**WHITAKER AWARD: An Opportunity** March 2023

Since its inception in 1885, the Indiana Academy of Science (IAS) has had some form of what is today called the Biodiversity and Natural Areas Committee (BNAC). Besides several name changes, the group has had **many** distinguished members. **A Who’s Who of Indiana biologists!** In particular, Winona Welch and John Whitaker are notable members. Winona was a DePauw University biologist (bryologist), an Academy member for more than 50 years, and the first female IAS President (1948). In 1991 her estate gift to the Academy plus contributions from various individuals and the Academy itself helped us turn that small bequest into what is today a $2,500 annual grant dedicated for botanical field study. IAS is now creating a similar award for zoological field study – the John Whitaker Award.

In 2017 Marion Jackson, an exceptional human and Indiana State University plant ecologist, published a captivating biography of his longtime colleague, mammologist extraordinaire John O. Whitaker, Jr. (see PIAS 126(2): 115-128). John’s work ethic and accomplishments are legendary. He is a preeminent field-oriented biologist and prolific scholar and, although nearing the age of 90, Whitaker is still quite active. He is one of those special people who looked at retirement as more time to conduct field studies. If we could talk with Russell Mumford or Ron Richards, who both collaborated with John, we are sure they would concur.

It will take about $75,000 to create a corpus sufficient to provide an annual grant similar to that of the Winona Welch grant. **I am requesting that you consider joining me by making a tax-deductible contribution to build a JOHN WHITAKER AWARD endowment.** Not surprisingly, the field mice and ground squirrels are protesting in opposition. 😊 As with the Welch Award, the Whitaker Award will be administrated by the BNAC.

Thanks in advance, and here’s to John and field biology!

*Bill McKnight*, IAS Pubs, BSC Chair 1988-93