

## The Royal Society of Western Australia Medallist, 1995

### Emeritus Professor A R (Bert) Main



A R (Bert) Main, BSc(Hons), PhD, DSc, CBE, FAA

The Medallist for 1995, Emeritus Professor A R (Bert) Main, was elected by the Council of The Royal Society of Western Australia because of his contributions to the scientific knowledge of the natural history of Western Australia. The Medal was presented at the Royal Society of Western Australia Medal Lecture, held in the "old" Zoology Building at The University of Western Australia, by Professor Alan Robson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of The University of Western Australia, on Monday 20 November, 1995.

Professor Albert Russell (Bert) Main was born in Perth in 1919. He grew up on a vineyard in the Swan Valley and attended Midland Junction Central School. Following a period of employment in the State Public Service, during which he studied accountancy and later towards matriculation at night school, he joined the CMF in 1939 and later AIF and saw service within Australia before joining the RAAF. After qualifying, he served as a navigator of Lancaster bombers in Europe, seeing out the last part of the war as a POW in Germany.

Upon returning to Australia he matriculated and began study at UWA financed by the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS). He graduated in Geology and with 1<sup>st</sup> class Honours in Zoology. In 1950, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to the University of Chicago. He returned from Chicago to take up an appointment in the Department of Zoology at the University of Western Australia in 1952, where he received

his Ph. D. degree in 1956. He has an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Western Australia.

In 1958, Professor Main was awarded a Carnegie Travelling fellowship to the University of California at Los Angeles, in the United States of America. He was elected a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 1969. He received the Britannica Australia Award with Professor Harry Waring in 1970. He was elected an ANZAAS Fellow and later awarded the Mueller Medal of ANZAAS and Gold Medal of Australian Ecological Society. He was made Commander Civil Division of the Order of the British Empire CBE in 1981.

Currently, Professor Main is a member of Society for Conservation Biology; Ecological Society of Australia; Geological Society of Australia; Australian & New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science and is an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Society of Ichthyologists & Herpetologists.

Professor Main is broadly interested in natural history, with a special interest in the ecology of animals in arid situations. He has had a long standing interest in environmental management and conservation. He served on the Fauna Advisory Committee and later the West Australian Wildlife Authority and was a foundation member and later Chairman of the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority. He was also president of the Zoological Gardens Board. He has been a member of the Council of the Australian Institute of Marine Science in Townsville, and President of the National Parks Authority, and was a member of the Australian Universities Commission 1971-1977.