



GORDON MILLER

2nd August 1941 – 27th May 2023

Ranger and Founder of the International Ranger Federation



Gordon Miller with the past presidents of the International Ranger Federation at the 2016 IRF World Ranger Congress, Colorado. (L-R: Deanne Adams, Rick Smith, Gordon Miller, Sean Wilmore and David Zeller). (Image by Chris Galliers).

It was with a very heavy heart and great sorrow that the International Ranger Federation learnt of the passing of Gordon Miller on Saturday 27th May 2023, after a long, courageous battle with illness.

Gordon Miller's life has been one devoted to the protection of the global environment, its fauna and flora and in the defence of the people tasked to conserve the world's special places. When he was 15 and still at school (1956) Gordon volunteered as a youth warden in the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire, qualifying as a "cadet warden" in 1960. He then took a post as a part-time warden and eventually joined the park staff as a full-time warden in 1969 remaining with the National Park until his retirement in 2001. In the 1970's the title warden changed to ranger in the UK and in addition to his 'day job' as a ranger, Gordon assisted in the development of many pioneering ranger training courses at Losehill Hall, in England.

In 1969 Gordon became a member of the Association of National Park and Countryside Rangers (later Association of Countryside Rangers, then the Countryside Management Association), becoming its chairman in 1982. It was during his chairmanship that the RANGER magazine was started in 1984. Gordon became Honorary President of the CMA in 2016 and, as a tribute to Gordon, the Association



presents the 'Gordon Miller Award' annually for the most deserving project, initiative or innovative practice that has made an outstanding contribution to countryside/urban greenspace management.

During 1991, in discussion with rangers from Scotland and the United States, Gordon was instrumental in developing the idea of an International Ranger Federation (IRF). On the 8th May 1991, Gordon was present at the founding of the International Ranger Federation on Loch Lomond. On 31st July 1992, along with representatives from the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA) and the Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR, USA), the accord was signed at Losehill Hall, Peak District National Park, that was the IRF was established. Gordon became the first President and we now celebrate 31st July as World Ranger Day.

In 1995 he officially opened the first IRF World Ranger Congress with the raising of IRF's flag in Zakopane, Poland. It was a watershed moment in the history of the ranger profession. Further IRF World Ranger Congresses followed under Gordon's guidance, in Costa Rica; South Africa; Australia; Scotland as well as in Bolivia; Tanzania, the USA and Nepal.

After stepping down as IRF President in 2000, Gordon became its first Executive Director, furthering the cause of rangers such as at the 2003 IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban.

At the EUROPARC conference in Sweden in September 2009, Gordon was presented with the Alfred Toepfer award *"for his significant contribution to nature protection in Europe by inspiring, encouraging and co-ordinating the work of ranger services"*.

During his retirement Gordon continued to champion the role played by rangers and the ranger profession at every opportunity. He maintained his wide network of ranger colleagues and friends around the world which meant that he was never far away from a friendly face.

Gordon's immense enthusiasm, inspiration, passion, and unswerving support for rangers around the world will always be remembered by many thousands of rangers across every continent. His innovative vision that rangers could come together from all corners of the globe to exchange their knowledge and experiences, lives on in the International Ranger Federation today. The many life-long friendships and mutual support between rangers worldwide is testament to his dedication and commitment to bringing rangers together.

Anyone who met Gordon will also know that he was an absolute true gentleman; a selfless, kind and generous soul who was never happier than when chatting with ranger colleagues from across the planet. Gordon was a pioneer for rangers. He saw his vision for a 'worldwide family of rangers' come to fruition.

We thank Gordon for his dedication to rangers, his vision for bringing rangers from different countries, cultures, languages, ethnicity, gender and religion together around a common cause and making every ranger feel comfortable as a member of the global 'ranger family'. His commitment to his vision was unwavering, as he participated in the affairs for as long as he was able to do so. With sincere gratitude for all his efforts, IRF will continue to develop and raise the profile of the ranger profession globally.

The IRF thanks Roger Cole, our Honorary Vice President, for much of the detail in this tribute.

