

IN MEMORIAM

Ian Giddy



Founder of Wildcliff Nature Reserve

Remembered here by Paula Pebsworth,
Wildcliff Research Director

Many people in Heidelberg know the old Palmyra farm off the Riversdale Road, but did you know that this is also the Wildcliff Nature Reserve. So you're asking, how does a farm transform itself into a nature reserve? That's easy – Ian and Jenny Giddy. Ian was an amazing man with a strong commitment for nature, conservation and all things wild. It is with great sadness that we announce the recent loss of Dr. Giddy on 14th June. If you've been reading *Die Post* the past few months, you may have read his accounts of chameleons, baboons and cape clawless otters. Here is a small tribute to a man we at Wildcliff came to love and respect.

Ian was born on 18 January 1948 to Allan and Ena Giddy in Johannesburg. Ian spent his formative years in Port Elizabeth where most of his family remains. He received his B.Sc. in Psychology and Mathematical Statistics at Wits in Johannesburg. In 1972 he obtained an M.B.A. and in 1974 a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Subsequently, he became a Professor of International Finance at New York University. Ian also served as a consultant to a number of multinational corporations and financial institutions in many countries.

Inspired to action by the sight of diminishing forests during a mountain climbing trip to Costa Rica, Ian and Jenny bought and converted a cattle farm in that beautiful country seven years ago into a nature reserve, called "Cloudbridge". (see www.cloudbridge.org) Over the years, dozens of volunteer scientists have gone to this remote area to do research on the fauna and flora in the

mountainous cloud forest. Aside from the research, a goal of the Giddys is to re-establish the natural biodiversity of this region by planting a mixed variety of indigenous trees.

About three years ago Ian and Jenny decided to do the same in South Africa, a country both still called “home”. Their search for a suitable property in the Western Cape led them to the old Palmyra farm near Heidelberg. Despite the fact that a large portion of the “farm”, now called “Wildcliff” was being consumed by black wattles, Ian and Jenny focused on the major section of the property that contained amazing waterfalls, kloofs and fynbos, which they realized could be a wonderful site for another research station. To date, volunteer scientists have produced fascinating reports on the birds, plants, ostracods, geology, ants, insects, baboons and even ancient fossilized pollens dug up from the marshy areas. See the website for details: www.wildcliff.org Inscribed with Cape Nature as a protected reserve, the goals for Wildcliff include eradication of the black wattle and protection of the fynbos and wildlife in perpetuity.

One would never know that Ian was a professor of finance. He researched everything from ants to zoonoses. I once asked him if he felt he’d missed his calling to be a biologist. He told me as much as he loved the natural sciences, he had the same, if not greater, love for finance.

Ian is survived by his mother, Ena, his wife, Jenny, and daughters, Julia and Laura.

Ian is no longer with us, but the work at hand continues. We welcome researchers from near and far. If you have a passion for puff adders, experience in controlled burns, knowledge of how to transform a farm into a nature reserve, then we need you! Please call us and come help us continue the dream of Ian Giddy, 079-1800827. We will continue to write about on-going research in future issues of *Die Post* – the legacy of Ian Giddy will continue...



Ian on the Whale Trail, 2007

For more on Ian’s life, see: <http://cloudbridge.org/ianmemorial.pdf>