Memorial to Victor A. Zullo
1936–1993

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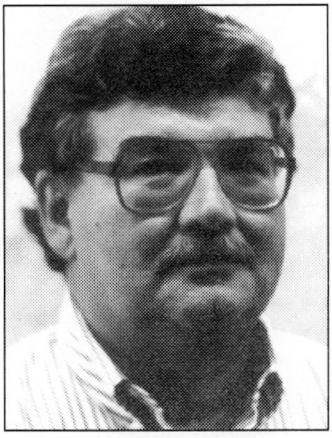

The unexpected death of Victor A. Zullo (Vic) on the morning of July 16, 1993, saddened his family, friends, students, and close colleagues. The passing of this outstanding teacher, scientist, academician, and researcher resulted in a void in the geological, biological, and university community that will never be filled. His contributions to the profession will be missed by those who knew him personally as well as by those who knew only his research.

Vic was born on July 24, 1936, in the Marina district of San Francisco, California, and maintained close ties with the Bay area until his death. He attended college at the University of California at Berkeley, where he earned bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in invertebrate paleontology. As a young paleontologist Vic worked under the direction of Professor J. Wyatt Durham on the classification and phylogeny of the Balanomorpha. He also had special interests in mollusks and echinoids, and some of his early publications dealt with these groups.

After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley in 1963 with his doctorate, Vic joined the Systematics and Ecology Program at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where he remained until 1967. At Woods Hole, Vic's interests in fossil and living organisms were varied, and he published papers on the systematics of barnacles as well as on other invertebrates. One of his early tasks was cataloguing the Cirripedia named by the American malacologist and cirripedologist Henry A. Pilsbry.

In 1967 Vic left Woods Hole and returned to San Francisco as associate curator and chairman of the Department of Geology at the California Academy of Sciences. In addition, he was a lecturer from 1967 to 1970 in earth sciences, biology, and geology at the University of California at Berkeley and California State University at San Francisco.

In the summer of 1971 Vic joined the University of North Carolina at Wilmington as the director of the Program in Environmental Studies and professor of biology. In 1973 he became a professor of geology in the Department of Earth Sciences, where he remained until his death. At the time of his death, Vic was the president of the Carolina Geological Society. As a member of the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Vic continued his research in the areas of living and fossil barnacles, other invertebrates, and biogeography, but he also developed interests in Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains stratigraphy, time-scale studies, sequence stratigraphy, and tectonics.

Vic made many contributions to the university that were outside his realm as a teacher and a scientist, particularly in the area of service. In addition to serving as the chairman of the Department of Earth Sciences (1982-1991), he was active in various aspects of campus life and politics. He was principal author of the university's faculty governance document during the 1970s which established the faculty senate and which still serves as the model for governance on the UNCW campus. He also was instrumental in the planning and implementation of the

graduate program in geology at UNCW. Vic's reputation as an intellect and a rational thinker was well known and appreciated on campus. His advice was frequently requested by others; consequently, he often served on various search committees within the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, and even the School of Education. Vic also was an ardent supporter of faculty welfare and equality, often heading committees that dealt with the promotion of these areas.

One of Vic's most important contributions to the university and to the profession was his promotion of dialogue among Coastal Plains geologists. He lamented that meetings of professional societies were too large and never provided the arena for sharing knowledge and developing cooperative ventures. Further, he disliked their emphasis on research results rather than research problems. From his ideas were born the Bald Head Island Conferences on Coastal Plains Geology in the mid-1980s, which brought together invited scientists for several days of intense discussion about research problems in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. The reputation achieved by these conferences during the 1980s and early 1990s was the result of Vic's initiative and the esteem in which he was held by his colleagues. Consequently, cooperative researches were developed among various colleagues at colleges, universities, and the U.S. Geological Survey. This result was the main purpose of Vic's initial drive to develop the continuing conferences.

Although Vic's early career papers were on the systematics of the balanomorph barnacles and the descriptions of fossil and extant species, Vic published on the ecology of other marine invertebrates and on biogeography, principally the cirripeds. In the 1970s, after joining the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Vic's interests and adeptness in stratigraphy, geomorphology, structural geology, and field geology quickly blossomed. Vic loved to work in the field and believed that field work was the foundation upon which any other aspect of laboratory study was built. He often commented that without training and experience in the field, modern geologists were lacking in a large part of their education.

I first got to know Vic in 1975 when I joined the University of North Carolina at Wilmington as a young assistant professor of geology. Over the next 18 years Vic and I became the best of friends and an active research team discussing new ideas, others' research, politics, or food. Although Vic was from the West Coast and I the East Coast, we shared many similar philosophies about such diverse subjects as science, education, food, and travel. And, although we engaged in many geological disagreements, our friendship never wavered, as we always viewed these exchanges as a means through which the data were evaluated and the best interpretation developed. However, people who did not understand our friendship were often confused by our working relationship in the field. For example, we were in a quarry once with two colleagues from the U.S. Museum of Natural History, and we entered into a heated discussion over some trivial aspect of the local geology. As was quite normal, our discussion quickly digressed into a contest of who could berate and question the other's competence the best. Both colleagues misunderstood our method of resolving problems and asked Vic how we were able to work together.

Vic's first love was research. He was obsessed with it, commonly working seven days a week studying some long-lost, obscure aspect of barnacle morphology or ecology, or the biostratigraphic relations of another unit. His bibliography reflects his passion for research and his philosophy that research was never finished until the results were written and published. I recall Vic saying "... too many colleagues enjoy research but hate writing up the results for dissemination." But just as great as his passion for research was his passion for teaching. He was always a teacher to students, colleagues, administrators, or friends, and he was an outstanding one. His classes were never easy, but they were always well taught. His undergraduate invertebrate paleontology was infamous; it was the course in the geology curriculum that separated

future geologists from those who would pursue other majors. For several years, I team-taught a course with Vic on Coastal Plains geology that provided the students with insight into his passion for all aspects of stratigraphy, and his willingness to show that there were always different interpretations of the same data. But Vic had compassion for students and always worked for their best interests. Students adored him as a scientist and teacher, and frequently as a father figure. He spent numerous hours working with them individually on problems that were not academic. His colleagues had the utmost respect for him as a scholar and as a friend. But as strong as Vic's passion for geology was his passion for good food. Often, one of the highlights of his sojourns in the field or trips to a professional society meeting was his reminiscence of the really great cuisine that he had found.

It is never easy writing a memorial to a close friend or relative, but I hope that these few insights into Vic's professional and personal side provide something about the uniqueness of this individual. No words can do justice to the impact that any one person can have on a profession, a university, his colleagues, or his friends. But Vic's impact on the geological and biological community, in a short period of time, was monumental. His counsel, guidance, and friendship will be missed by all who knew him, but particularly by his former students, research associates, family, and friends. Many of us are indeed fortunate to have crossed the path of Victor A. Zullo. His unexpected death coincides with a time period in which several other Coastal Plain friends and researchers have died, including Juergen Reinhardt, Norm Sohl, Wally Fallaw, and Jim Owens. They and their work will be missed by all workers in the Coastal Plain.

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Note: Victor A. Zullo was author or coauthor of at least 50 additional papers.

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