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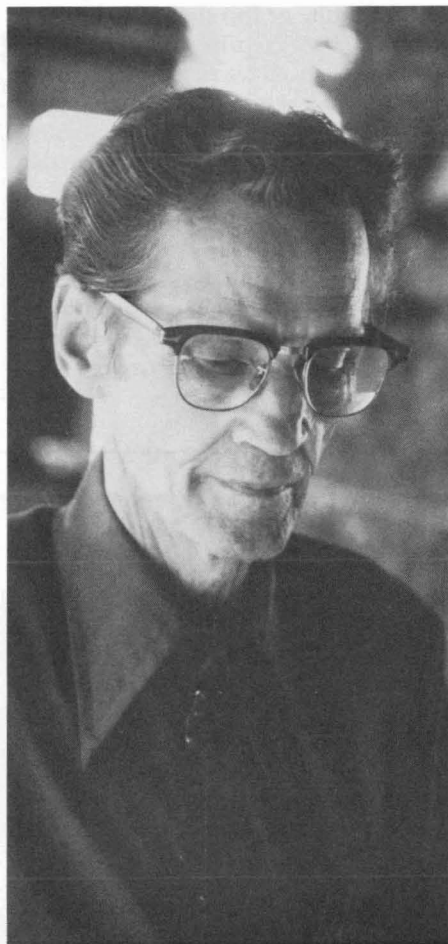
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James Pestoor, President



**In Memory of Erling Kjelland**

(1912-1986)

The avicultural world was grieved to learn of the death of one of its most distinguished members. Erling Kjelland was born in Valley City, North Dakota. He served in the navy and on his return set up a small art and craft shop in "old town" section of Chicago. He and his wife taught at the Chicago Art Institute and decorated windows in many of the major department stores in Chicago. His wife bought him some budgerigars for his birthday and soon they had an art and bird shop.

Erling was the sole owner and operator of Sedgwick Loft Studio since 1948. He kept between 1,000 and 2,000 birds in his shop ranging from hornbills to crimson seed crackers and from macaws to lorikeets which he bred regularly. For 40 years he was Chicago's bird guru (in the finest sense of the word).

I recall meeting Erling in 1952 after I became a pest in one of the larger downtown pet shops and the clerk told me, "Only Erling Kjelland can answer those questions." That evening I met Erling. The pet shop guy was right! At

that time he and his wife Ester had a large art and bird studio very near his present location.

He was *the* bridge which most of us cannot be between the general public and the highest eschelons of the avicultural world. Erling fielded 20-plus calls every single day and into the night which most of us would consider nothing short of nuisance. He entertained myriads of school classes at his famous shop and was featured countless times in sections of the Chicago Tribune and Sun. In that way his promoting the fancy was unparalleled.

As an aviculturist he was a natural. Erling was among the first private breeders to produce macaws in an 8 foot cage suspended from his 20 foot ceiling in 1954. All the while, 50 to 100 people passed under that cage every day. He bred many of the pet birds in his shop and maintained a small, private garden aviary in his back yard (he lived alternately in and above his shop for 30 years). His ability to hand train parrots is legendary. He had many free flying birds at his shop, including softbills, all of which were hand-tame.

He was a founding member of the Illinois Budgerigar Society and The Old Town Art Fair (one of the largest art fairs in the United States). He was prominent in civic affairs in Old Town and was a popular figure on the streets when he was not in his shop (open 7 days a week for 38 years). He judged countless hookbill, finch and softbill sections in the midwest and around the United States for many years. He was one of the first to import exhibition budgerigars to this country. He won many awards with them in the early and mid-1950s. He supported the Greater Chicago Caged Bird Society for years with exhibits and displays for which he was justifiably famous.

Although he lived and kept his shop in a semi-dangerous neighborhood in which gang wars were a weekly occurrence, his reputation and bearing kept him as safe as if he had never left the plains of North Dakota which he loved so well.

As one of the many young students he took under his wing, I am left with that sinking, empty feeling anyone has when a giant in our fancy passes the torch. Sadly, the torch bringing aviculture to the public which he bore will be left in the dust of his fascinating shop. The attributes which were unique in him and allowed him to excite wondering children and champion exhibitors alike are gone forever. The endangered is extinct. ●

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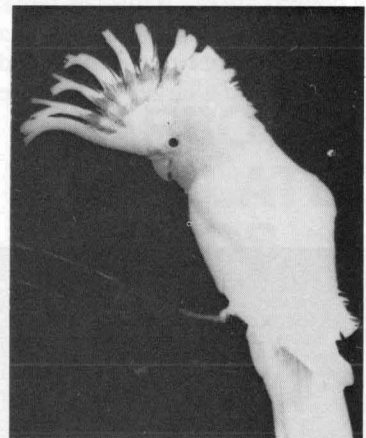
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