

**DEDICATION:**  
**Robert Folger Thorne, Ph.D.**

Curator & Taxonomist Emeritus, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden;  
Professor Emeritus Claremont Graduate University & Pomona College

The old saw is that “Old botanists never die, they just go to seed.”

Well, there’s nothing ‘seedy’ about Robert F. Thorne, Curator, Taxonomist, and Botany Professor Emeritus at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, who celebrated 90 years young last July.

Every week, Bob is in his office at RSABG keeping up on the literature and adding the most recent taxonomical information to his previously published *An Updated Classification of the Class Magnoliopsida* (“Angiospermae”). [R. F. Thorne, with many nomenclatural additions by James L. Reveal, published in 2006 by *The Botanical Review* 73(2): 67–182.]

Bob not only continues to update his classification and bibliography of the flowering plants of the world, but also his Floras of the local San Bernardino Mountains, Santa Catalina Island, and the Sierra San Pedro Mártir of Baja California. The latter Baja flora was published just a year ago and has garnered much enthusiasm not only from botanists this side of the border, but especially from colleagues in Baja California! [*Vascular Plants of the High Sierra San Pedro Mártir, Baja California, Mexico: An Annotated Checklist*. R. F. Thorne, R. V. Moran, and R. A. Minnich. 2010. *Aliso* 28: 1–50.]

In addition to his ‘additions’ to the Magnoliopsida classifications, Bob regularly oversees the processing of his previously uncatalogued collections. Of note, this Spring, with the support of a National Science Foundation grant, the Thorne Australian collections have been accessioned into the RSA-POM Herbarium at Rancho. This is a major achievement and a wonderful addition to the holdings at RSA. An aside on the Australian specimens, Bob began those collections with the number 20,000...just to give you an idea of the depth of his collecting, which now tops over 75,000 in total.

As an author, Bob remains active. He and coauthors contributed a chapter to *Terrestrial Vegetation of California*. [R. F. Thorne, A. A. Schoenherr, C. D. Clements, and J. A. Young. 2007. Transmontane Coniferous Vegetation, pp. 574–586. In M. G. Barbour, T. Keeler-Wolf, and A. A. Schoenherr [eds.],





Bob pressing collections in the back of field vehicle, Baja California, Mexico, 1965.



Terrestrial Vegetation of California. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.]

During his long career, Bob, who graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. degree in botany from Dartmouth College in 1941 and who went on to pursue his graduate education at Cornell University [M.S. 1942; Ph.D. in economic botany with minor in geomorphology in 1947], has held positions at Cornell University, the University of Iowa, University of Virginia, and the University of Minnesota. In 1962, he joined the faculty of then Claremont Graduate School (now Claremont Graduate University) as botany professor, taxonomist, and curator of the RSA and POM herbaria that were located at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. He 'retired' in 1990.

Of significance, under Bob's tenure the holdings of the two herbaria were merged to offer a comprehensive 'one-stop' look at the taxa contained therein. Under Bob's curatorship, his forward thinking saw that the herbarium was modernized and retrofitted with compacting herbarium storage that insured the ability of RSA-POM to add to its collections (focused on plants from Mediterranean regions, with extensive holdings from California and southern California, in particular).

Bob, as noted above, has significant collections from all over the world—including New Caledonia and Lord Howe Island, but perhaps a more recent highlight for him was adding specimens of *Scheuchzeria* (Scheuchzeriaceae) to complete his comprehensive collection of all families within the state of California. This event occurred just north of Chico, California, and just prior to the Botany 2006 meetings, at which Robert F. Thorne was honored by the Botany Society of America with their prestigious Centennial Award in recognition of his outstanding service to the plant sciences and the Society.

A note about Bob Thorne would not be complete without recounting his first encounter with the seagrass *Posidonia* (Posidoniaceae). In the course of a 'chat,' Bob might tell you about the time during WWII (in early 1944) when the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which he served as navigator was badly hit by enemy flak. The crew managed to stay aloft long enough to bale out in Allied-friendly territory over the Adriatic Sea near the island of Vis (formerly Yugoslavia, now Croatia). As 2nd Lieutenant Thorne descended, he recognized *Posidonia* and with regret notes that it was at a depth too deep to collect after splash-down.

