



Alumni



KAREN STEIDINGER
BA, ZOOLOGY '68
MS, MARINE SCIENCE '71
PH.D, BIOLOGY '79

Karenia brevis. Steidinger Auditorium. Don't be surprised to see the name Karen Steidinger appearing in a host of eminent places! Karen is an internationally renowned scientist who has dedicated much of her career to the study of dinoflagellates and harmful algae. So profound is her scholarly impact, the scientific term for Florida's red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, was named in her honor in 2000.

Throughout her continuing tenure as a research scientist, her moniker has appeared as author or collaborator in dozens of journal articles and books. An entire special issue of *Continental Shelf Research* was dedicated to Karen in 2008, in recognition of her major contributions to science, professional societies, and agency service. And, in 2002, the 250-seat auditorium at the FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute in St. Petersburg was named in her honor. Steidinger Auditorium hosts an array of scholarly forums, academic classes, and symposia – instructional programs prized by her educator's heart.

Karen began as a biologist and laboratory technician for the Florida Board of Conservation in 1963. By 1978 she became Laboratory Supervisor at the Bayboro facility. In 1980, Karen rose to Bureau Chief of Florida's DNR Marine Science and Technology, in charge of the marine research laboratory, the shellfish program (in Tallahassee), and for field offices around the state. The agency subsequently endured several name changes, with Karen remaining the chief executive until she returned to research full-time in 1993. After formally retiring in 2003, Karen resumed scientific work with the Florida Institute of Oceanography and then, back to FWRI. She is currently collaborating with colleagues to complete a "Guide to the Harmful Algae of the Gulf of Mexico," a final product of an EPA grant (which will be available as a free, downloadable document). She is

also writing systematic reviews of several Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) genera and preparing teaching materials for HAB identification workshops.

Karen works tirelessly to instill the joy of science in students. She is a long-time courtesy professor in the College of Marine Science. Training future scientists — as well as her professional peers — is an integral part of Karen's legacy. Her intellectual curiosity is contagious. She particularly appreciates the symbiotic nature of her work, the scholarly exchange between teacher and pupil – and the resulting creative interaction. Karen views "learning as an unending experience and the possibilities of scientific discovery as infinite, every day something new is recognized."

In addition to *Karenia brevis*, Karen's name appears on other accolades, among them: the Yasumoto Lifetime Achievement Award, International Society for the Study of Harmful Algae (2008); the Lifetime Achievement Award, Phycological Society of America (2003); and the Wildlife Foundation of Florida Louise Ireland Humphrey Award (2001). Karen has also provided expert leadership as President of the International Society for the Study of Harmful Algae (2000-04) and as a member of the Editorial Boards of both *Protist* (2004-06) and the Phycological Society of America (1990-92, 2005-07, 2012-16).

Best of all, the deeply respected, unpretentious, and genial scientist remains an enduring and venerated presence at Bayboro.

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