



Obituary

Edward T. Elliott

17 October 1951–7 June 2002

Edward T. “Ted” Elliott Jr., Director and Professor of the School of Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, died in June 2002 of cancer. He was 50.

Dr. Elliott was born in Madison, Wisconsin. When he was five, he received a microscope from his parents, an event he often credited as starting his scientific career and lifelong fascination with microorganisms. As an undergraduate at Colorado State University, he formalized this interest by conducting an independent research project under the direction of Dr. David Coleman, in which he examined soil protozoan dynamics in the shortgrass prairie of eastern Colorado. This research resulted in his first peer-reviewed publication in 1977, the year he received his B.S. degree in Soil Science. He went on to earn an M.S. degree in Soil Chemistry/Micro-

biology from Colorado State University in 1978 and a Ph.D in Ecology from the University of Georgia in 1982.

Dr. Elliott joined the scientific staff at the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory at Colorado State University as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate in 1981. He worked at the NREL as Research Associate (1982–1986), Research Scientist (1986–1989), and Senior Research Scientist (1989–2000) and served as Associate Director from 1993 until 1998, when he became the Program Officer for the Ecological Studies Program at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., a position he held from 1998 to 2000. In June of 2000, he became Director of the School of Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

His early career focused on the role of soil microorganisms and soil food web interactions in controlling carbon and nitrogen cycling in grassland and agricultural soils. He went on to study how soil structure influences organic matter dynamics. He developed, in collaboration with his doctoral student, Dr. Cindy Cambardella, a physical fractionation method for isolating particulate organic matter (POM). Their work demonstrated that POM contributes significantly to the total soil carbon pool, is physically protected within stable aggregates, and is highly susceptible to loss following disturbance of the soil aggregate structure. This approach to soil organic matter separation has become widely used in the ecological and soil science communities.

Ted Elliott was one of the first ecologists to study agricultural systems from an ecosystem science perspective. He advocated the integration of field data collection, process-level studies, ecosystem modeling, economic analysis, and GIS for the assessment of agroecosystems. During the past decade, he led an initiative using this approach to determine how different agricultural management practices impact soil carbon sequestration potential at the regional and national scale.

Dr. Elliott gave numerous invited symposia and invited workshop presentations around the world. He published more than 70 articles in refereed journals, more than 50 book chapters, and three books. He is among the 250 most cited researchers in the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) database in the area of Ecology and Environmental Science, out of more than 19,000 scientists surveyed. He was a member of the Ecological Society of America, the Soil Science Society of America, the International Soil Science Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Ted Elliott is survived by his wife, Kathy Elliott; two sons, Graham Elliott (of Glendale, California) and Nathan Elliott (of Fort Collins, Colorado); and his parents.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1499, or to the University of Nebraska Foundation, School of Natural Resource Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0758.

