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After half a century, Auburn’s Claude Boyd to ‘retire’

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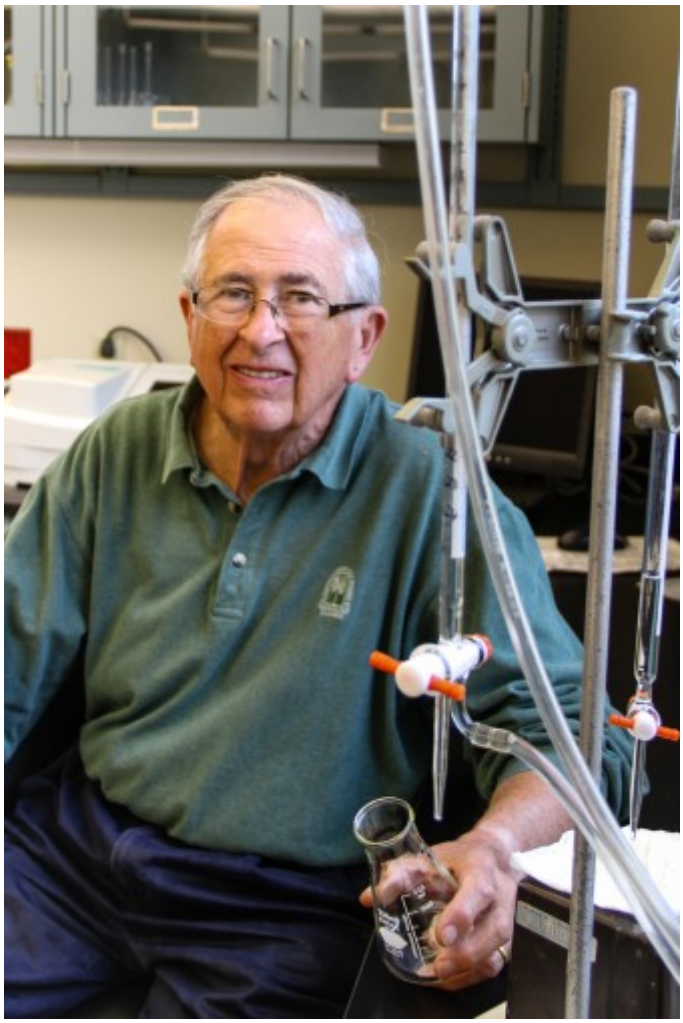
21 April 2016 James Wright

Fish farming researcher with distinguished career has written more than 100 articles for the *Advocate*



Dr. Claude E. Boyd, Ph.D.

The aquaculture industry has changed dramatically in Claude Boyd's time. The Auburn University professor was already years into researching fish farming and water quality — work he began in the mid-1960s — before he'd even heard the word "aquaculture."

"When I started it was just called fish farming," Boyd told the *Global Aquaculture Advocate*, a publication that has published more than 100 of his articles since its inception in 1998. In fact, of the 102 print editions of the magazine from 1998 to 2015, Boyd's work appeared in all but one.

Prolific researcher and writer Dr. Claude E. Boyd, 76, is officially retiring from Auburn after more than 50 years of studying, researching and teaching aquaculture, most of them at the Alabama institution. He will continue in his role for the next two years to see his five remaining graduate students through the program, so it'll be a "soft" retirement for the hard-working Mississippi native.

"I never did do anything but work. I don't know what else to do," Boyd said in a heavy Southern accent that those who know him best say is one of his trademark features, along with an insatiable thirst for knowledge.

Boyd first came to Auburn in 1964 as a graduate student, and began teaching classes in 1971. Other than a three-year stint working at the University of Georgia in the late 1960s, Boyd has been a fixture at the Auburn campus and its School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences for 49 years, when adding up his time as a student, researcher and professor. His colleagues — most of them former students — say he is the world's leading expert on water analysis.

