

In our thoughts: Dr. Richard Guyette



We are sad to report that Dr. Richard Guyette passed away on Tuesday, August 29th, 2023. Rich began his forestry research career in 1978 focused on dendrochronology (the study of tree rings). In the 1980s, Rich began pioneering research including some of the first studies assessing climate change. After receiving his PhD in 1991, he became a research professor and started fieldwork in remote areas of the US & Canada. His research was instrumental in justifying the need for fire management on state and federal lands. In the School of Natural Resources, he helped to establish The Missouri Tree-Ring Laboratory, of which he was Director until his transition to Professor Emeritus in 2017. The lab became a recognized Center for Research in 2021 and is now named The Center for Tree-Ring Science.

Richard was a highly accomplished and creative scientist. His notable contributions to science include: using tree rings to describe past Indigenous & early European uses of fire, developing equations to measure & predict wildfire activity from climate, and extracting elements from tree-rings to measure changes in pollution. He achieved international recognition as an expert in dendrochronology, and remains one of the most published & cited fire ecology scientists in the eastern US. In 2019, he received the Herbert Stoddard Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Fire Ecology. In 2022, he received a second lifetime achievement award from the Ozark Area Community Congress.

Rich was also a skilled woodworker and renowned artist. Specializing in fine pen & ink drawings, which made complex scientific information more interesting and accessible. His designs were used by many local organizations, including a special series commissioned by Missouri State Parks.