



Carlyle (Carl) Luer

August 23, 1922 - November 9, 2019

Carlyle (Carl) Luer was born in Alton, Illinois, August 23, 1922, the son of Verna and Carl Luer. He was educated at the Western Military Academy in Alton and Washington University in St. Louis, where he received his medical degree from the Washington University School of Medicine in 1946. He served in the US Army from 1943 to 1946 as an enlisted reservist to attend medical school and from 1946 to 1950 as a Captain in the US Army Medical Corps stationed in Linz, Austria. After completing his residency in surgery from Washington University School of Medicine, Carl relocated his family to Sarasota in 1953, where his parents had moved following his father's retirement. In establishing his medical practice in 1953, Carl became the first Board Certified surgeon in Sarasota County.

Carl was active in the community as a Director of Sarasota Little League, as an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Sarasota, and as a member of the Palmer Bank Board of Directors. After nearly 25 years as a highly respected physician, he retired from his surgical practice in 1973 to devote his attention to his second career, that of a world-recognized orchid biologist. By that time, he had already published two books on North American orchids: *The Native Orchids of Florida* and *The Native Orchids of the United States and Canada Excluding Florida*. These instantly became classics and they are still some of the most authoritative treatments of the US and Canadian orchid flora.

Through his friendship with Marie Selby, one of Carl's patients during his medical practice, the concept of leaving her estate for the creation of a world-class research and public botanical garden was born. As a result, Carl was a co-founder of the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, served as Chair of its Board of Trustees from 1974-1979, created and was the first Editor of Selby's research journal, *Selbyana*, and described and illustrated more than 3,000 new species of orchids.

His exceptional work has also been acknowledged outside of the Sarasota area, having received Adjunct Scientist appointments at the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St Louis, Harvard University in Cambridge, and the Kew Gardens in London, establishing important

collaborations with the premier botanists in Latin America, and achieving the ultimate recognition for a botanist when he was inducted into the Linnean Society of London. Still authoring scientific papers until his passing, Carl is widely considered to be the most prolific taxonomist in the history of orchid research.

Carl is survived by his loving wife of 74 years, Jane Pfeiffenberger Luer. He is also survived by a daughter Ann Skipper (J Ronald) of Sarasota, and sons Carl (Rosa) of Sarasota, William (Melissa) of New Orleans, George of Sarasota, and Albert of Melbourne, Florida. He is also survived by 12 grandchildren, Cynthia Gries, James Skipper, and Christopher, Amy, Dustin, Alexander, Katherine, Eric, Sara, Andrew, Jane, and William Luer, as well as 9 great-grandchildren.

Plans for a Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.