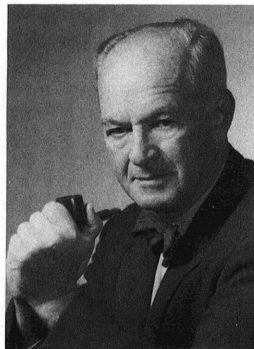


## David Gottlieb, 1911–1982

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David Gottlieb, professor of plant pathology, University of Illinois, died March 29, 1982, in Urbana, IL.

In a long and productive scientific career, Dr. Gottlieb published more than 200 research articles, book chapters, monographs, or books and served as major professor for six M.S. and 15 Ph.D. candidates. He received many awards and honors including the University of Pavia Medal (1958), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1962), the J. E. Purkyne Medal (1964), the Wakefield Award (1975), the Paul A.

Funk Award (1976), and the Fisher Award (1977). He was a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society, the American Academy of Microbiology, and the Japanese Society for Actinomycetes. In 1971, he was a guest lecturer at the University of Sydney, Australia, and a national lecturer for the American Society of Microbiology in 1977 and 1978.

Dr. Gottlieb's lifelong interest in plant pathology research began in high school. Stimulated by a visit to the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research in Yonkers, NY, he built a laboratory in his parents' basement and studied crown gall tumors caused by *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*. He received a B.S. in chemistry and botany from the City College of New York in 1937, an M.S. in chemistry and botany from Iowa State University in 1940, a Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of Minnesota in 1942, and was a Research Fellow there until 1944 when he moved to the University of Delaware as a Koppers Coke Fellow. In 1946, he joined the Department of Horticulture at the University of Illinois and, in 1955, was among the founding members of the Department of Plant Pathology at Illinois where he continued working until his death.

Dr. Gottlieb used plant-pathogenic fungi in studies of sterol biosynthesis, respiration, aging, spore germination, and the mechanism of action of antifungal antibiotics. His interest in antibiotics and actinomycetes began at Illinois. He pioneered in that new and rapidly growing area of science, discovered or co-discovered several new antibiotics (including chloramphenicol, filipin, levomycin, and tetrin), and described the mechanism of action and biosynthesis of several of these and other antibiotics.

Dr. Gottlieb's research gained the respect of the international scientific community. He was invited to numerous international meetings, was F.A.O. advisor to the Chilean Government on research in plant pathology (1956–1957), served as chairman of the Subcommittee on Actinomycetes of the International Committee on Bacteriological Nomenclature, and chaired both the national and international committees on the Taxonomy of Actinomycetes; the latter led to the first systematic, computerized, classification of these organisms. Dr. Gottlieb also served on the editorial boards of several journals and was editor of the section on Actinomycetales in

the most recent revision of Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology.

Although his life was devoted to science, Dr. Gottlieb also participated in the affairs of his professional societies, the Department of Plant Pathology, and the University of Illinois. His advice was sought in filling important positions (including the current presidency of the university). A colleague noted, "Dave brings a sense of sanity to any discussion he is in." One of his greatest gifts was the ability to see and go directly to the heart of any matter under debate and to offer comments that were always concise, logical, and to the point.

While scientific and academic activities were very important to Dr. Gottlieb, another primary concern was for students. They will undoubtedly recall the evening seminars at his home or in the laboratory where not only science but many other topics were discussed, all with equal fervor. He felt that educational experiences should be more than simply becoming aware of the collective body of knowledge in a discipline. He was disturbed by students who did not take time to attend concerts or lectures, but he also understood their problems and would ensure that they had everything required for doing research. At the same time, he demanded thoroughness and critical analysis in experiments. New students soon learned that his name was David "T. C." Gottlieb, the "T. C." standing for "triplicate control." He presented not just technical and scientific information, but more importantly, the philosophical concepts of how to solve a problem. Some classroom facts were probably soon forgotten, but the concepts learned in frequent conferences will remain with his students throughout their careers. Dr. Gottlieb was an honest man with a firm concept of right and wrong. He was tolerant of other's ideas and flexible in his dealings with people, but rejected intolerance and charlatany and quickly challenged inaccurate or ambiguous speaking or writing.

David Gottlieb will be remembered for many reasons. He was introspective and constantly tested himself by self evaluation; this is illustrated by an excerpt from the address delivered when he received the Paul A. Funk Award:

"I have accumulated a number of honors from my professional colleagues that have brought me a pleasurable sense of being valued. Although I enjoyed receiving these honors, I have often wondered why I have not been more moved by them. Perhaps it is because I see life as imperfect and destined to remain so."

Although realistic enough to recognize that life may be imperfect, David Gottlieb was sufficiently idealistic to know that one still needed to strive for perfection; his life was spent working toward that goal.

David Gottlieb will be missed by his family and by his many friends and colleagues. He is survived by his wife of 21 years, Amy (née Zahl), and a sister and brother. Dr. Gottlieb was the sole survivor of a tragic auto accident in 1960 that claimed the lives of his first wife and two teenage children.