

# BILL FAVER:

## A Gentleman And A Scholar Of Nature

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

**B**ill Faver is exactly the man you would imagine when you see the wildlife he has captured with his camera and read his insightful essays on nature.



FAVER

His smile is genuine and sweet and his eyes twinkle as if he knew a happy secret. The friendly

voice invites conversation and he is at least as interested in listening as talking.

In fact, when you ask about his artistry, a kind of shyness comes over him, but he can talk about the Great Blue Heron with authority. He is a photographer/writer possessed of both humility and strength.

This was the gentleman I met at Holden Beach town board meetings some 16 years ago as the town administrator. Although he met the usual political turmoil with patience and confidence, he seemed strangely out of place in its midst.

*Brunswick Beacon* readers who have enjoyed his weekly columns on wildlife and environmental issues, complete with breathtaking nature photographs, can thank me, in part, for this pleasure.

My casual acquaintance with Bill at those town meetings led to the discovery that he wrote nature essays and wielded a mean camera. He showed me one of his pieces and, as *Beacon* editor, I published "Living At The Edge," the first in a series that now has a long and delightful history.

Holden Beach lost this gracious administrator in 1981 to Comprehensive Home Health Care, where Bill and his wife Catherine both worked for several years thereafter. In 1983 they moved to Wilmington to work in its offices there. Through it all, the columns and incredible photography arrived every week at the *Beacon* offices and drew increasing numbers of Faver fans.

He said his penchant for photography began in high school in his native South Carolina, but in 1964 his mother pushed him to another level.

"I was developing a camp and conference center in the Everglades of Florida," he recalled, "and Mother was lecturing about birds in that area. She complained that there were no photographs of birds in their habitat, so I said, 'Get me a camera and I'll do it.'"

He said there was no better place to take serious pictures of egrets, the Great Blue Heron, wood storks and cormorants. His love of birds and photography blossomed.



ONE OF BILL'S all-time favorites.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

*"I do have a secret place in Brunswick County where I go every chance I get and find birds and flowers to photograph. Actually, any place without people is a good spot for nature photography."*

Of course, by this time Bill had launched an entirely different career, after marrying Catherine, his high school sweetheart. A Clemson graduate in agricultural economics,

he did some marketing research, then got into Christian education through the Presbyterian church. In south Texas he worked for the church as director of education, but

noted, "This was a great place to see beach birds like sandpipers and gulls."

The Favere's next move was to High Point, where Bill developed

an environmental education center on the High Point Lake.

Then, in 1978 he accepted the Holden Beach position and built an oceanfront house there that introduced him to quantities of beach birds, then flowers indigenous to Brunswick County that also became photographic subjects.

"I had already done a lot of writing for church magazines and had an article published in *Better Camping* magazine," he said. The marriage of camera and typewriter, however, came about through *The Brunswick Beacon*.

This new avocation flourished in several directions. Bill's prints were exhibited in Southport's Blue Dolphin Gallery and sold in gift shops around the county. He also developed a slide program for visitors at Town Hall called "Welcome to the Seashore" that was a popular summer feature.

Shortly after the move to Wilmington, the Favere's both retired, only to open a catering business, in which Catherine was chief cook and Bill the dishwasher. A bout with cancer in 1986 slowed him momentarily, but he has never looked or felt healthier than today.

The physical setback prompted the couple to travel extensively, and by now they've been to most corners of the world, including Europe, the British Isles, Scandinavia, Greece and Turkey. These experiences have offered new opportunities for Bill's photographic bent.

"I like taking pictures of historic sites and people, too," he said, "but not just as people. I like to photograph someone coming through a door or otherwise in connection with architecture."

Bill has developed his talents largely on his own. "I took a couple of correspondence courses in writing once," he acknowledged, "and a workshop in photography." Mostly, thought, it has been "on-the-job training."

He has a new problem with his *Beacon* photography. "The thing is," he said, "since we sold our beach house, I'm not on the beach as much. But I do have a secret place in Brunswick County where I go every chance I get and find birds and flowers to photograph. Actually, any place without people is a good spot for nature photography."

The Favere's don't sit still long enough for much local work, however, whether it's her catering or his photography. Having returned in late July from a visit to Scotland, they plan a jaunt to Australia before the end of the year.

That should result in some dramatic nature photography and fascinating commentary, as well...even if it isn't Brunswick County.