Dr. Robert F. Thorne has had a long and illustrious career, has received numerous awards for his contributions to botany, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from Southern California Botanists in 1999. His influence continues in many ways. Not long ago, Professor of Botany Lucinda McDade, and chair of the CGU





Bob Thorne collecting *Triglochin* in Siskiyou County, early 1970s,



Botany Department at RSABG, noted to her students while teaching a plant families course that Bob's understanding of plant groupings (without benefit of the molecular evidence) most closely corresponds to what botanists now know about these relationships. Wendy Zomlefer, in the introduction to her illustrated *Guide to Flowering Plant Families*, notes her rationale for adopting Thorne's system for her familial work. "Thorne attempts to emphasize similarities and relationships between groups rather than differences; he avoids splitting 'natural' groupings ... Thus, his family delimitations stress phenetic concerns, as well as phylogenetic relationships."

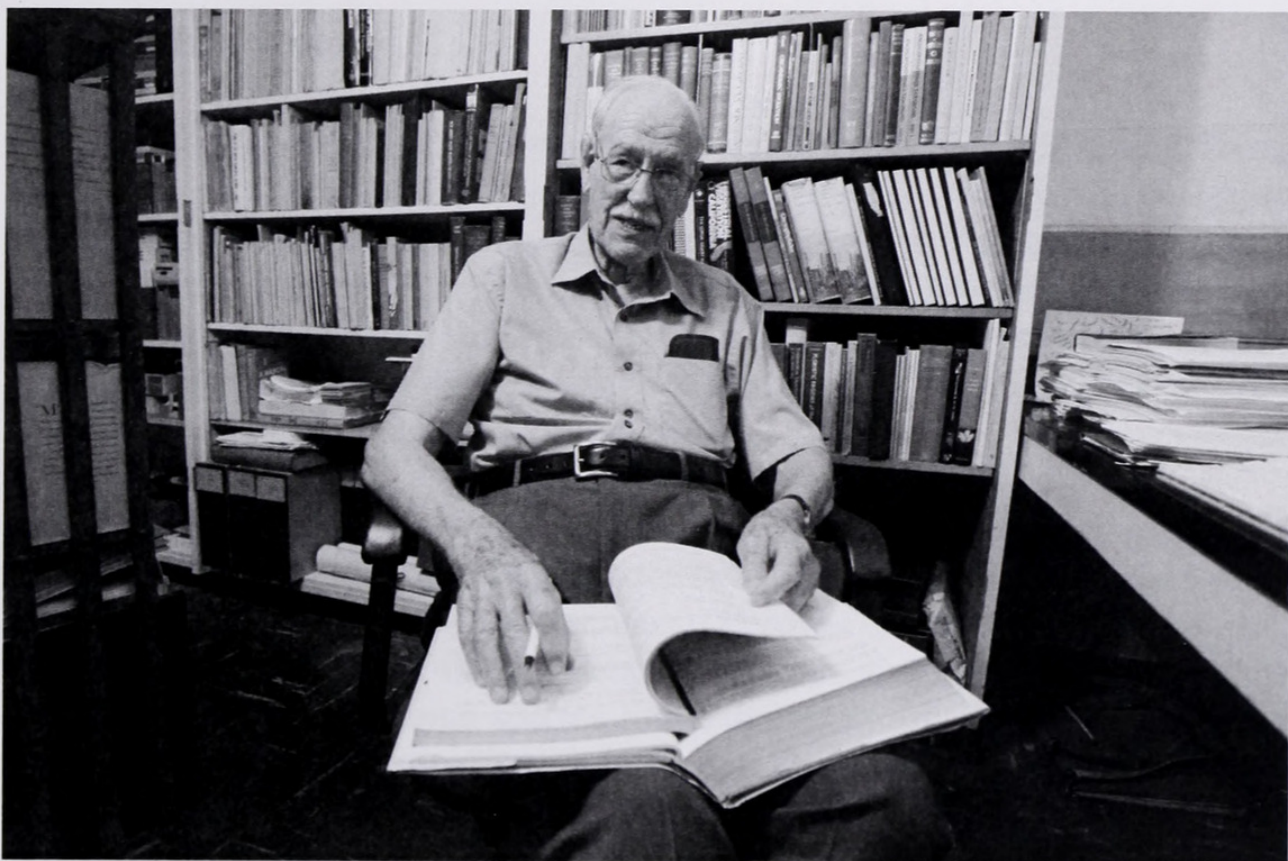
When I asked Bob to autograph my copy of the above text, he wrote "Wendy is a fine illustrator and a keen judge of systems of classification."

