002–2003, Nancy ranked rare and unusual fungi for the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center. In 2007, Prof. Weber was honored by the North American Mycological Association Award for Contribution to Amateur Mycology for "More than 30 years of duty in the trenches of amateur mycology".

Publications

Subsequent to her doctoral work, Dr. Weber 'joined the family firm,' coauthoring books with her parents. These titles include: *How to Know the Gilled Mushrooms* (Smith, Smith & Weber 1979), *The Mushroom Hunter's Field Guide* (Smith & Weber 1980), *How to Know the Non-Gilled Mushrooms* (Smith, Smith & Weber 1981), and *A Field Guide to Southern Mushrooms* (Weber & A.H. Smith 1985). Her husband, Jim, was recruited into the fold as photographer for *A Morel Hunter's Companion* (Weber 1988). Nancy's writing contributions can be found in earlier volumes of *McIlvainea*. Her "Musings on 'Mushrooming'" (*McIlvainea* 2001) revealed how much information can be gained by monitoring the day-to-day development of fruiting bodies in one's own backyard. This article is mirrored by a 2013 episode of Oregon Public Broadcasting's "Oregon Field Guide, "Mushrooms" (2506, season 25, aired 11/14/2013). I was not fortunate enough to meet Nancy Weber but---thanks to the internet---she lives on posthumously in the

OPB video segment, which can be viewed here <https://watch.opb.org/video/oregon-field-guide-mushrooms/>. You, too, can see Nancy in action, exploring the fungi in and around her Oregon home where she has found more than 300 types of fungi in her forested backyard. She is not survived by any children, yet Prof. Nancy Weber's legacy lives on in the five species that have been named in her honor: *Boletus nancyae*, *Brauniellula nancyae*, *Galerina nancyae*, *Lactarius nancyae*, and *Russula nancyweberae*. Most recently, the 2022 NAMA Scholarship for a promising Mycological Society of America doctoral candidate specializing in the study of macro fungi has been named as the Nancy Weber Memorial Scholarship.

Photo from the Kit Scates and Harley Barnhart mycological photo collection, courtesy of Michael Beug, PhD.