

Irvin Lynnell Forbes, 1902–1987

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Irvin Lynnell Forbes, professor emeritus at Louisiana State University, died at the Baton Rouge Health Care Center on March 4, 1987.

Dr. Forbes was born April 13, 1902, at Deerford, LA, a few miles north of Baton Rouge. He attended Louisiana State University, from which he obtained a bachelor of science degree in 1925. In 1924, the Department of Botany, Bacteriology, and Plant Pathology was formed with Dr. C. W. Edgerton as head. Dr. Edgerton employed young Irvin as an assistant and, recognizing his talents, encouraged him to continue his education. Irvin enrolled in the graduate program and pursued his degree while working as an assistant to Dr. Edgerton. He earned the master of science degree in 1928 and in 1929 enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Plant Pathology at the University of Minnesota under the guidance of Dr. E. C. Stakman. During the period of his graduate studies, he spent time in both Baton Rouge and St. Paul until he received the Ph.D. degree in 1935. He became assistant professor at LSU before receiving his Ph.D. degree and, soon thereafter, was promoted to associate professor in 1936 and to professor in 1946. In 1943, Dr. Forbes was appointed Assistant Director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station and served in that capacity until 1956, at which time he returned to full-time teaching and research in the department. He remained on the faculty at Louisiana State University, until June 30, 1972, when he retired as professor emeritus after having served the university for a total of 47 years.

Early in his career Dr. Forbes did research on crown rust and other diseases of oats, the results of which he published in *Phytopathology*. He did extensive research on sugarcane diseases, publishing in sugarcane journals such as *The Sugar Bulletin*, *Sugar Journal*, and *Proceeding of the International Society of Sugarcane Technologists*. His research on varietal reactions to sugarcane diseases, coordinated with the sugarcane breeding program, was published largely in bulletins of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station.

Dr. Forbes was a dedicated and inspiring teacher. He assisted Dr. Edgerton during the early years and later taught the



introductory course in plant pathology at Louisiana State University. He influenced many students, both national and international, to study plant pathology at the master's and the Ph.D. level.

Dr. Forbes became a member of the American Phytopathological Society early in his career and remained a member throughout. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Division APS from 1941 to 1946 and as President in 1948. He was a member of Alpha Zeta and Sigma Xi.

Dr. Forbes was married in 1926 to one of his college classmates of 1925, Elsie Doran, who at the time was a school teacher in the Baton Rouge area. Their only child, Ben L. Forbes, was born in St. Paul in 1929. Mrs. Forbes was highly supportive of her husband throughout his career. She retired after a long association with a prominent bank in Baton Rouge about the same time Dr. Forbes retired. After retirement they traveled extensively in the United States.

Dr. Forbes in retirement found time to do chores in the department. One of his favorite projects was that of administering the C. W. Edgerton Memorial Fund, which he helped establish in 1965 after the death of Dr. Edgerton. The fund was used to defray travel expenses of former graduates or faculty members to visit the department. One of the last persons to be honored with Memorial funds while Dr. Forbes was still chairman of the committee, was his friend and former classmate Dr. Harold H. Flor.

In October 1979, Dr. Forbes suffered a severe stroke and underwent brain surgery. He was hospitalized for an extended period of time in a coma after surgery but eventually came out of the coma and made a remarkable recovery. During this extended hospital stay and after he was discharged Mrs. Forbes remained devoted to his care. In July 1983, he was admitted to the Baton Rouge Health Care Center where he remained with excellent care until his death.

Dr. Forbes is survived by his wife Elsie Doran Forbes and a son Dr. Ben L. Forbes, professor of accounting at the University of New Orleans; five sisters Wilma Forbes Decker and Josie Forbes Miller both of Denham Springs, LA, Alex Forbes Bahm of Baton Rouge, LA, Florence Forbes Sides of Central, LA, and Eunice Forbes Fly of Water Valley, MS; and a brother, Henry A. Forbes of Baton Rouge, LA.