We couldn't agree more! Here's to you Robert F. "Bob" Thorne. We thank you for your many contributions to our lives in the field and in the classroom, and we dedicate this volume of *Crossosoma* to you.

From your colleagues and friends in botany.

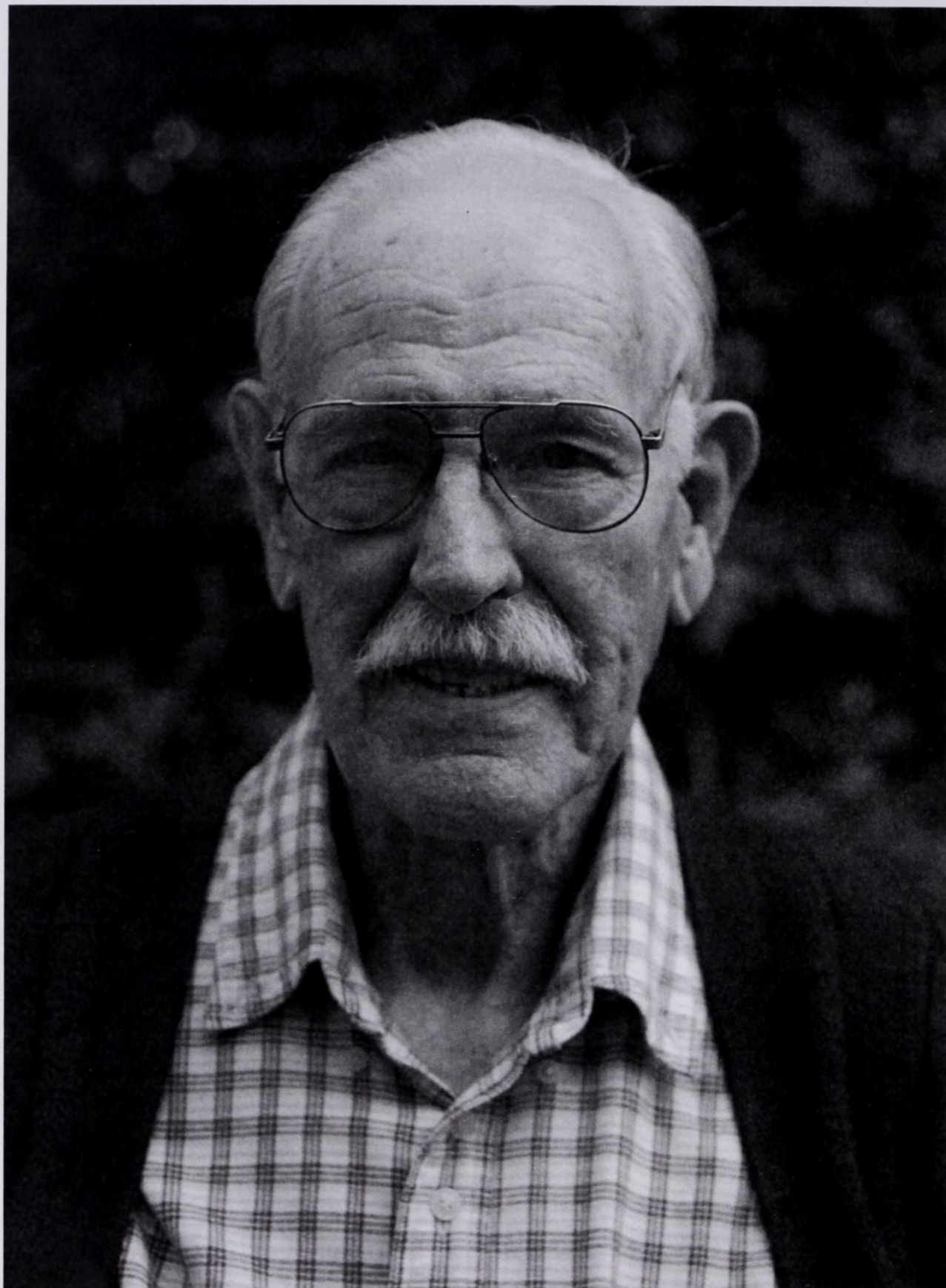
*Linda Worlow*

*Friend and RSABG colleague*



Bob in his office at RSABG with *The Jepson Manual* at the ready, Fall 2009.  
Photo: Tom Zasadzinski.





A chipper Bob Thorne at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, 2005.  
Photo: J. Travis Columbus, Professor of Botany.



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