


11-2013

# Fluttering Beauty

Jonathan Jeffrey

Western Kentucky University, [jonathan.jeffrey@wku.edu](mailto:jonathan.jeffrey@wku.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_fac\\_pub](http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fac_pub)

 Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Biology Commons](#), [Entomology Commons](#), and the [Transportation Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Repository Citation

Jeffrey, Jonathan. (2013). Fluttering Beauty. *Kentucky Explorer*, 28 (6), 22-23.

**Available at:** [http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_fac\\_pub/36](http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fac_pub/36)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in DLSC Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).

Appeared in *Kentucky Explorer*, vol. 28, no. 6 (November 2013): 22-23.

Fluttering Beauty  
by Jonathan Jeffrey

*Happiness is as a butterfly,  
Which when pursued is always beyond our grasp,  
But which if you will sit down quietly,  
May alight upon you.*

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Many Kentuckians purchase license plates that sport a colorful butterfly, but few can probably identify the fluttering beauty as one of the Commonwealth's state symbols, the Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*) butterfly. And even fewer would know that two Warren County women led the effort to obtain that designation from the Kentucky General Assembly.

In 1987 State Garden Club of Kentucky (GCK) president and Warren County resident, Jo Jean Scott, asked a fellow Warren Countian, Lillian Pace, to serve as the organization's "Chairman of Conservation and Preservation of Butterflies" knowing that the fluttering creatures held "a special place" in Pace's heart. Within a year, Scott asked Pace for a nomination of a butterfly for the state insect to present for approval at GCK's October board meeting. Scott even suggested the Black Swallowtail, "black with lovely blue patches on each wing."

By December 1988, after contacting several state offices about the matter, Pace and Scott—with the help of R.A Scheibner, an entomologist at the University of Kentucky and Herbert E. Shadowen, a biology professor at WKU—had selected the Viceroy as the best candidate. Scheibner championed the Viceroy saying: "It occurs more commonly throughout the state than does the Monarch, so it has the same aesthetic appeal. The caterpillar stage feeds on the leaves of willows and poplars, but not to the extent that it is considered a pest insect. We might object to some insects because they are pests of plants we value, or if they feed on weed plants[;] we have to tolerate some weeds for the sake of the insect. We humans can live happily with the Viceroy and its required foods plants, so we are less apt to do things to endanger the Viceroy. The Viceroy is a survivor in agreeable harmony with humans."

Earlier Scheibner had even composed an ode to the clever creature:

Milkweeds are on what it feeds,  
Only this—no other weeds.  
Nothing else will suit its needs.

It's a butterfly, oranged dressed,  
And a Monarch ranked o'er the rest.  
Of lesser rank is the Viceroy  
That mimics it as a protective ploy.

He noted: "It could be implied from the rhyme that the Viceroy is less noble than the Monarch, but that is in name only. I would like to think that we Kentuckians recognize things for their worth irrespective of what it's called. A rose by any other name would be as sweet."

When Scheibner mentioned that the Viceroy mimicked the Monarch "as a protective ploy," he revealed something quite unusual about the "oranged dressed" insect. Its coloration actually apes the Monarch as a survival strategy, as birds avoid eating the later due to their unsavory taste. The American Museum of Natural History in New York tried to disprove this myth by conducting tests in which blackbirds were offered only abdomens (sans any hint of the wings of the butterfly) of viceroy, monarch, and queen butterflies, which are known to be bitter tasting, with several species that have reputations for being tasty. Birds that tasted a Viceroy abdomen commonly showed distress by shaking their heads and becoming agitated. When they did eat them, they generally did so only hesitantly. Only 41 percent of the Viceroy abdomens were completely eaten, compared with 98 percent of the abdomens from the tasty species. The birds rejected 35 percent of the Viceroy abdomens after a single peck. Monarchs fared about as poorly. Pace ultimately concluded: "The Viceroy is a survivor in agreeable harmony with humans." The later part of her conclusion was based on the fact that the Viceroy caterpillar did not forage on important cash crops or flowers.

