



## **Gregory L. Poe**

October 31, 1960 – March 11, 2017

Gregory L. Poe passed away unexpectedly on Saturday March 11, 2017. Greg was born on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1960 in Memphis, Tennessee, but grew up in Southern California, only a mile from the beaches that profoundly influenced his life and choice of a career in environmental economics. Greg attended Pomona College and while a student there traveled to Nepal to study with the Experiment in International Living, an experience that stimulated his interest in international development. He returned to Pomona College, graduating in 1983 in Economics with distinction. From 1983 to 1986, Greg served in the Peace Corps in Cameroon, working on fisheries management. Greg's assignment was to encourage fishermen in lakes that were being overfished to fish less. While his advice did not go over well with the fishermen, the experience did help to direct him toward his future education and profession.

Upon returning to the U.S., Greg was heavily influenced by a course he took in irrigation and water management at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo taught by his great uncle, John Merriam. Merriam felt that anyone who would be recommending policies affecting agriculture and natural resources should have some knowledge of agriculture. Shortly thereafter, Greg began his graduate studies in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning his M.S. degree in 1988, and his Ph.D. in 1993. The title of his dissertation was *Information, Risk Perceptions, and Contingent Values: The Case of Nitrates in Groundwater*. Greg's major professor was Richard C. Bishop, one of the founding fathers of contingent valuation.

Greg joined the Cornell faculty on February 1, 1993, in what was then the Department of Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics (ARME), within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). Greg was promoted to Associate Professor on November 1, 1999,

and to Full Professor on January 1, 2010.

Greg's research broadly focused on (1) non-market valuation of environmental public goods, (2) experimental economics, and (3) environmental and water resource policy. He made important conceptual and empirical contributions to contingent valuation methods and experimental economics methods on provision mechanisms for public goods. In his active experimental economics and field research program, Greg frequently focused on water quality policy issues, ranging from the non-market valuation of damages to ground and surface water resources, to the design and assessment of non-point source pollution incentive policies, and to point-source-to-point-source emissions trading at the watershed level. His research was published in the top field journals in public finance, resource and environmental economics, and agricultural economics, including the *Journal of Public Economics*, *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, *Environmental and Resource Economics*, *Land Economics*, and the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Greg served as editor of *Resource and Energy Economics*.

Greg was regarded as an outstanding teacher and advisor. He taught environmental and resource economics at the undergraduate (AEM 1500, 2500, and 4510) level and at the graduate (AEM 6510 and 7510) level. Greg was instrumental in defining the environmental economics concentration in the CALS major *Environmental Science and Sustainability*. Professor Shanjun Li observed first-hand Greg's devotion to his students and advisees. "Although Greg had teaching assistants for his large undergraduate course in environmental and resource economics, he insisted on grading the exams himself. He would hold extra office hours before exams. When I asked him why he spent so much time on teaching, he said we have an obligation to provide the best instruction we can, and that was how he wanted his college-aged sons to be treated by their professors."

In both teaching and research, Greg spoke passionately on the importance of understanding economic behavior and economic incentives when trying to formulate public policy to correct for the over-harvest of renewable resources and the pollution of air, water, and land. The high quality of his research was recognized both domestically and internationally, the latter leading to sabbaticals in the UK (the University of East Anglia) and Australia (the Crawford School of Economics and Government, Australian National University).

Greg's passion for the environment and its careful stewardship was deeply personal as well as professional. Growing up backpacking and camping with his family, Greg climbed Mount Whitney in California at the age of seven. He started surfing as a youngster in Southern California, later continuing this passion on annual family trips to North Carolina's Outer Banks. Greg said that he needed an "ocean fix" at least once a year. Greg and his family were diehard visitors of our National Parks and regularly camped in the Adirondacks. Greg tried to combine outdoor experiences with participation in conferences at home and abroad, from hiking the mountains in British Columbia to following pilgrimage routes in Spain.

In his later years, Greg returned to the international work that had so interested him as a young man. In Ecuador, Greg worked with Cornell colleagues and others on wildlife corridor design and human interactions with riverine ecosystems. A recent project focused on the preservation of environmental services resulting from rapid hydropower growth and dam construction in the

Amazon basin. Greg played a key role in developing the conceptual framework to evaluate the tradeoffs between hydropower generation and ecosystem services such as river fisheries, biodiversity, sediment flows, and navigation across the major Amazon sub-basins.

Greg also gave generously of his time in service to his profession, and to the Department, College, and University. He played a particularly active role during the transition of the Department from ARME to Applied Economics and Management (AEM), to the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, and to the SC Johnson College of Business. He served on the executive committee within the Dyson School and was area coordinator for Applied Economics and Policy in the SC Johnson College of Business. The Interim Dean of the Dyson School, Edward W. McLaughlin, noted that Greg “was a trusted colleague to all and played an essential role in the Dyson School and SC Johnson College of Business...Importantly, Greg had a gift for asking uncomfortable but always pertinent questions.”

Greg will be sorely missed. He was a valued colleague and good friend. His smile, sense of humor, and irreverence for academic pomposity, could be counted on to lighten the atmosphere during casual conversation, academic discussions with colleagues and students, and especially at faculty meetings. Greg is survived by his wife Ann and sons Jeremy and Kyle.

*Written by Jon M. Conrad, Richard N. Boisvert and David R. Lee*