

Kendall, 95, became an authority on the world of butterflies, moths

His interest in the insects was sparked by his stepson's science project.

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KENDALL

ROY O'NEAL KENDALL

Born: May 21, 1912, in Ingalls, Kan.

Died: Jan. 19, 2008, in San Antonio

Survived by: His stepson, Bobby G. Montgomery of Kirkland, Ariz., and two grandchildren.

Services: Graveside service will be at 2 p.m. today at Sunset Cemetery.

BY TUNETTE M. CALLIS
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

To some people, butterflies are just colorful insects. To Roy O'Neal Kendall, the winged creatures were his passion.

After helping his stepson with a science project, Kendall became a self-taught lepidopterist and an authority on his subjects.

During his life, Kendall gathered 100,000 butterfly and moth specimens throughout Texas and Mexico. He later donated his collection to the entomology department at Texas A&M University.

Kendall, who was an avid enthusiast until he was 90, died Saturday. He was 95.

Before helping his stepson, Kendall hadn't studied insects. He had only studied law for two years at Louisiana State University before enlisting in the Army in 1941.

Kendall was honorably discharged in 1953, went to work for Kelly AFB as an

administrative clerk in 1954 and retired in 1972.

After helping with the science project, still working at Kelly, Kendall fell in love with the study of moths and butterflies. Studying insects started out as a hobby, taking road trips with his wife throughout Texas and Mexico.

As Kendall's passion grew, so did his research, which led him to have a laboratory built that was filled with plants that attracted butterflies. Kendall, meticulous about keeping records of everything he did, documented the life cycles of more than 500 butterflies and moths.

It didn't take long for his name to get out among naturalists, said Sara Kerr, a biology professor at the University of the Incarnate Word.

Kerr first heard of Kendall while studying in college and met him after taking a job at the Witte Museum in 1981.

As he published his research in various European journals, Kendall built up a fan base. Through his research, he discovered new butterfly and moth specimens. His work led him to join the Lepidopterists Society, where he became a lifetime member.

Kendall spent the better half of his life preserving research for the scientific community.

"Nobody else has ever produced that much information," said Terry Doyle, an admirer of Kendall's work.

In 1982, Kendall was featured in Texas Monthly magazine, in which writer Samuel A. Johnson wrote, "Roy Kendall, self-taught lepidopterist, would want you to add this to the list of reasons for living in Texas: Nowhere else in the U.S. are there so many beautiful and unusual butterflies."

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