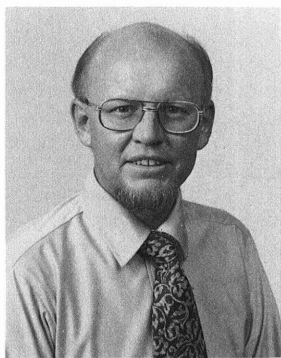


William John Moller, 1936–1981

H. English and J. E. DeVay



William John Moller was born in Adelaide, South Australia, August 5, 1936. He died after a two-year battle with cancer, at his home in Davis, California, June 23, 1981.

Following graduation with an Honours Certificate from Unley High School, South Australia, he attended the University of Adelaide and received a B.S. degree in plant pathology and horticulture in 1958, an Honours degree in 1959, and an M.S. degree in 1964, the latter two in plant pathology. From 1960 to 1964 he served as a horticultural research officer (in plant pathology) with the South Australian Department of Agriculture and gained valuable research and extension experience with diseases of fruit and vegetable crops. In 1964, he accepted a research assistantship in plant pathology at the University of California, Davis, and embarked on a Ph.D. program with J. E. DeVay. In 1966, he took a one-year leave to accompany Harley English to Chile in a fruit-tree disease project involving the universities of California and of Chile. His investigations resulted in five publications and two later invitational consulting visits to Chile.

After completing the Ph.D. degree at Davis in 1967, he returned to Australia and served as a senior research officer (in plant pathology) in the South Australian Department of Agriculture. His research and extension duties largely involved fungal diseases of pome- and stone-fruit trees. Working with M. V. Carter of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, with whom he earlier had done his M.S. degree, he made valuable contributions to knowledge of the etiology and control of the *Eutypa* dieback disease of apricots. In 1970 he returned to the University of California, Davis, as an extension plant pathologist.

His research and extension duties in California dealt with the diseases of grapes and deciduous fruit and nut crops. His accomplishments in applied research and extension during the 11 years before his death were truly outstanding. His demonstration that the "deadarm" disease of grapes (previously thought to be caused by *Phomopsis viticola* alone) is actually two diseases, one caused by this fungus and a second caused by *Eutypa armeniaca*, opened the door for meaningful studies on their epidemiology and control. His research, in part cooperative with other scientists in this country or abroad, made him a world authority on the dieback diseases caused in apricots and grapes by *E. armeniaca*; he authored or coauthored about 37 papers on diseases caused by this fungus and was an invited speaker or consultant in New York and Washington, as well as in Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia.

He served as coordinator for a highly successful IPM project on fireblight of pears that involved basic and applied research workers, extension personnel, pest control advisors, and growers. The result was a new and highly effective fireblight management program for California. He also contributed immensely to knowledge of the destructive *Ceratocystis* canker disease of almond and stone-fruit trees; his research on this disorder was devoted largely to epidemiology and the important role of certain insects in the syndrome. He conducted other significant research on crown gall of stone fruits, leaf scorch of almond, pear decline, walnut blight, root- and crown-rot diseases of cherries and walnuts, and apple scab. Dr. Moller was a good team researcher and most of his investigations were conducted cooperatively with experimentation or extension personnel.

Dr. Moller was a keen observer, an imaginative and industrious researcher, and a prolific writer. During a relatively short professional life (less than 14 years after completing the doctorate)

he authored or coauthored 81 technical papers, 57 popular publications, and 19 abstracts. His dedication and productivity are further substantiated by his authorship or coauthorship of 25 papers during the last two years of his life when he was undergoing three major operations and other drastic therapy for incurable cancer. In 1980, at the national meeting of the American Phytopathological Society, there was nationwide recognition for his research; he received the CIBA-Geigy award for significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge of plant diseases and their control. Previously, he was an invited speaker at the International Colloquium on Biological Control in Switzerland (1973), the International Crown Rot Workshop in Canada (1974), the Third USDA Fireblight Workshop in New York (1976), and the Third International Congress on Phytopathogenic Bacteria in France (1978). He also chaired the Fireblight Symposium at the Second International Congress in Plant Pathology at Minneapolis (1973) and served as a consultant to the UN-FAO in Rome, Italy, from January to June in 1976.

Dr. Moller had the unique ability to present, orally and in writing, highly technical information in a manner readily understood by farm advisors, pest management operators, growers, and other agricultural industry people. One of his important extension contributions was service on the steering committee and as the principal-disease author of the 234-page California Pear Pest Management book published in 1978 and as technical editor and principal-disease author of the equally important 312-page Grape Pest Management book published in 1981. His knowledge and speaking ability was in constant demand by farm advisors and the agricultural industry for presentations on the diseases of deciduous fruit and nut crops. His performance as an extension specialist placed him among the top few in the University's statewide system.

Although Dr. Moller was a full-time plant pathologist in cooperative extension, his excellence as a researcher and teacher earned him the courtesy titles of Lecturer in the Department of Plant Pathology and Associate in the Agricultural Experiment Station. These appointments enabled him to participate in advanced-degree examinations and the guidance of thesis research of students seeking either M.S. or Ph.D. degrees.

Dr. Moller participated willingly and effectively on several important campus and university-wide committees and in national and international scientific organizations. He served on committees of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Sciences and the American Phytopathological Society and was a member of the Australian Plant Pathology Society. He served on the Executive Committee and as Chairman of the National Apple and Pear Disease Workers Association and was a member of the National Pest Management Workshop Organizing Committee. During the 8–9 years before his death he was a member of the National Fireblight Committee and the European Plant Protection Organization panel on apricot apoplexy. He was elected to the national honor society Sigma Xi and was an active participant in the University Covenant Church.

In recognition of Dr. Moller's outstanding contributions, the Department of Plant Pathology (UC Davis) has established the "William J. Moller Memorial Fund," the proceeds from which will be awarded annually to a graduate student in the Department who shows exceptional ability in mission-oriented research.

Dr. Moller is survived by his wife, Janice, three teenage daughters, Lieschen, Tricia, and Andrea, his mother and father, and three sisters. His immediate family continues to reside in Davis.

Bill Moller will be long remembered not only for his professional accomplishments but also for his friendliness, sincerity, integrity, and courage. We who knew him well have gained tremendously from association with him. He was a complete plant pathologist, a leader, an inspiration to students and staff, and a true friend.