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-friend Bill Mixon

DONORS:

John and Vicki Swift

ROY LEE DEWITT came from a time when those interested in acquiring a falcon had to go out and find one. While many aspiring falconer would travel out to climb cliffs for their bird, this 12-year-old had another approach while growing up in the St. Louis area. He chopped down a tree to get his first Cooper’s Hawk. Thus began a relationship with falconry that would last his entire life and affect many others.

“He was a true falconer and did everything he could to promote it,” said his friend Larry DeRaps. DeWitt was a well-rounded falconer who had numerous birds over the years and appreciated the way each bird behaved.

A president of the Georgia Falconry Association for many years, he was respected throughout the state.

“He was delighted to introduce people to the red-tails, and had a beautiful female Goshawk” said friend Bill Mixon. He apprenticed at least five or six falconers, while sharing his knowledge with anyone who was interested, even producing a video. He always had good word and good advice and never said a bad word about anyone. He was an excellent mentor. “When he worked with you, you flew the bird well,” Mixon said. “He was one of those guys who made it look easy.”

His great dedication to everything he approached made many things look easy. His magnificent pencil drawings of falcons practically look like black and white photographs. The DVD he produced about the nesting cycle of five species of hawks and an osprey took five years.

Roy was on the football and track teams in high school. Roy was a Pentecostal preacher, an author (“Teaching from the Tabernacle”), a prison minister and a computer consultant, teacher, and a member of the Potawatomi tribe. While stationed with the Army in Korea, he met his wife, Suk Cha. They had been married 39 years at the time of his death from cancer.

His daughter, Lydia DeWitt Skordilis, said he was a true multi-task person who grasped things quickly and who put a lot into everything he did. Many people looked up to him.

Another friend, Alan Drury, said DeWitt was a class-act and a good Christian. He was thoughtful, helpful, knew no enemies, and was respected in the falconry community from coast to coast. Drury went camping with DeWitt often, and he considered him more a brother than a friend. He had a personality that made others smile.

“When he would tell a joke, he would start laughing before he got to the punchline,” Drury said. “It would take a while to get to the end of the joke.”

Despite all his other interests, much of his life still centered around falconry.

“He was like a hero to the falconry association,” said his daughter, who describes him as very popular, outgoing and very accepting of others. He certainly would accept plenty of birds around the house, too. “He had a nice set-up for his birds. It took a lot of our backyard,” Lydia said. “Sometimes he would keep some of his birds in the house. And we had a freezer full of chicken legs. I’ve never seen so many chicken legs in my life.”

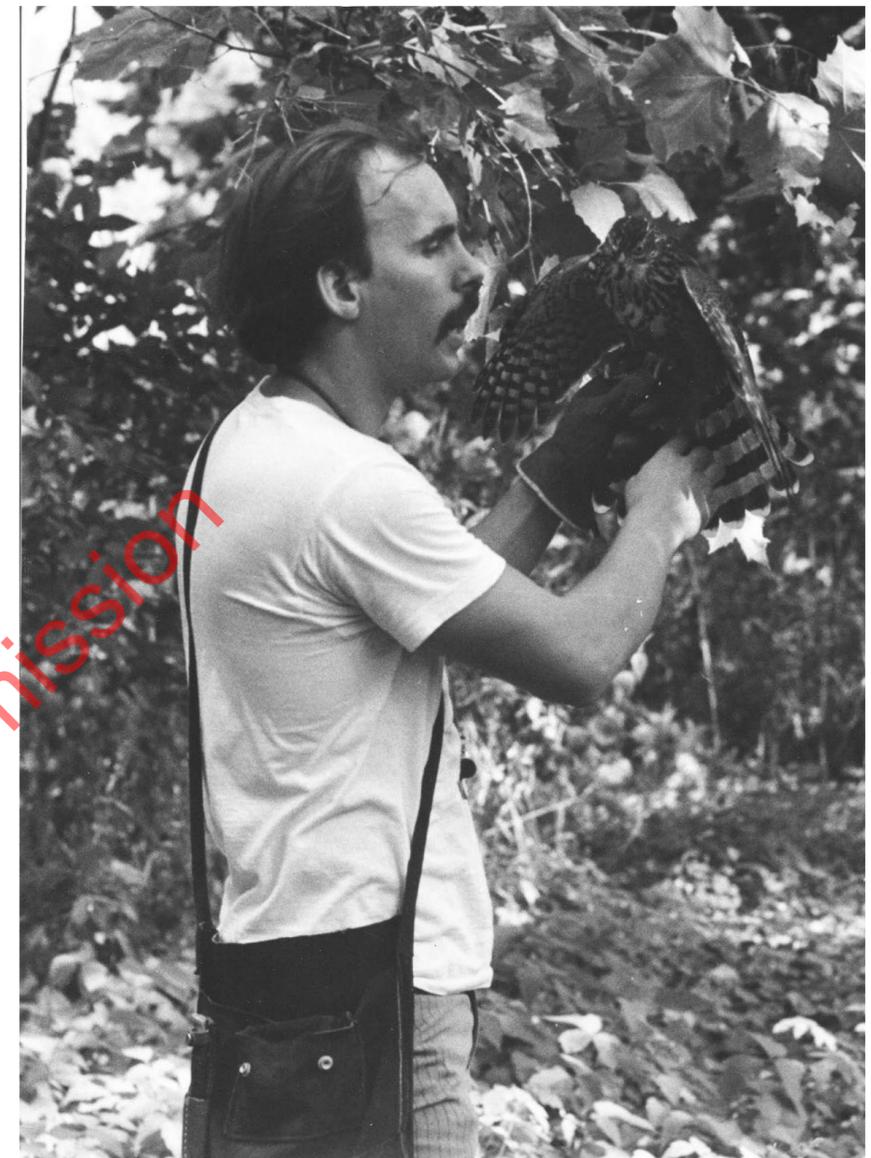
Falconry was her dad’s “natural high.”

