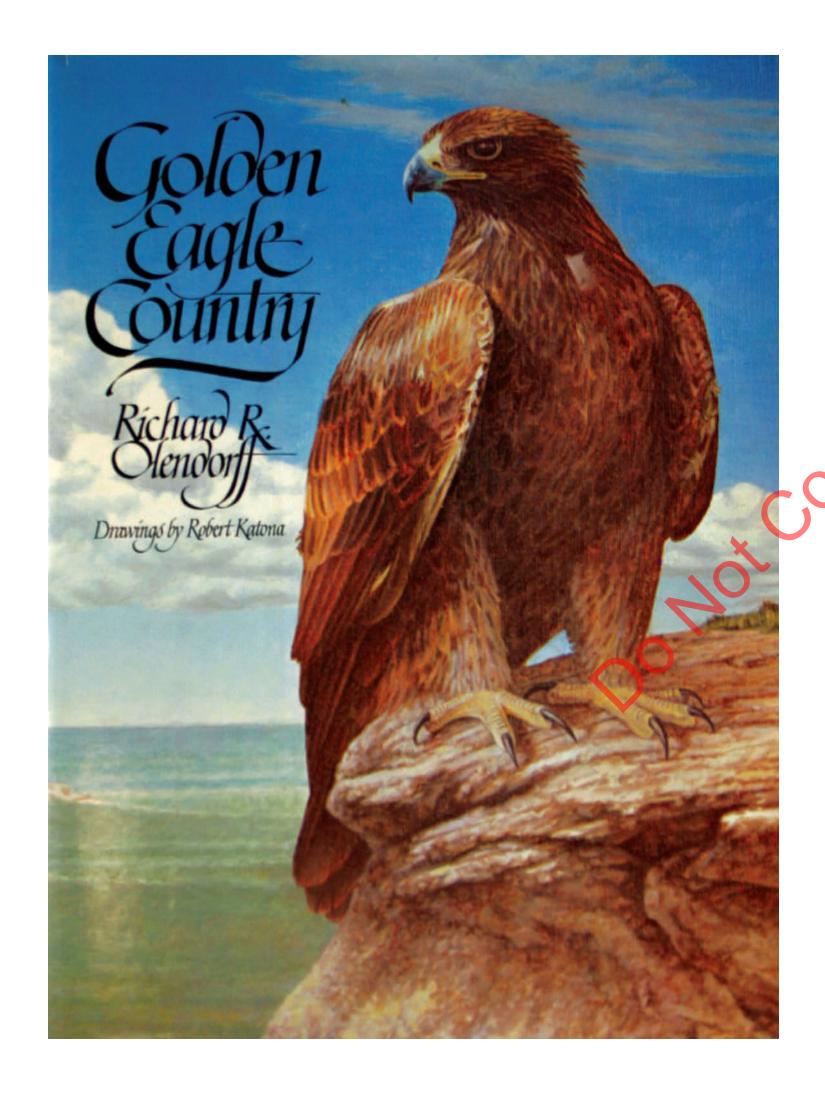


## **Donors**

John and Vicki Swift



## **Butch Olendorff a Memorial**

Richard R. "Butch" Olendorff was a charter member of NAFA and a charter member of the Raptor Research Foundation. In 1961 at age 17, he and George Valiconyi worked their way from Anchorage, Alaska to Denver, Colorado to attend a falconry meeting at Hal Webster's home. They worked on a ship from Alaska to Hawaii to Seattle, Washington. There they bought a used vehicle and drove to Denver. That meeting formed the North American Falconry Association and many lifelong friendships. The next year Butch and Dave Rosino came to the first NAFA field meet in Reno, Nevada. There along with possibly thirty hawks sitting on their perches we saw two fine goshawks, two peregrines, and a Cooper's flown. The Thanksgivings of 1961 and 1962 had impacted our lives in a big way. Not only had we seen the hawks, the equipment, and the paintings and made friendships, but we found out that there were men who studied raptors professionally.

Unlike the high school age falconers from Colorado, those high school falconers from Anchorage, Alaska had a problem. The only raptors they could get their hands on were gyr falcons. As the story goes, while in high school, they paid five dollars apiece for three eyas gyrs from a native Indian girl. But Butch wanted to fly accipiters. After age 17 he never flew another falcon.

By the time Butch had finished his Bachelors degree in Washington state he had married Sheri, and they had had their first child. Then the Olendorffs moved to Colorado where Butch started his PhD at CSU in Fort Collins.

Butch didn't want to waste time. He went straight through his doctorate program. While working on his PhD, Butch took on the responsibility of editor of NAFA's *Hawk Chalks* and the NAFA *Journal*. During this period, the Colorado Hawking Club was formed and Butch edited the *CHC Journal*, too. Butch was hawking then, too. It was during that four year period that he was obsessed with catching various sundries with Cooper hawks and rabbits with a passage red-tailed hawk. In the mid 1960s there were many weekends when a dozen people would get together. We were young and hungry to trap hawks, find eyries, make equipment, go hawking, and save falconry and raptors.

Butch was a scientist, author, administrator, visionary, mentor, husband, and father. He was very important in the early years of the raptor profession. He faced his lifelong illness with dignity and humor. Butch had spent much time with his family, despite his professional activities. He started a youth soccer club and coached his children's soccer teams.

Butch established the Raptor Research and Technical Assistance Center for the BLM in 1990. He had also worked on the California condor recovery team and the California Bald eagle and Peregrine falcon working teams.

Over 25 years have passed, and many of the falconers from Colorado in the mid 1960s joined the Olendorff family in Boise, Idaho to pay last respects to Butch. Dr. "Butch" Olendorff, age 50, died Thursday, February 24, 1994 from diabetes complications. Butch loved falconry meets, raptor research meetings and parties where falconers and raptor researchers were in attendance. Butch's passing brought together a large group of both types of his favorite people. He would have liked that, but for us it was rough to acknowledge our loss.

by Jack Stoddart, NAFA Journal, 1994

