

John O. Corliss, you will be sorely missed by many! (1922–2014)



John O. Corliss (photo from Prof. K. Hausmann collection).

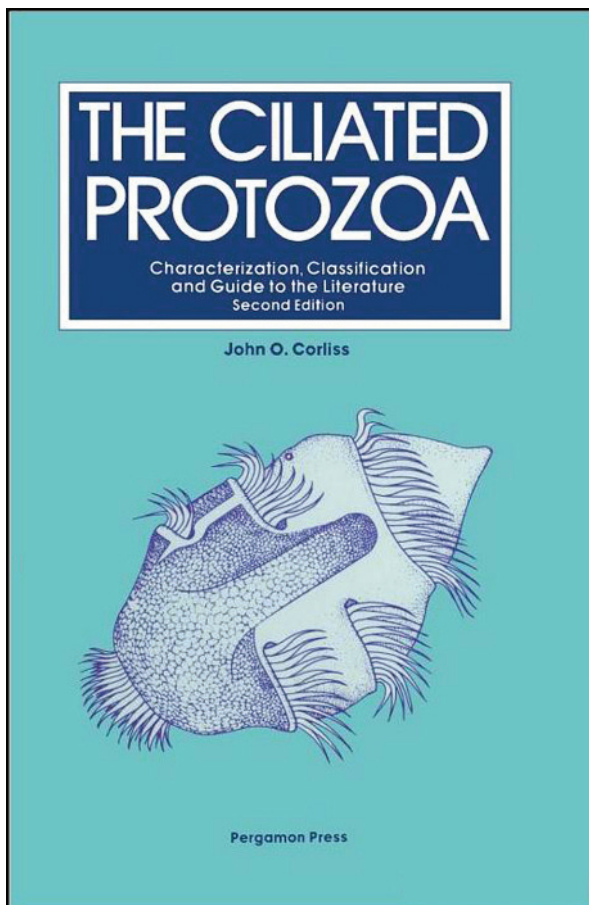
Very sad news arrived from USA: in the very early morning of December 21, 2014 John Corliss passed away in Philadelphia (PA). John was a singular individual and wonderful person for everybody who knew him personally. Much more people remember John O. Corliss, the Emeritus Professor of Zoology, University of Maryland, as one of the great minds of Protistology. Indeed, John was an inspiration to his peers and to many younger protozoologists representing several generations. In the John O. Corliss festschrift dedicated to his 70th birthday in February 1992, Jacques Berger

called him – Ciliatologist Extraordinaire, which is definitely true for all international protistological community members. Many of them expressed own feelings and emotions in the Internet after receiving this sad news: «John was the last of a great generation and... so many of us have wonderful memories of him» – that was the common opinion.

John Ozro Corliss was born on 23 February 1922 in Coats, Kansas and at the age of seven moved with his family to Vermont (St. Albans) where he had his schooling including the University of Vermont (B.A. in Zoology in 1947 with the highest evaluation – summa cum laude). However, during the World War II time military service, he received a B.Sc. in Meteorology from the University of Chicago (1944), and spent almost three years as a weather forecaster for the US Air Force in the African and Italian theaters of operations.

Then after graduation from the University of Vermont he got his post-graduate training in parasitology in the New York University, but shortly after his area of interest was shifted to protozoology. Finally, John received his Ph.D. in 1951 for a dissertation on the systematics of Tetrahymena. Just after this event Corliss spent a year in the laboratory of Emmanuel Fauré-Fremiet, Collège de France, Paris. Apparently, this experience had great impact on Corliss' career in ciliate systematics, morphogenesis, and evolution. Back in the USA Dr. Corliss got the first academic appointment at the Yale University, and then the sequence followed by the University of Illinois at Urbana, the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, and, after all, 17 years as Professor and Chairman, Department of Zoology, the University of Maryland. During this time Professor trained over 20 masters and 14 doctoral candidates as well as numerous international postdoctoral fellows.

