

## Frank Paden McWhorter, 1896-1985

T. C. Allen



Frank P. McWhorter, "Mac," formerly Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Oregon State University, died November 16, 1985, in Carmel, California, following a brief illness.

Mac was born on April 20, 1896, in Nashville, Tennessee. He obtained his B.S. degree from Vanderbilt University in 1917. From 1918 to 1920 he was a Fellow at the University of Chicago where he obtained his M.S. degree. He joined the College of Agriculture at Los Baños, the Philippines, in 1920

and was acting head of the Department of Plant Pathology during 1921 and 1922. Mac joined the American Phytopathological Society in 1926. He received his Ph.D. in plant pathology from Cornell University in 1928.

Following research at the Virginia Truck Experiment Station during 1924-1929, he joined Oregon State University in 1930 as a collaborator, Agricultural Research Service, USDA. He served as an FAO virologist in the Philippines 1958-1959 where he developed a research program for cadang cadang diseases and a lasting dislike for chicken. After retirement from the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Oregon State University, 1967, he moved to an orphanage in California ("none of those people had parents").

Dr. Frank P. McWhorter, an individualist in research and personality, is recognized for his highly original and numerous contributions to plant pathology, biological photography, and science in general. He maintained and increased his enthusiasm for research into his 89th year, still studying desert lichens, his first love as a graduate student.

His classical research on virus inclusion bodies, in which he placed viruses "midway between the quick and the dead," stimulated many to consider inclusions once again in plant disease diagnosis. His staining and photographic methods have been used throughout the scientific community. And his monocot leaf union technique is unique to the field of botany.

Dr. McWhorter earned the respect of lily bulb growers for his numerous research contributions, as evidenced in many of his 191 publications. While examining one of his many field experiments, he noted the presence of lilies with stubby, square leaves. He quizzed the grower and was told that it was deer damage. These results appeared in Mac's paper entitled "Non-virus diseases of lilies" in the 1963 yearbook of the North American Lily Society. The photo was labeled "*Cervus* blight followed by hail injury. Data prove that application of 12 pounds of Thimet per acre reduces the blight but does not control the hail. This plant has had it."

Mac's sense of humor proved that "a little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men." Among old-time civic leaders of Corvallis, Oregon, he may be best remembered for his rock throwing abilities. For years he demonstrated his prowess annually to a Chamber of Commerce gathering at the Willamette River. His classic throws not only spanned the 100 meter-wide river, but knocked leaves from tall trees on the other side. As was printed on his green eyeshade, we will "make checks payable to F. P. McWhorter" and trust that his eggs will be fried on the right side. In addition, we know that his long life was due in part to eating only filter cigarettes, which purportedly "prevented worms and lung cancer." Our memories of him are uniquely cherished. He will be missed but never forgotten.

Survivors include his wife, Margaret, of Carmel Valley; a son, Malcom, of Portola Valley, California; and a granddaughter, Marta, of Fairbanks, Alaska.