

VOLUME 20, NO. 2 Summer 2002

Loyal Friends Keep BCI Strong
Merlin D. Tuttle

At critical moments in BCI's history, loyal members, friends, and trustees have stepped forward to enhance -- sometimes even to save -- our worldwide mission. Their vision, creativity, and enthusiasm helped us turn seemingly impossible challenges into lasting accomplishments. Without their dedication, countless millions of bats would have been lost, at great harm to healthy environments and human economies.

These key conservation partners come from all ages and walks of life. Nine-year-old Bert Grantges began sharing BCI slide shows with fellow students and eventually reached millions in an appearance on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*. Colin Kapelovitz, 12, convinced his state senator to end the poisoning of bats in North Dakota. Founding member Anne Fisher won coast-to-coast media attention with a Chicago "Bat Dinner" featuring foods from bat-dependent plants. Insurance agent David Shields convinced a client to provide BCI's first grant to document the essential roles of flying foxes in propagating economically important plants.

The handful of special friends profiled here is but a sampling of the thousands who have given so much and for whom we are so deeply grateful. Gifts of every kind, donations large and small, have combined to create a record of which we can all be fiercely proud.

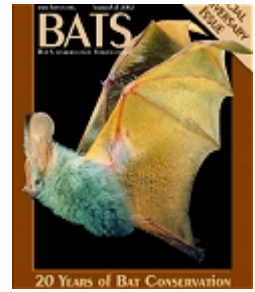
No one surpasses the dedication and generosity of Founding Trustee Verne Read and his wife, Marion. They listened before anyone else heard. BCI's first donation came from Verne and Marion, and they have helped underwrite basic operations for 20 years. Nearly every one of BCI's most successful initiatives is linked to their inspiration and generosity, from America's first national park in a tropical rain forest (in American Samoa) to such programs as student scholarships and saving bats in mines. The Read family's leadership in bat conservation continues through their son, Tom.

Early members Bill and Carole Haber provided the critical influence that led in 1990 to filming *The Secret World of Bats*, the first television program of its kind, which aired on CBS in the U.S. and in some 70 other countries. The Habers also, with special help from Perry, Lee, and Ed Bass, enabled BCI to purchase its own 10,000-square-foot headquarters building in Austin, Texas.

The Bass family played a pivotal role in other vital initiatives. They provided founding support for the North American Bat Conservation Partnership, which led to the first coordinated plan for bat conservation in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. The Bases also supported our launch of Bat Conservation and Management Workshops, which have trained more than 1,000 wildlife managers, conservationists, and educators.

Trustee John Mitchell and his family's Beneficia Foundation provided critical support for many programs, including expanding our Latin American Initiative and land purchases at Bracken Cave.

Tim Worth, as U.S. Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, opened new doors for



 [View PDF version](#)
[2.99 MB]

conserving migratory bats that overwinter in Mexico. His wife, Wren Worth, has generously supported continuing efforts in Mexico, which have become a model for all of Latin America.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Bob Armstrong helped organize a three-day bat conservation field workshop for directors and deputy directors of federal agencies who manage wildlife, opening many new doors for BCI partnerships.

When BCI first moved to Texas, Peggy and Jack Phillips and Patsy and Marshall Steves hosted events to introduce influential friends. These relationships are still paying dividends some 15 years later, especially in saving the world's largest bat colony at Bracken Cave, which also benefited greatly from the tireless efforts of Board Chairpersons Mike Cook and Beth Robertson.

To these friends and to all of you who have given so generously of your time, enthusiasm, and financial support, we at BCI express our deepest appreciation!

All articles in this issue:

- [Past & Future](#)
- [The Gray Bat's Survival](#)
- [An Epic Gate](#)
- [Bat Scholars](#)
- [Workshops for Bats](#)
- [North American Bat House Research Project](#)
- [A Priceless Resource](#)
- [Bats in the News](#)
- [Bats & Mines](#)
- [The Vampire Video](#)
- [Loyal Friends Keep BCI Strong](#)
- [The Challenges Ahead](#)
- [The Future is Built One Piece at a Time](#)