

**THE JIMMIE PIGG MEMORIAL AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING SCIENCE TEACHING – 2001**

BRUCE A. SMITH

Dedicated to teaching at both the high school and college levels, Bruce A. Smith, a teacher at McLoud High School, is the recipient of The Jimmie Pigg Memorial Award for Outstanding Science Teaching in 2001. He received the award at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Junior Academy of Science in March. He was again honored at the annual technical meeting of the Academy in November.

For more than 20 years, Bruce has been mentoring students in science. As one nominator noted: "A major strength of Bruce's teaching is his ability to involve his students in semi-independent research in biology. He is most adept at getting them to observe, question, hypothesize, collect and analyze data, and then present their results in traditional scientific fashion." His students have been presenting the results of their research endeavors at the Oklahoma Junior Academy of Science, at the Oklahoma Academy of Science, and at Science Fair competitions at the state, national, and international levels. They have won numerous awards and several of their papers have been published in the *Transactions of the Oklahoma Junior Academy of Science*, placed on the OJAS website, or published in the Academy's *Proceedings*.

Bruce also has made a commitment to providing additional science experiences for pre-college students. For eleven years, he has received funding from the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education for month-long summer academies in field biology for pre-college students at the University of Oklahoma Biological Station on Lake Texoma. Many of his students, now enrolled at state colleges and universities, have commented that their decisions to pursue careers in science were due to their experiences at these academies.

In addition to his high school teach-

ing, Bruce also regularly teaches a summer course in field botany at the Biological Station and evening courses in botany at Rose State College. He is well known to OAS members who attend field meetings, repeatedly volunteering to share his knowledge of Oklahoma's flora as an enthusiastic field trip leader.

Bruce earned his BS in biology from Cameron University, his MEd from the University of Central Oklahoma, and his PhD in plant taxonomy from Oklahoma State University. As an active researcher, he is a role model for his students. He has written descriptions and keys for the state's 17 families of ferns and fern allies and is a major contributor to the Flora of Oklahoma project. In addition, he is conducting floristic work on several sites throughout the state. As always, his students are involved in his fieldwork. At this year's technical meeting, they presented a paper on work conducted at Natural Falls State Park in Delaware County.

The Jimmie Pigg Award is the latest recognition of Bruce's commitment to teaching. In 1996 at the Oklahoma State Science & Engineering Fair, he received the "Hall of Fame for Excellence in Teaching and Science Fair Sponsorship" award. He was named "Teacher of Today" by the Masons in 1996 and 1998, and in 2000 he received the Anne Long Memorial Award from the Oklahoma Native Plant Society for "Outstanding excellence in teaching and high standards and expectations of his students in botany." Perhaps the most significant indicator of his contribution to science education is that offered by one of his students: "Learning from Mr. Smith changed my life. Under his instruction, I gained a great appreciation for science, which ultimately affected my career choice." The Academy congratulates Bruce A. Smith as this year's honoree.

