

Award of Distinction

The Award of Distinction, a special award to be presented on extremely rare occasions to persons making truly exceptional contributions to plant pathology, was presented to J. C. Walker at the 1969 Annual Meeting in Spokane, Washington, with G. S. Pound participating in the ceremony.



John Charles Walker: "Scientist—plant pathologist—inspirational teacher—internationally eminent in the field of research, and distinguished for his practical scientific knowledge applied to breeding disease-resistant vegetables for the benefit of mankind", read the accolades to this great man. Walker's choice of plant pathology as a profession, and of vegetable disease control as a specialty, came naturally. He was born at Racine, Wisconsin, in 1893, where much of his boyhood was spent among the vegetable farmers of the area. As an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin, guided and inspired by Professor L. R. Jones, he distinguished himself in receiving the Science Medal for the outstanding baccalaureate thesis of 1914. The subject of his dissertation was the control of onion smut using formaldehyde drip treatment. Even before his graduation, the pattern of Dr. Walker's career had been established when he published for Wisconsin farmers in *The Country Magazine* an article on the control of potato diseases. Since his first article to the potato growers, his major concern and thrust have always been directed toward the solution of problems of disease control in the field. Under the tutelage of Professor Jones he acquired an M.S. degree in 1915, and following an extra-

mural semester at Cornell, he received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1918.

Dr. Walker's contributions as a plant pathologist are so vast as to be immeasurable in their dollar impact throughout the world. For Wisconsin's canning-vegetable crops alone, the impact of his contributions to disease resistant varieties is in excess of 20 million dollars annually, and the \$300 million pickle industry in the U.S.A. utilizes disease-resistant germplasm identified and improved by him. Within the area of vegetable disease control, Dr. Walker has left his mark on crop after crop: onion; cabbage; beans; peas; beets; potatoes; and cucumbers.

The strength of Dr. Walker's contributions was not limited to the seeking and introduction of disease-resistant germplasm into superior horticultural types of vegetables; wherever he found gaps in our understanding of disease and its control, he directed his energies. He made most significant contributions to the biochemistry and physiology of disease, to environmental factors affecting disease initiation and development, and to control of disease.

Dr. Walker's *Plant Pathology* is perhaps the most widely used text in the field, having been published in three editions and in three major languages. His *Diseases of Vegetable Crops* is a sourcebook for all working with vegetable crops. In his texts, in his journal publications, in his lectures, and in his conversation he establishes a philosophy of balance between basic research and its application to agriculture. He is without peer in contributions to both. As a teacher of graduate students he has been mentor for 75, whose nationalities reach into all continents.

A participant in many international congresses, and a member of numerous societies and associations, Dr. Walker has been sought continuously by both the academic and agricultural communities. From 1919 to 1944, together with his university appointment, he shared the position of pathologist in the USDA. In 1952, he was Visiting Professor at the Instituto Biologico, Sao Paulo, Brazil. As President of The American Phytopathological Society in 1943, Vice-President of the American Institute of Biological Sciences in 1953, and a member of the Board of Governors of AIBS from 1949 to 1954, his contributions to the scientific community are well reflected in the positions of responsibility he held.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences (1945); Man of the Year (1954) for the Vegetable Growers of America; Honorary Doctor of Science (1960), University of Göttingen; Member of the Board of Electors of the New York University Hall of Fame since 1955; Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and Fellow of the APS are but a few of the honors which indicate the impact of his career and the importance of this man to our society.