*(Editor's Note: See Dr. Boyd's April 8, 2016 article, "**The importance of water analysis in aquaculture**.")*

"Dr. Boyd is a walking encyclopedia for water quality and all things related," said Bill Daniels, associate professor at Auburn. "During our travel to Namibia, he complained about having to find all the references that the publisher wanted for a book chapter he wrote. He had all the information in his head and could recite it but couldn't remember exactly the sources."

> He was a feared, revered, respected, entertaining and extraordinarily effective teacher. And the most prolific researcher in aquaculture.

Dr. Claude E. Boyd, Ph.D.

Boyd — whose professional resume requires an astounding 54 pages to list the titles of all his published works and other contributions — is "more chalkboard than PowerPoint," Daniels said. He is appreciated by fish farmers everywhere for his ability to translate water quality and water chemistry terms and concepts into words they can understand. Boyd speaks some Thai and Spanish as well.

"Of course, they still have a hard time understanding his accent," Daniels joked. "While Dr. Boyd may be retiring, I seriously doubt he will slow down. He still travels internationally better than most of us."

Ironic, because Boyd initially refused to travel overseas, back when researchers were being regularly deployed by USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development), right out of school, to faraway locations in Asia, Africa and South America.

"I didn't think I knew enough to help anybody," the humble professor said. "So I stayed here for 20 years working on research."

His adventurous side obviously emerged, as Boyd has since made numerous trips to those places and many others to give lectures that, according to his longtime secretary June Burns, "could be quite a challenge for interpreters," due to his strong accent.

Always with an eye on the future, Boyd would like to see the U.S. aquaculture industry grow, and to see more investment into practical, commercially viable work to expand production everywhere.

"We can grow more fish than we can keep alive. We need to spend more time improving production systems instead of just improving the fish," he said. "[Aquaculture is] an essential part of the world food system. I don't see anything that's going to keep it from continuing to grow. But [the U.S. is] a very small segment of world production. There's been a lot of development of techniques here, that've been spread to other parts of the world."

Thanks in no small part to knowledge sharing from people like Dr. Claude E. Boyd.

Dr. Claude E. Boyd, Ph.D.

Craig Tucker, lead researcher at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS) Warmwater Aquaculture Research Unit in Stoneville, Miss., was Dr. Boyd's first doctoral student back in 1976. The two have worked closely together ever since, having published books and numerous papers.

When Tucker nominated Boyd for the **U.S. Aquaculture Society Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award** back in 2009, he wrote that Boyd "stands alone as the universally recognized authority" in water quality and environmental science. Boyd has been honored with too many other awards to mention in this article.

"I recall his teaching method to be frightening, because he was one of the few teachers who made you come to class prepared to think," Tucker wrote in that letter.

"He was a feared, revered, respected, entertaining and extraordinarily effective teacher," Tucker told the *Advocate* upon hearing the news of Boyd's pending retirement. "And the most prolific researcher in aquaculture."

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Editor's Note: The Global Aquaculture Alliance congratulates Dr. Claude Boyd on his outstanding career and thanks him for all of his contributions to the Advocate *and to the aquaculture industry over the years. Please see links to some of his recently published work below.*

