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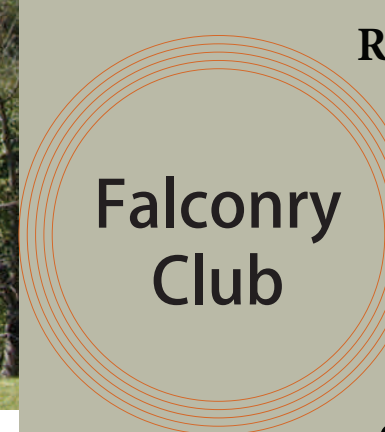
**Teacher, mentor, conservationist, researcher, wildlife expert, outdoorsman and cricket coach.**

And during his educator years — including 22 years with the Falcon College in Zimbabwe — Ron Hartley was considered by his international peers as one of the top falconers in the world.

With his emphasis on conservation and falconry ethics, Ron “was a powerhouse in the development of falconry in Zimbabwe and is largely responsible for the good standing of falconry in our sub-region,” wrote Dr. Adrian Lombard of the South African Falconer’s Association.

One of Ron’s missions in life was to dispel any unfavorable perceptions of falconry. His strict ethical codes and conservation standards with the Zimbabwe Falconer’s Club made it an admired model for falconry clubs around the world.

Ron edited or contributed to every volume of the club’s newsletter from 1984 to 1998, he published more than 100 articles on falconry, he was a consultant for National Geographic and the BBC, and he worked with the Peregrine Fund to establish a captive breeding and release program for both African Peregrines and Taita Falcons. An energetic and athletic researcher, his climbing and whitewater research expeditions were not for the faint-hearted.



**Ron R. Hartley was highly instrumental in advancing ethical and quality falconry in his native Zimbabwe by forming a falconry club comprised of students at Falcon College.** His falconry club students had to meet his club’s high standards for the safety and care of their birds, and had to adhere to the country’s falconry and hunting regulations and traditions. Their advance in the sport was predicated on having quality knowledge of their game species and on raptors husbandry and handling skills. Ron instituted a progressive program of beginners using easily obtained and common species of raptors, and having actual hawking success before advancement to the next level of sportsmanship. Ron was also deeply involved in the protection of the varied species of native Zimbabwean raptors, and was widely admired for his work in conservation and hunting." **-M. Alan Jenkins**



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*-Dr. Adrian Lombard of the South African Falconer’s Association*



Born in Zambia, Ron spent his school years near Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, where students were encouraged to become learned in the ways and wildlife of the bush country. Generations of falconers were part of the local traditions. In 1971, he graduated from the University of Natal in South Africa and began a teaching career in Mutare in the eastern, mountainous part of Zimbabwe. While also coaching field hockey and cricket, he

founded a wildlife society at the school and used his spare time to hunt with his Hawk-Eagle and Black Sparrowhawks.

In 1983, he took a position at the aptly named Falcon College, a private boarding school in Zimbabwe, where he followed in the footsteps of Peter Steyn, a noted naturalist and photographer. (Steyn would later call Ron “a colossus” in the world of raptor research and conservation.)

Back in the open bush country, Ron switched from shortwings to the longwing African Peregrine. He began a falconry club at the school and would mentor hundreds of students in both falconry ethics and conservation research. He believed strongly that falconers had a responsibility to contribute to conservation and science, not only for raptors but for all of nature’s communities.

**His boundless energy and enthusiasm for conservation and raptors made him popular with everyone from local ranchers to professional safari hunters.**