By January 1989, the GCK had approved the Viceroy nomination and state senator and physician Nick Kafoglis of Bowling Green advised Scott and Pace to contact Senate President Pro Tem John "Eck" Rose of Clark County to sponsor the legislation. Pace finally made contact with Rose's office with the help of garden club members from Winchester, the largest community's in Rose's district. The legislation was quickly drafted and read poetically: "The viceroy butterfly is named and designated as the state butterfly." The Act's rationale was poetic: "Whereas, the red-brown or orange Viceroy butterfly, found throughout the Commonwealth, is widely admired by Kentuckians; and whereas, the Viceroy butterfly in its caterpillar stage does not harm the foliage of the poplars and willows upon which it feeds and is therefore no threat to human interests; and whereas, the Viceroy butterfly thus lives in appealing harmony with its required food plants and with humans; and whereas, the Viceroy is known for its imitation of the

Monarch butterfly, which is distasteful to predators; and whereas, the delicate and evanescent beauty of the Viceroy butterfly holds a special charm for gardeners, hikers, and other nature lovers; and whereas, it is therefore fitting that a state noted for its natural beauty and its great outdoors should have a state butterfly; now, therefore...the viceroy butterfly is named and designated as the state butterfly.”

Rose was successful in guiding the legislation through the General Assembly. Senate Bill 29 was signed into law by Governor Wallace Wilkinson on 16 March 1990. The Bill’s co-sponsors included Bowling Green politicians Nick Kafoglis, Jody Richards, and Billy Ray Smith. Jo Jean Scott, the bill’s early champion, explained its significance: “It is important to protect butterflies because they help us in pollination and because they remind us that life is a cycle and we can take a great message from how they live and reproduce.” The seemingly lone dissenter of the bill was Representative Bill Lear who had criticized similar bills in the past as frivolous. “I know the entire insect world is holding its breath to see what we do on this,” snipped Lear, a Democrat from Lexington.

Even before the legislation was drafted, Pace communicated with Powell County artist Nellie Meadows about painting the butterfly and then issuing a limited edition print. She instructed Meadows: “I see the Viceroy more often in late summer feeding on goldenrod (State Wildflower), butterfly weed, and other milkweeds. Use your discretion as to the plants you wish the Viceroy to be on. I would like to have at least two Viceroy Butterflies painted in the picture or more; with wings open and wings closed.” The resulting print, produced by Gerald’s Printing, was praised for its beauty, and sales of the \$25 (16x20) item were brisk. Governor Wallace Wilkinson received the first signed print. The profits from print sales were used for restoration efforts at the Wallis Home in Paris, Kentucky, headquarters of the Garden Club of Kentucky.

Pace’s interest in butterflies never waned; she continued to serve as the GCK’s state butterfly chairman for another decade. She was pleased when the image of a Viceroy was selected to appear on Kentucky license plates in 2002, and she would have been delighted to know that the sales of those plates supported the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund.

Pacesetter (Sidebar)

Lillian Iona Tynes was born on 25 August 1925 in Russellville, Kentucky, the youngest of seven children of Oscar Franklin Tynes and Euva Hightower Tynes. She attended the public

schools in Russellville, graduating from Russellville High School and later from Western Kentucky University.

Lillian married Dr. Robert N. Pace, a dentist, and they lived on a large wooded lot on Nashville Road in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Mrs. Pace was active in a number of civic, religious, and philanthropic organizations. Her chief hobby was gardening, thus she was a member of the Ruth Rabold Garden Club as well as other state and national garden clubs, where she always assumed leadership roles. She served on the board of directors for Friends of Lost River, Mammoth Cave National Park Association, the Friends of the Warren County Public Library. She served for nine years on Bowling Green Beautification Commission. Lillian also enjoyed handwork, reading, and singing and was an active member of Bowling Green's First Christian Church as well as the Landmark Association.

Gardening and nature study were passions for Pace. She planted a variety of flowers and trees in her expansive lawn, but her passions tempered each other. "We don't do formal landscaping," she once noted. "We don't cut our trees or move our rocks. We just landscape around them." In her yard, you were likely to find small weed patches in the corners, because as she said: "The butterflies need a place to rest and birds need somewhere to get off by themselves. You don't see butterflies much in manicured yards."

Mrs. Pace died on 9 October 2010 and was interred beside her husband in Bowling Green's Fairview Cemetery. Her children donated her papers to the Special Collections Library at WKU, making this information available for a larger audience.