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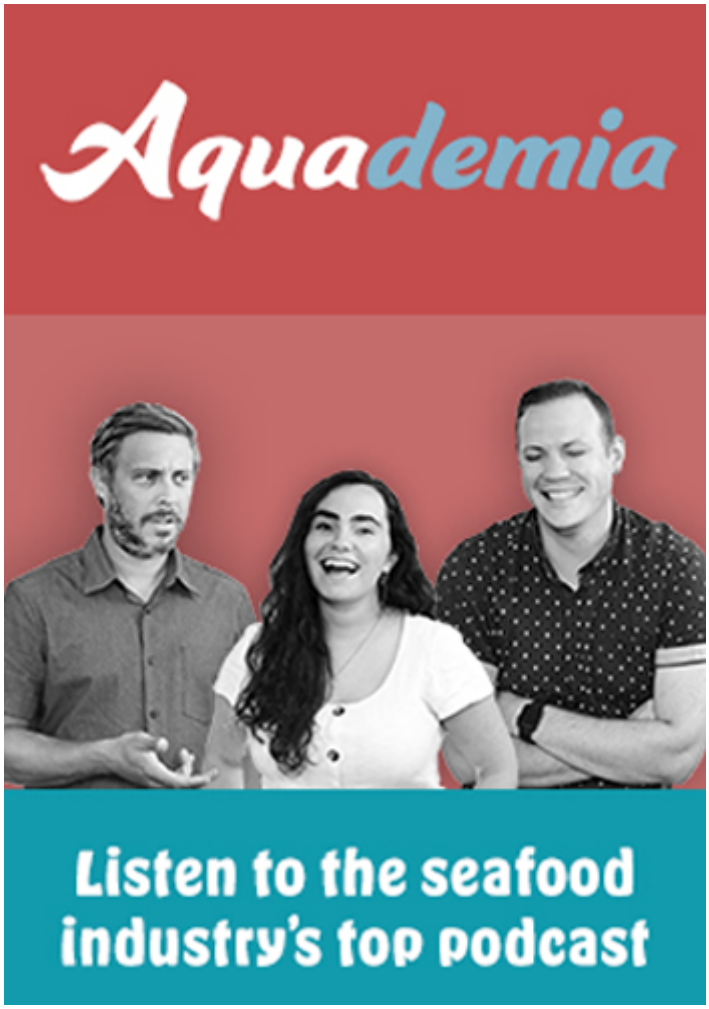

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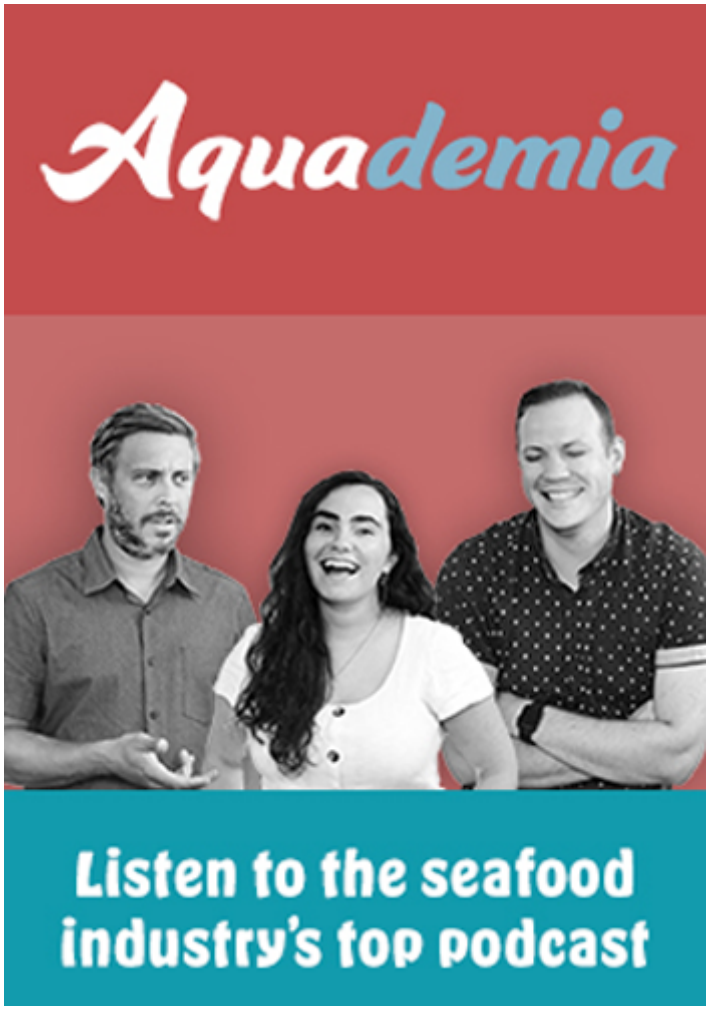

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