

IN MEMORIUM—DR. H. MICHAEL “MIKE” BARNES

June 9, 1943–August 30, 2023

Hoyt Michael “Mike” Barnes, emeritus professor and first Thompson Distinguished Professor of Wood Science and Technology of the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts (formerly Forest Products) at Mississippi State University departed this life on August 30, 2023. Mike was a lifelong scientist, by his own recollection having captured a caterpillar at age six, delivering it to the local junior high school science teacher for identification. Growing up in Baytown, TX, Mike was an Eagle Scout and student-athlete at Robert E. Lee High School and was recruited to his beloved Louisiana State University on a football scholarship. It was at LSU where Mike met his match in Martha Lasyone, the future Mrs. Martha Barnes. Through 58 years of marriage, Mike and Martha adventured around the world with their four boys Bryan, Brooks, Brandon, and Brett, and eventually their grandchildren as well.

Mike found a love of wood science at LSU as well, working under the late Dr. Warren Thompson as an undergraduate and under Dr. Elvin Choong during his early graduate studies, focusing on dimensional stabilization during his MSc program. After graduating, Mike and Martha moved the family to Syracuse, NY to pursue a PhD at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry under Dr. Christen Skaar. In 1971, Mike joined the faculty of the Department of Wood Science and Technology and the Mississippi Forest Products Laboratory at Mississippi State University and became involved with the Society for Wood Science and Technology, the American Wood Protection Association, the Railway Tie Association, the Forest Products Society, and the International Research Group on Wood Protection, among other professional organizations.

Mike served SWST as president from 2001 to 2002 and as the editor of *Wood and Fiber Science* from 2010 to 2017.

Mike’s contributions to wood science are vast—authoring over 200 publications, directing and collaborating on numerous projects, and advising a horde of students over his 51 years at Mississippi State, his influence will continue to be felt across the field for generations. Projects initiated by Dr. Barnes are still being evaluated by MSU researchers and will continue to deliver industry-critical data for many years to come.

During his career, Mike was honored many times, including as an SWST Fellow in 2007, the 2008 SWST Distinguished Service Award, the 2008 FPS Distinguished Service Award, the 2002 FPS Gottschalk Award, the 2015 LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources Hall of Fame, 2004 LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources Alumnus of the Year, AWWA Award of Merit 2004, RTA Broad Axe Award 2006, and numerous awards from Mississippi State, including the 2016 Regions Bank-MSU-DAFVM Superior Faculty Award for Service, 2005 MSU ORED Ralph E. Powe Research Excellence Award, and Teacher of the Year from the MSU Forest Products Society Student Chapter. Mike was most fond, however, of talking about his many years of service as Scoutmaster to Troop 45 and all the many adventures he and his fellow Leaders and Scouts had.

Dr. Barnes is deeply missed by his colleagues and former students, many of whom still serve in the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts.

DR. BETH STOKES
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