

George Miksch Sutton

A lifelong passion for birds

Renowned ornithologist and artist George Miksch Sutton's fascination with birds started as a young boy. Born in Nebraska to a family that moved every few years, he began to collect bird skins, feathers, bones, eggs and nests at an early age from the varied areas of the country in which the family lived. By the time he was 16, his first bird drawing as well as several articles had been published and he had joined the American Ornithologists' Union.

Educated at Cornell University, Dr. Sutton worked at both the Carnegie Museum and the University of Michigan's Museum of Zoology. 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 and collect specimens and to paint. His travels took him throughout North America as well as the Arctic Circle and Mexico.

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 to 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.

Dr. Sutton's passion for the study of birds is 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.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
George Miksch Sutton, 1957

The Oklahoma City Community Foundation is proud to be in possession of more than 70 original Sutton bird paintings. At one time, these paintings were part of the Kirkpatrick Center art collection.

