



DONORS:

The Archives of Falconry Legacy Circle,
The North American Falconers' Association



Sterling became interested in falconry in the early 1950s and met people that would become his lifelong friends.



Dr. STERLING BUNNELL, M.D.

July 6th, 1932 -
December 30th, 2015

by *Seth Bunnell*,
November 2016

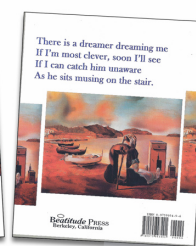
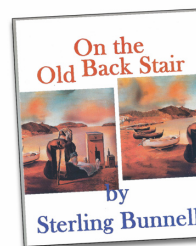
Sterling was raised on natural history in a Victorian house of old San Francisco. He was an only child but had the company of crocodilians, turtles, and other creatures that occupied a backyard pond which he referred to as "the well of knowledge." With an inexhaustible thirst for information and an extraordinary memory, he built the foundation of his encyclopedic mind.

He transferred from Stanford to UC Berkeley as an undergraduate in biological sciences, his true passion, but ended up going to medical school and becoming a psychiatrist. During the early-1950s he became interested in falconry and met some of his lifelong friends including Hans Peeters and Steve Herman. I remember from my toddler period a variety of exotic pets and many terraria containing venomous snakes. My father's index finger tip was modified because of a Gabon Viper bite which his surgeon father Sterling Bunnell Sr. had handily carved away with his pocket knife. We frequently went snake collecting and small mammal trapping in the deserts of California, Nevada, Arizona, and Baja. Sterling followed his father's influence when it came to living dangerously rather than denying himself significant life experiences.

A man of free will, he was not fond of authority figures. Respect for the individual was a priority for Sterling. This may have played a role in his accumulating many eccentric friends throughout his life. He was creative and had a powerful imagination. Great pleasures were achieved through conversation, books, and cuisine. Sterling's wit was an immense source of amusement for me; I still laugh when I reflect upon his clever, sometimes dark and sinister, statements.

An aesthete of the highest nature, he distilled experience into profound language. This manifested itself in barish storytelling, songs, and poetry. He said, "You are the best person at being you." There was never a need for conformity, and absolute funkiness prevailed. Sterling was the only person that I have ever seen wade through ponds of filamentous algae in his birthday suit while hunting bullfrogs barehanded. His friend Robert Rydjord remembered being on the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda when: "Sterling spied a cloud of gnats so thick that the air was black... So he opened his mouth like a whale shark and ran through the cloud, coming out the other side happily munching them and remarking about the taste and protein value. Only a man who embraced the entire world of nature could even think this way."

Sterling always fought for conservation. He battled "the nozzle heads" (pesticide enthusiasts), strip miners at the Hopi reservation, and developers threatening unique natural landscapes. He heightened public awareness of pupfish, kit foxes, and cetacean intelligence. His friend Luis Baptista and he worked to establish the Island Endemics Foundation. He directed his efforts and support to protecting living treasures from destruction by human greed and arrogance; therefore, the best way to celebrate the life of Sterling Bunnell is to save and restore endangered populations and the ecosystems on which they depend.



Sterling wrote a book of poetry
that was published in 2005





IN REMEMBRANCE

The best way to celebrate the life of Sterling Bunnell is to save and restore endangered populations and the ecosystems on which they depend.



Sterling always fought for animal conservation.