

A memorial to Robert D. Liska (1931–2021)

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Robert D. Liska passed away on January 24, 2021. He died peacefully at home in the presence of his much-loved wife of 64 years. He was laid to rest in a private funeral service at the Houston National Cemetery.

Born in 1931, the youngest of four, Bob grew up in Riverside, Illinois, and San Diego, California. Three years of Army service during the Korean War took him to Europe, where his love for travel and classical music began. He returned to study for a MSc in Geology at San Diego State University. There he met and married Suzanne. They had two daughters and adopted the first of several beloved Labrador Retrievers.

In 1963 Bob joined Texaco in Long Beach, California as a geologist. Two years later he joined Texaco International in Colombia, South America. He and Suzanne brought two more daughters into the family. Amidst field trips into the Andean jungles and family trips throughout Central America and Europe, he took up bowling, Tejo, and became quite a good basketball player. In 1973 the family moved to Trinidad, West Indies, where Bob became a Senior Stratigrapher and head of the Point-à-Pierre Geological Laboratory. He became an avid tennis player and added golf to his games and the Caribbean to his family vacations.

After 20 years overseas, Bob returned to the US as an independent biostratigraphic consultant specializing in the Gulf Coast. He helped his four girls graduate from University – one of the highlights of his life. He and Suzanne then settled in Houston, Texas, where he continued consulting and working on his microfossil collection right to the end of his life.

Bob had a long association with Micropaleontology Press, and published several papers in *Micropaleontology* and in the *Journal of Foraminiferal Research* in the 1980's and 1990's. He reported on the stratigraphic range of *Globigerinoides ruber* in the Caribbean (Liska 1985), and the age of the *Globorotalia menardii* Zone in Trinidad (Liska 1991). In the latter paper he dealt at length with the stratigraphic relationships between vari-

ous Middle and Upper Miocene stratigraphies and the nascent planktonic foraminiferal biostratigraphic schemes being developed in the Caribbean by Blow and Bolli. He is perhaps best remembered for the discovery and description of the enigmatic planktonic foraminiferal genus *Polyperibola* Liska 1980 (type species *Polyperibola christiani*) from the Upper Miocene of Trinidad. In a follow-up study, he compared his *Polyperibola* with other morphologically similar Miocene genera (Liska 1984).

In 1985, Bob donated a box of sample residues from two wells drilled through the Lizard Springs Formation of Trinidad to Mike Kaminski, who was then a PhD student with Bill Berggren at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The material formed a significant part of Mike's Ph.D. thesis. The collection of faunal slides from Lizard Springs is now housed in the European Micropalaeontological Reference Centre, at the offices of Micropress Europe in Kraków.

With his characteristic generosity, Bob assisted Dennis Sanchez in his research towards a MSc thesis at Rutgers University by donating material from his excellent Caribbean collection, which helped him delineate the role of the excellently preserved Lower

and Middle Miocene planktonic foraminifera in the Cipero Formation, Trinidad, as a standard of reference for the less well preserved foraminifera in the subsurface Carapita Formation of Eastern Venezuela (PF Zones N4/M1 to N6/M9) (Sanchez, Berggren and Liska 2014). In a companion study, Sanchez, Aubry and Liska (2014) evaluated the temporal completeness of one land section and three wells through the Carapita Formation and determined that paleodepth changes are associated with hiatuses at upper and middle bathyal depths.

Bob leaves behind his wife Suzanne, his four girls, eleven grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter. He also leaves behind the legacy of his lifelong passion for micropaleontology and stratigraphy: his extensive and unique microfossil collection which will be housed at University College London, and his equipment which was donated to Texas A&M. He was a supporting member of the Cushman Foundation for Foraminiferal Research.



Bob was never shy about expressing what he loved – his work, nature, Labrador Retrievers, humor, European soccer, cooking, and above all, his family. His enthusiasm for sports and travel never diminished. When he became less able to get out, he took up exploring all the places he wanted to visit via Google Earth. Every day started with: “it’s a great day to be alive.” His favorite motto: “*Do what you love, and love what you do*” was exactly how he chose to live his life. May you rest in peace Bob.

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