



A PROFILE OF TRANSFORMATION



Name: Kermit O. Ratzlaff

Hometown: Hillsboro, Kansas

Profession: Physiology Professor (Retired)

ASA Affiliation: Member since 1951, ASA Fellow

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I currently live in Hillsboro, Kansas, the town where I was born. I was raised as a Mennonite in the Oklahoma panhandle during the dust bowl. I have five children, 14 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild on the way! In 2016, I lost my wonderful wife of 70 years. After teaching at Biola University for one year, I spent my career as a physiology professor at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, IL.

When did you first learn of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), and how did you become a member?

Around 1950, I learned about the ASA through John Sinclair, a fellow biologist, while discussing evolution when I was a grad student at UCLA.

Wow, you have been a member since 1951! What have you enjoyed about your ASA membership?

The biblically related topics about science and evolution, veracity of the Scriptures. I have especially enjoyed reading the journal over the years and the diverse, scholarly topics addressed. I keenly remember attending annual meetings at King's College and John Brown University in the mid-60s, where my family attended as well, and we also visited the World's Fair while we were there. Additionally, I have fond memories of serving as secretary of the Los Angeles chapter of the ASA in the 1950s.

You certainly have lived through much in your lifetime.

Living through the COVID pandemic has been challenging for all of us. How are you coping?

While I patiently await the vaccine, it's been lonely, but I am thankful that I can go to the common dining room for meals. Having few close friends, my socialization is limited. A big plus is zooming with my family on a regular basis.

How old are you? What words of wisdom or advice on life can you offer us?

I am 98 years old, a Christmas baby. I will turn 99 on December 26. An interesting fact about me is that I just retired (after 10 years of delivering the local newspaper) as the world's oldest paper boy in my town. My advice would be to strongly adhere to basic tenets of Christianity and scripture and, most importantly, to do so during difficult times—like I did while losing my wife and battling cancer.

You have been a long-time donor to the ASA. Why have you chosen the ASA in your charitable priorities?

The ASA has been an important and significant part of my thinking, my study, and my life. Thank you for your leadership and service to the ASA. I hope to give a little bit to the ASA in my legacy estate plans.