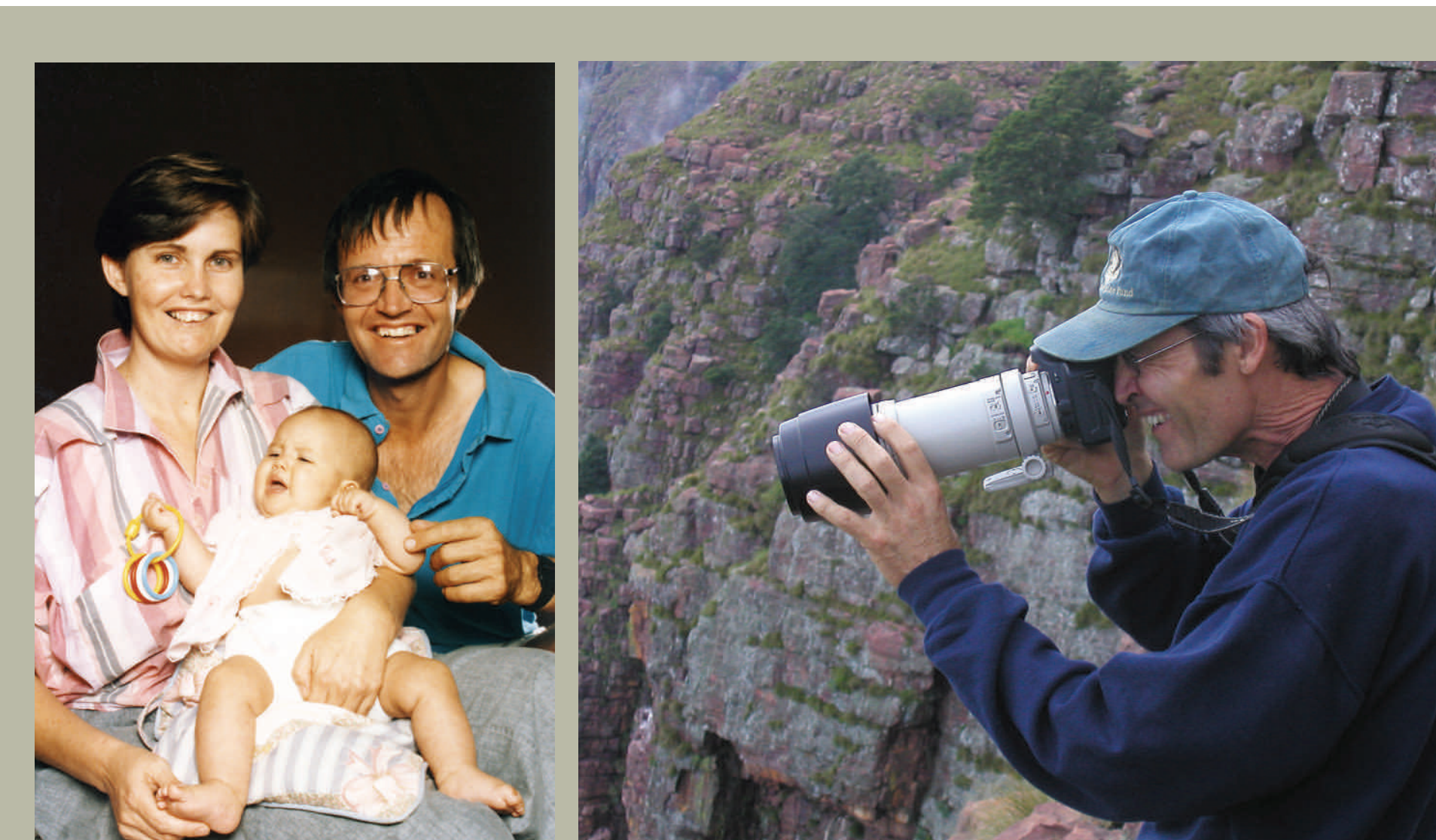
Ranchers, while learning habitat and game management methods from Ron, appreciated his attitude and exuberance so much that he was granted unrivaled access to hunting lands.

Ron’s research, meanwhile, was meticulous and prodigious, even to the extent of inspecting the stomach contents of caught prey. His bush skills, including finding nests, far exceeded what trained ornithologists could accomplish themselves. And he passed on his disciplined and well-organized research skills and ethics to many others. South Africa would eventually legalize falconry. His wife, Deirdre, joined Ron in the falconry life (thanks to growing up with three falconer brothers), and her pharmacist skills would come in handy when Ron would care for or rehabilitate an injured small mammal or raptor. His daughter, Emma, chose a college education in Australia where she combined a study of law and ecosystems.

Ron just plain loved birds and nature. A self-proclaimed “Bush Baptist,” Ron had boundless energy for the things he loved, and he had an outgoing, garrulous personality. He loved to spend time with kids or ranchers or anybody who showed an interest in any of the things important to him. And his enthusiasm was clearly infectious.

“Ron was one of the finest examples of the falconer/raptor conservationist ever to come from our ranks,” said Patrick Morel, President of the International Association for falconry & Conservation of Birds of Prey. “His friendship and sound advice will be greatly missed.”

— Reminiscences: Richard Teague, David Coffin and Peter Steyn



*Ron followed in the footsteps of Peter Steyn, a noted naturalist and photographer.*

