

Merlyn Arthur Stillwell, 1929-1977

R. E. Wall, R. H. E. E. Bradley, and G. M. Strunz



A widely known and respected forest pathologist, Merlyn A. Stillwell, died on August 21, 1977 at the age of 48. He is survived by his wife Eleanor, and six children.

Born at the village of Debec, New Brunswick, the son of Roy and Hazel (Reynolds) Stillwell, he attended various rural schools in western New Brunswick and received his BSc and MSc from the University of New Brunswick. In 1950 he joined the staff of the Forest Biology Laboratory at Fredericton (now the Maritimes Forest Research Centre) where he pursued a fruitful research career until his untimely death. He took part in various university activities including the teaching of pathology at the University of New Brunswick. Also, he was keenly interested in primary and secondary education and worked for years with the local school board and the Canadian School Trustee's Association.

His early research on the impact of decays in the forests of the Atlantic Provinces led to cull procedures for yellow birch killed by dieback, windthrown timber, and budworm-killed fir. In the late 50's and early 60's he

unravalled a complex vector relationship between woodwasps and the decay fungus, *Stereum chailetii*. Early in his research career, he also noticed the pronounced antifungal effect of a *Cryptosporiopsis* isolate, which led to the isolation and characterization of a promising antibiotic named cryptosporiopsin. Later, he and a small group of colleagues isolated and characterized the antibiotics scytalidin and hyalodendrin. All three of these antibiotics continue to be tested for possible use against wood decays and diseases of plants and animals.

One of his final contributions was a series of incisive studies on the control of Dutch elm disease. Many of those familiar with his work believe that he could have steered current thinking on this problem in a more fruitful direction had he been granted a full life span. He insisted on objective reasoning and critical scientific evaluation of all proposed control measures and refused to become carried away on the latest bandwagon concerning DED.

Mert was one of those personable people who makes friends easily. Talking with him was always a treat. His home and summer cottage were always open to his friends and colleagues, who took every opportunity to enjoy his boundless humor and energy. He will be sorely missed by many.