



Namesake for the National Trout Unlimited Ray Mortensen Award



Stream Blazer

Ray Mortensen

1927-1998

Chatooga and Davidson River, Greenville, South Carolina

Ray, my dad was a "passionate" fisherman. His father also liked fishing for when he retired he began making and selling saltwater fishing lures. He retired to a city close to the New Jersey coast. On the yearly vacation at my grandfather's fishing was the normal activity. It might be fishing the salt backwaters, or getting up before sunrise and going deep sea fishing with my father, who had a friend who owned a 40-foot fishing boat. We did not catch fish

every time, but it was not from the lack of trying! At night I would tag along with my dad and granddad and surf fish on the New Jersey beaches. I can say rarely that fishing was NOT on my dad's mind. Over the years we fished the "fish desert" Lake Norman. It was there I learned to fly fish from my dad. I can imagine the bream are still telling stories of my attempts to fly fish. My dad's job had him on the road during the week, so a lot of times it was off to the North Carolina Mountains to see what the streams might give up. These trips often included camping out, usually under the stars, as pitching a tent cut into fishing time.

When he retired he chose to live just outside Clemson, South Carolina where he was close to the mountain streams. There were no Trout Unlimited chapters in the area, so my father organized one. Within a few years the chapter had been awarded the National "Silver Trout" Award by Trout Unlimited while my father was President of the chapter - a big honor that showed the effort of the group. His passion for fishing was unrelenting; in fact the family had just finished two weeks in the Florida Keys - of course it included fishing every day. When he got home he packed up and went to Montana to fly fish some of the best streams in that state. While on that trip (he drove there) he started feeling ill. He gave up some of his fishing time and headed back to South Carolina. The doctors told him that it wasn't a cold, but it was cancer. I do not believe he fished

any more after that. At the time he was on the Trout Unlimited National Board of Directors. He passed shortly after that. Trout Unlimited was so taken back by his fishing passion and volunteer work that they established the National Trout Unlimited Ray Mortensen Award to recognize an outstanding member who advanced the cause of fishing. It is the highest award given to a Trout Unlimited member. I am sure there are more fishing stories I could tell, but I think this pretty well covers his passion to fish - not just fly fishing but ANY fishing.

Glenn Mortensen

Note:

The National Ray Mortensen Award is an annual award. You may submit your nomination for this prestigious award by accessing www.tu.org and the keyword "awards" to search for the current and past information about the Trout Unlimited National Awards.



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Catching and landing...



CATCH-AND-RELEASE! Ray photographed and return to the fish.



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