

A tribute:

James Bennett Boyce: A TOEA Pioneer

August 31, 1944 – June 14, 2008

The Texas Outdoor Education Association and outdoor education in general has lost a good friend and pioneer in the field.



It has been said that neither the date of birth nor the date of passing which is etched on a person's tombstone is important. Rather the significance is represented by the dash which separates them, the sum of things that made up that person's life. In the case of our friend and colleague James Boyce it was an insatiable quest for knowledge and his unselfish sharing of that knowledge with others.

James was involved in the early organizational meetings that led to the formation of TOEA, was a charter member and served as its second president. James and Ynette, his wife and outdoor enthusiast partner, made presentations at numerous workshops through the years.

One would be hard pressed to find a person with a broader base of knowledge on almost any topic than James Boyce. At his memorial service it was said that James had more knowledge about more subjects than anyone he had ever met – with two exceptions: Professional Sports and Hollywood.

He had the unique ability to understand and explain the most complex things in simple understandable language. He loved to teach. In his 34 year career in education he taught math, physics, chemistry, biology, and of course, Outdoor Education. Even after leaving the classroom he remained active as an administrator and advocate of outdoor education, even in retirement.

James always found time for outdoor leisure and recreation with his family. He was a problem solver. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping, backpacking, canoeing and growing pecan trees. He was the lead field instructor for the American Wilderness Leadership School in Wyoming for five summers.

Anyone who knew James always had at least one story to tell about him. He lived life well. I heard a sermon that contained points of Truth that I believe apply to the life James Boyce lived so well:

1. The most important things in life aren't things.
2. All glory is fading
3. If you have a pain, you don't have to be a pain.
4. Only God is in a place to look down on other people – but he never does
5. When you're gone, leave a testimony, not a title.

James loved and honored God, all of His creations and his fellow man. He lived the Golden Rule and always strived to keep God's creations foremost in his thoughts and works.

We will miss him.

Respectfully submitted by John Fortner.