

Henryk Jedlinski, 1924–1987

R. E. Ford, M. C. Shurtleff, and C. J. D'Arcy



Henryk (Henry) Jedlinski was born in Bialystok, Poland, 15 February 1924, son of Thomas and Jadwiga Jedlinski. He died of cardiac arrest 4 April 1987. Henry married Helena Malinowska 31 December 1958 in Lincoln, Nebraska. A devoted family man, he took great pride in his children. Michael (27) is a physician in Springfield, Illinois. Janine is a student in nursing. Also surviving are his mother; a grandson; two brothers, his identical twin Jerzy of Bialystok and Stanislaw of Johannesburg,

South Africa; and one sister, Halina Wielgosz of Toronto, Canada. His wife Helena died 5 January 1988.

Henry received a diploma from Lyceum No. 1, Luebeck, Germany, in 1946. His higher education began at the University of Bonn, West Germany, from 1947 to 1949, where he obtained a Half Diploma in Agriculture. He then immigrated to the United States and obtained his B.S. degree in Agriculture at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in 1950. Continuing his advanced studies there, he worked as a graduate research assistant, obtaining his M.A. in 1954 and his Ph.D. in 1959, both in plant pathology under the guidance of W. B. Allington. Henry's Ph.D. thesis was entitled "Studies of initial infection processes of certain mechanically transmitted plant viruses and their hosts." His employment as agent, working on rust epidemiology with the U.S. Department of Agriculture at Urbana, began in 1957 during his doctoral studies. He was appointed research plant pathologist with the USDA in November 1958.

The University of Illinois attracted this bright young scientist to join the Department of Plant Pathology, College of Agriculture, and Agriculture Experiment Station in March 1959, through their Memorandum of Agreement with the USDA, to help solve the serious disease of cereals called barley yellow dwarf. He was appointed collaborator, then assistant professor in 1966, and promoted to associate professor in 1979. Henry was appointed a life member of the Graduate Faculty, University of Illinois, in 1973. He had national stature and was conscientious, hard-working, thorough, energetic, and dependable.

His honors early in his career include a USDA Certificate of Merit (1960) for excellence in research. He was elected to membership in Sigma Xi, The Research Society, and Gamma Sigma, the Honor Society of Agriculture.

Henry guided, as major professor, theses programs for Pornpod Thongmeekom, Harshani Gunasena, and Vilai Cheochankitkaew (M.S.) and Eugene Terry and Hanafy Fouly (Ph.D.). He served as a thesis committee member for many other students in the departments of Plant Pathology and Agronomy. He gave many invited lectures in several courses taught in Plant Pathology. Henry especially delighted in taking students in laboratories to his field plots to instruct them in how to infest plots with literally quarts of aphids and how to take readings of many diseases on the cereal crops in the field.

At the time of his death, Henry was enthusiastically and carefully preparing his final five-year plan of work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The focus of his research for over 30 years was on how insects transmit viruses to plants. He was a world authority on the barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV) and the disease it causes in oats, wheat, and barley.

Henry's close colleague over the years at the University of Illinois was plant breeder C. M. Brown. Together they formed an integral and inseparable research team, incorporating genetic resistance against infection by BYDV into oats and more recently into wheat. Oat varieties released in their programs (Otee, Jaycee, Brave, and Lang), which have the highest yields and a high degree

of resistance to BYDV, are grown now in nearly 30% of the acreage in the U.S. and Canada. Thirteen other disease-resistant oat germ plasm sources have been released.

He was the expert to whom many plant pathologists and plant breeders across the United States and from other parts of the world sent winter wheat germ plasm and breeding materials that they needed to test for genetic resistance against the wheat soilborne mosaic virus (WSbMV). This virus is transmitted from plant to plant or soil to plant by a fungal vector. The University of Illinois Agronomy and Plant Pathology South Farm contains a nationally known research plot originally established by H. H. McKinney, which provides a uniformly severe test for WSbMV. Henry graciously donated many hours each year to maintain this national resource and to provide this much-sought, indispensable service. Henry's research program focused primarily on new and improved populations of oats, wheat, and barley. His contributions were exemplary, as he sought better resistance to stress, pests, and diseases, especially BYDV. He identified genetic resistance and he helped broaden the tolerance level of small grains to BYDV, WSbMV, and wheat striate mosaic virus. Few scientists could evaluate small grains for resistance and tolerance to virus and other diseases as well as Henry. That is why he was called on and willingly evaluated eight disease nurseries annually: early oat, midseason oat, oat smut, oat rust, winter wheat rust, spring wheat rust, hard red winter wheat WSbMV, and winter/spring wheat mildew. Henry monitored regularly during each growing season the epidemiology of rusts, other airborne fungi, and foot- and root-rotting fungi of cereals for their interaction with BYDV. The aphid vectors and their specificity in transmitting BYDV strains held his strong scientific interest. Henry's findings, of fundamental importance in describing biotype variation in BYDV, contributed to our understanding of vector specificity, cross-protection, and synergism among the BYDV isolates in nature. He was supported with research grants from the Quaker Oats Company and the Illinois Crop Improvement Association.

Henry was a long-standing member of the American Phytopathological Society and the American Institute for Biological Sciences. He was sought for his professional advice, most recently, for example, when he served in 1986 on a scientific team to review and evaluate the Fort Hays Kansas Experiment Station. He was a meticulous editor of manuscripts for scientific journals, including *Phytopathology*, *Crop Science*, and *Plant Disease*.

Although Henry had many scientific colleagues, two formed an especially close triumvirate. On organizing his papers for the University of Illinois archives, we found six to 12 letters per year from both Myron K. Brakke and William Rochow, which gave evidence of an unusually close and supportive relationship.

Henry published more than 60 scientific journal articles, technical reports, book chapters, and abstracts of presentations at meetings, in addition to the more than a dozen variety releases in which he participated. Those who knew him well can attest that few scientists were as up to date and as well informed about all aspects of plant virology.

Henry, generous with his time and assistance, was always quick to help anyone in need of personal or professional assistance or advice. He had a special appreciation for the need to provide answers to problems that growers and seedsmen faced. He took great but quiet pride in seeing the fruits of his years of tedious, careful, painstaking research pay dividends as the BYD-resistant oat varieties gradually spread across the land. Wheat and oat research workers across the nation will miss the ready, friendly help which Henry provided. The departments of Plant Pathology, Agronomy, and the College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, will sorely miss his friendly smile, his wit, and his wise counsel. We have lost a respected colleague and friend.