And as for visions, it’s not hard to picture him at another activity — car hawking — driving down the road with a kestrel on the steering wheel on the hunt for sparrows or starlings.

He will long be remembered.

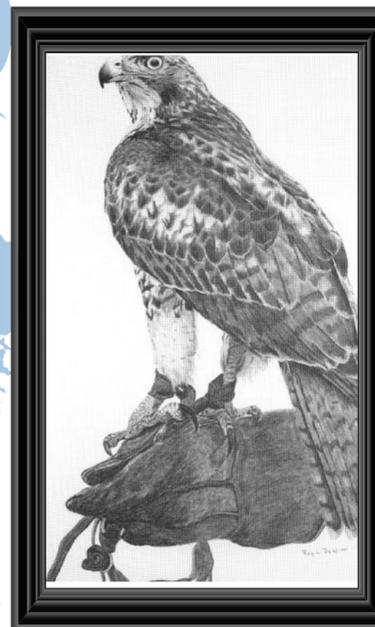
“I consider myself to be a much better person for knowing him.”
Drury said.

— *Reminiscences: Larry DeRaps, Lydia DeWitt Skordilis, Bill Mixon and Alan Drury*



Roy with one of the many Coopers he loved to sketch.

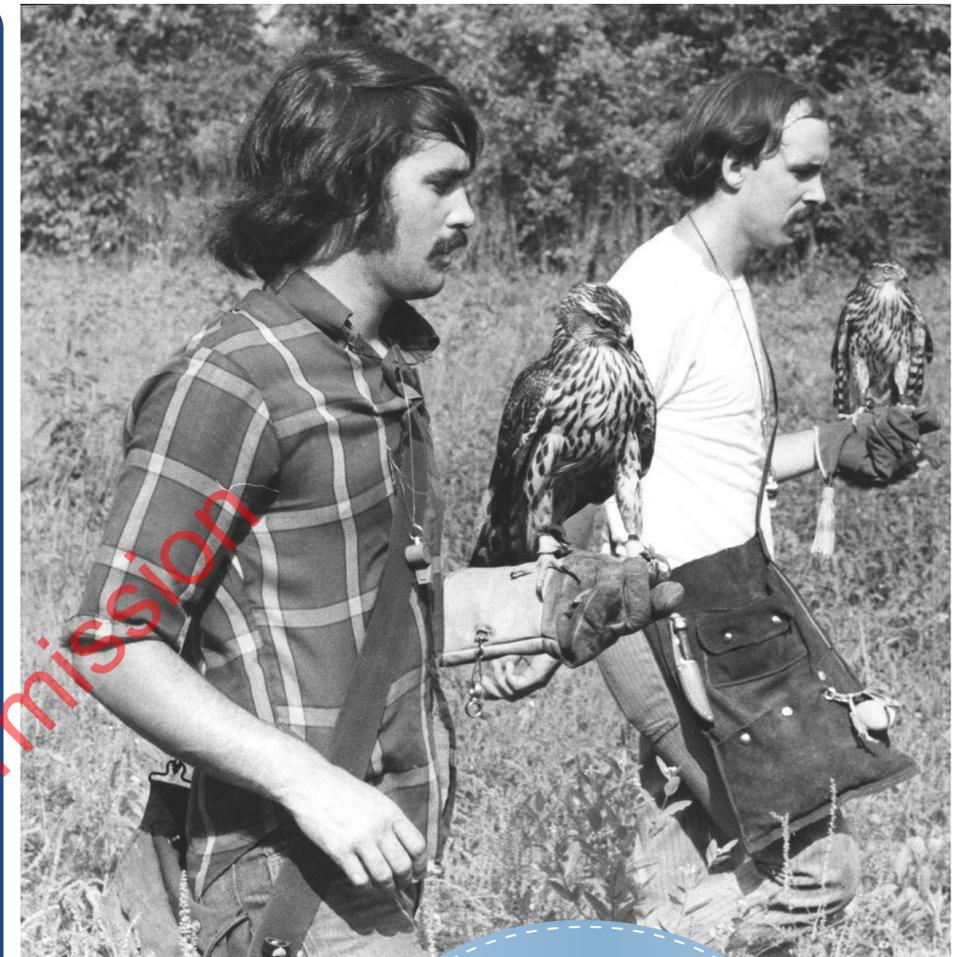
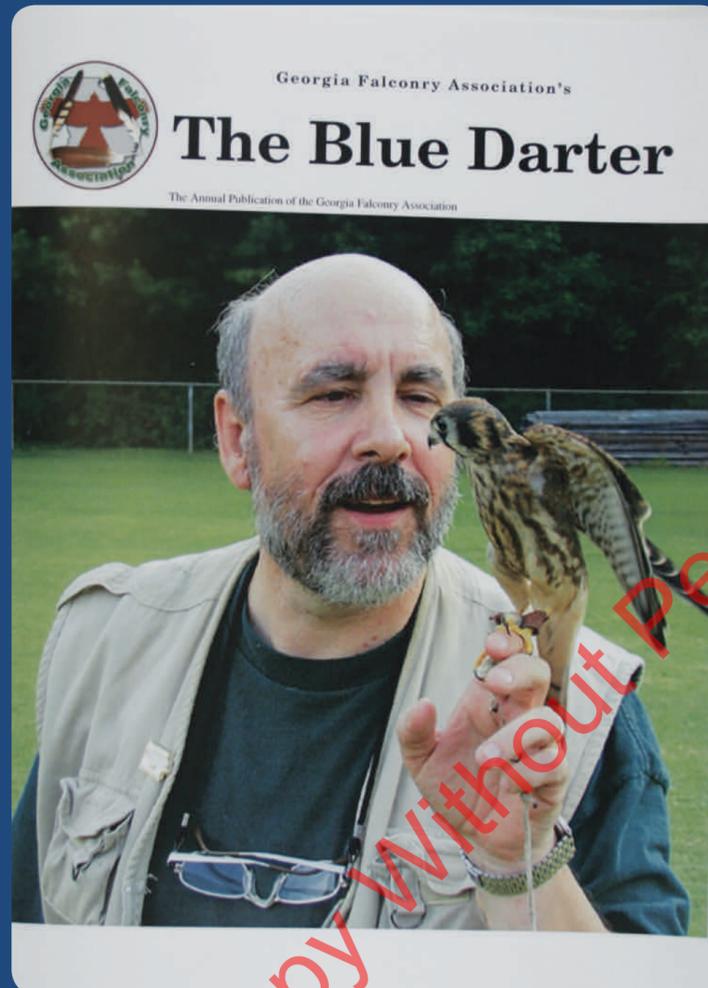
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{ A TRIBUTE TO ROY LEE DEWITT }

by Buster Brown

Turn back the clock. Not too far. The first weekend in August 2002 to be exact. For the first time in almost a decade I made the short drive down south of the city to the Atlanta Buckarama. It was there that I first met Roy. Fortunately for me (maybe not so much for him), I found out that this president of this Georgia Falconry Association lived less than five miles from my home in Marietta. From the very beginning this man "took me under his wing". He had seen many people approach this falconry madness and turn away from its commitment and passion. Perhaps in me he saw potential through all the ignorance. Whatever it was, I owe this man for my adventure into this truly addicting sport we all know and love. Because of Roy Dewitt, I have had opportunities in this crazy world of raptors to see things and meet people that have enhanced and improved my very existence. Quite honestly, I'm sure that I am not alone in that regard. Roy's influence and expertise in the falconry community spreads wide over our country, but he has had profound influence here in our great state. Many many men & women over the past years have come under the watchful eye and steady supervision of this man. We are all better falconers because of him. Personally, it goes way beyond our sport. Roy is my friend and my brother in Christ. I will be eternally grateful for his example, his witness, his leadership. Today we celebrate the life of our fellow falconer and friend. The board of directors of the Georgia Falconry Association proudly dedicate this Darter to Roy Lee Dewitt.



Roy and his wife Suk Cha enjoyed 39 years of marriage.

