

Clyde C. Allison, 1905–1990

C. Wayne Ellett and Lansing E. Williams



Clyde C. ("CC") Allison, professor emeritus of plant pathology, The Ohio State University, died in his sleep in San Bernardino, California, April 9, 1990, a few days before his 85th birthday. He is survived by his son, Robert, and six grandchildren. Professor Allison was born 1905 in Champlin, Minnesota. He received the B. S. degree in 1928 and M. Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in 1930 and 1935, all from the University of Minnesota under the direction of Drs. E. C. Stakman and J. J. Christensen. After

the baccalaureate degree he spent a year as a student exchange fellow, University of Halle, Germany. From 1936 to 1938 he was associate plant pathologist with the USDA at the Tobacco Experiment Station, Greenville, Tennessee, where he developed root rot resistance and studied the genetic variability of pathogens.

He joined the Department of Botany, The Ohio State University, as extension plant pathologist, in 1938. He developed a comprehensive extension program with meetings, short courses, and field demonstrations throughout the state. From 1946 until his retirement as professor emeritus in 1972, he was professor of botany and plant pathology. Under his early leadership, an outstanding graduate program in plant pathology was developed. He advised and supervised the research of 45 Ph.D. and 50 M. Sc. students, including many international students. He received one of the University's Distinguished Teaching Awards in 1964 and served in the Faculty Senate. In addition to his teaching duties, in the 1950s he supervised the development of three research projects with the University Research Foundation to evaluate new chemicals as fungicides and nematicides for three companies that did not have their own inhouse research in these areas. He also developed research on the influence of antecedent environments and effect of internal nonpathogens (fungi) in inhibiting Fusarium wilt of tomato, cotton, and cowpea.

His goal as he taught graduate classes in plant pathology was to help students think in a logical and critical manner. This was further stressed through weekly formal and informal seminars that included literature surveys and seminar papers on specialized topics, to be presented and defended. Scientific thinking based on an understanding of concepts and principles was emphasized rather than definitions and detailed information. He had great

ability to motivate students.

He was an active member and supporter of the American Phytopathological Society, serving as its Secretary 1942–1944.

During the several years prior to and after his retirement, Professor Allison contributed his expertise in improving teaching, research, and extension programs in plant pathology at the international level. These assignments included a Fulbright Lectureship at the University of Rhodesia in 1960 and from 1964 to 1969 at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, under a Technical Assistance Contract with The Ohio State University. When he arrived in the Plant Pathology Department, University of Sao Paulo, located in Piracicaba, he played an important role in helping develop their postgraduate training. In his first semester of teaching "Principles and Concepts of Plant Pathology," he used a translator but subsequently lectured in Portuguese. In 1966, while in Brazil he encouraged the formation of a new Brazilian Society of Phytopathology. He served as a councilor of the society for several years and was elected an honorary member for his assistance in its foundation. He proposed and promoted the publication of the Manual de Fitopatologia (600 pp.) by the faculty of the Department of Plant Pathology, University of Sao Paulo. He also helped form the Paulista Grupo of the Brazilian Society and a tribute to him written by Professor Ferdinando Galli appears in Volume 1 of its journal, Summa Phytopathologica. During brief visits to India in 1960 and 1966 he presented seminars and consulted with plant pathologists at Banaras Hindu University and Punjab Agricultural University.

It was fortuitous that in October, 6 months before his death, "CC" visited his son and family in Tennessee. While there, he decided to visit the Tobacco Experiment Station in Greenville where he had begun his professional career. He was overwhelmed to find 51 years later that its present superintendent was his third-generation student; from there, he traveled to the University of Tennessee where he had a warm meeting with the second-generation student.

Through a significant contribution by Professor Allison (and continuing contributions from his many students and friends) the C. C. Allison Fund in Plant Pathology was established in 1984 by the Board of Trustees of The Ohio State University. Annual income is used each year for presentation of the C. C. Allison Award to an outstanding undergraduate or graduate student in the Department of Plant Pathology. Five students to date have been the recipient of this honor to an outstanding plant pathologist.