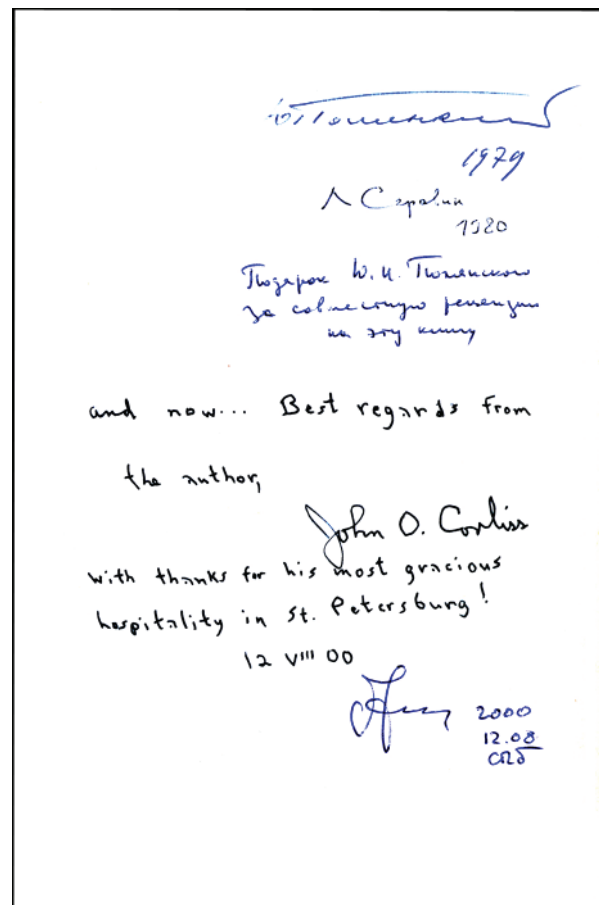
In John Corliss' pioneering volume, *The Ciliated Protozoa: Characterization, Classification, and Guide to the Literature* (1961) and onwards, he had always paid attention to general questions of protozoology, mainly connected with ciliated



Cover of Corliss' famous book

protists taxonomy and evolution. His contributions in the field consisted of almost 600 publications, 10 books and many chapters in different volumes. Among them, definitely the classical one is the Second Edition of *The Ciliated Protozoa* book (1979), which for a long time had been the reference volume for the majority of protozoologists all over the world. Unfortunately, John could not take part in preparation of the Third Edition of this book published by Denis H. Lynn (2008), as after 2002 his health turned for the worse. Mentioning this point, Denis wrote in the preface of this book: «The Third Edition would have benefited significantly from his deep and careful understanding of taxonomic and nomenclatural practices, and I can only hope that I have achieved to some degree the level of excellence that he established in the first two editions». One of the last important publications made by Corliss was *Why the world needs protists* (2004).

He also was deeply involved in the historical researches dedicated to protozoology and microscopy and collected a great seat of old books and



Autographs of Y.I. Polyansky, L.N. Seravin and J.O. Corliss on the fly-leaf of the *The Ciliated Protozoa* book belonging to the author of this article.

photos devoted to outstanding scientists of the past. Among his important historical publications is *A salute to fifty-four great microscopists of the past: a pictorial footnote to the history of protozoology. Part I and II* (1978, 1979) as well as a part of the Chapter 21 in the Second Edition of *The Ciliated Protozoa* book. This interest to his scientific predecessors was clearly seen even at the beginning of Corliss' career: at Yale, he collected the manuscripts (and the money) for publication of the first issue of *The Journal of Protozoology* (February 1954), which was subtitled «The Woodruff Memorial Issue». This was a field in which I communicated with John personally, especially in 1995–2002 when he helped me with publications about W.T. Schewiakoff (2000) and V.A. Dogiel (2001). Personally, I met him for the first time in Berlin, during the X International Protozoological Congress (1993). Later, I had a great pleasure to host John and Yuemei (his wife)

for a week in St. Petersburg in 2000. Among many cultural places of my city that we visited, we spent together some hours in St. Petersburg Zoo, which was a particular point of interest for John.

Professor Corliss always participated actively in different scientific communities: he has been a member of the Society of Protozoologists' Committee on Systematics and Evolution of Protozoa; councilor of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature; editor of *Transactions of the American Microscopical Society* and *The Journal of Protozoology*; served as president of

the Society of Protozoologists, American Microscopical Society, and American Society of Zoologists (in different years). When John moved to Philadelphia area he became a very active volunteer docent in the Philadelphia Zoo.

Besides everything listed above, memory of this outstanding scientist lives in the John Corliss Ciliate Systematics Award established for young protozoologists. John was so amazing and it is hard to believe that he has passed away. John O. Corliss, you will be sorely missed by many!

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