



George Miksch Sutton

Renowned ornithologist and artist George Miksch Sutton's fascination with birds started as a young boy. Born in Nebraska, his family moved every few years and he began at an early age to collect bird skins, feathers, bones, eggs and nests from the varied areas of the country in which the family lived. At the age of 13 he completed mail-order taxidermy lessons and had developed a collection of various birds and mammals. By the time he was 16, his first bird drawing as well as several articles had been published.

Known as "Doc" to his friends, Dr. Sutton was educated at Cornell University and worked at both the Carnegie Museum and the University of Michigan's Museum of Zoology. After serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II, his career path would eventually lead him to accept a professor of zoology position at the University of Oklahoma in 1952. In addition to his classroom responsibilities, he traveled extensively to observe habitats, collect specimens and to paint. His travels took him throughout North America including the Arctic Circle.

Although he retired in 1968, Dr. Sutton remained the curator of birds at the university's Stovall Museum of Science and History and continued to work with graduate students and paint. A prolific storyteller and writer, Dr. Sutton was the author of 18 books and left behind numerous manuscripts following his death in 1982. Thanks to a group of friends, his last book, *Birds Worth Watching*, was published in 1986.

In 1971, Dr. Sutton established the George Miksch Sutton Fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation to support the Oklahoma Zoological Society, encouraging the appreciation, study and preservation of bird habitats. This fund now comprises a Charitable Organization Endowment supporting the Oklahoma Zoological Society with an annual distribution.

Dr. Sutton's passion for the study of birds is also continued through the George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Since its inception in 1983, the nonprofit organization has worked to find cooperative conservation solutions for birds and the natural world through science and education. In addition, Dr. Sutton's work can also be viewed at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation where more than 70 of his original bird paintings, that once were a part of the Kirkpatrick Center art collection, are now displayed throughout the building.