

# K.C. Kim retires after 40 years at Penn State

Ke Chung (K.C.) Kim, professor of entomology in the College of Agricultural Sciences, retired this past fall after more than 40 years of service to the University.

Kim, a native of South Korea, earned his bachelor's degree from Seoul National University in Korea in 1956. He came to the United States and earned his master's degree from the University of Montana in 1959 and his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1964. Kim joined Penn State's Entomology Department in 1968.

Kim is a taxonomist by training and has led an active teaching and research career. He has published extensively in scientific journals and has written several books. He is an expert in parasitic invertebrates on seals and other marine mammals.

More than twenty years ago, he turned his efforts to preserving biodiversity. He founded the Center for BioDiversity Research in 1988 with the goals of promoting and coordinating multidisciplinary research related to the science, conservation, and restoration of biological diversity in Pennsylvania,

North America, and the Asia/Pacific region. Kim says, "Many years ago I decided that for the rest of my career I would dedicate my efforts to preserve biodiversity wherever I could."

Among his many biodiversity efforts and the one that may be his legacy if it comes to fruition, is his campaign to establish a Korean Peace Bioreserves System in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The goal of this effort is to preserve the 2 ½-mile (~4 kilometers) strip spanning the Korean peninsula between North and South Korea as an environmental laboratory and eventual Peace Park for eco-tourism. This 155-mile-long (~250 kilometers) strip of land was devastated by the 1950-53 Korean War and has had almost no human intrusion since. Kim says, "The DMZ is one of the few places in North or South Korea that may be home to endangered animals and plants as well as those that have already disappeared elsewhere in the Koreas. The only good thing to come out of



*Photo left to right: Dave DeWalle, former PSIEE associate director, K.C. Kim, Brian Dempsey, former PSIEE associate director, and Tom Richard, PSIEE director, at K.C.'s retirement reception last November.. Photo courtesy: K.C. Kim.*

the war is the DMZ—it is a natural sanctuary for native plants and animals, which in most of the country are already gone from the land. The DMZ is the last major vestige of Korea's natural heritage."

Another one of his accomplishments was the creation of the Frost Entomological Museum. He brought together the extensive collection of the late Stuart Frost, professor of entomology, and as curator expanded the collection to near 2 million specimens.

As one of the few certified forensic entomologists, he helped launch the Forensic Entomology Workshop, an annual workshop held by the Entomology Department for forensic investigators working for law-enforcement agencies.

K.C. may officially be retired but doesn't show signs of slowing down!

*K.C. can be reached by e-mail at [kck@psu.edu](mailto:kck@psu.edu).*

*For more information please visit:*

*[Kim's Department of Entomology Faculty webpage](#)  
[Frost Entomological Museum](#)  
[DMZ Forum](#)*



*Red-crowned and white-naped cranes feeding in the DMZ. The white-naped crane is endangered and over-winters in the DMZ. Establishment of a Korean Peace Bioreserves System in the DMZ may be Kim's legacy to biodiversity conservation.*

*Photo courtesy: K.C. Kim*