

Excellence in Teaching Award

This award was established in 1987 by the APS Council in recognition of excellence in teaching plant pathology. The award is presented to individuals with active responsibility for one or more courses in plant pathology and recognizes the individual's distinguished proficiency in teaching, as indicated by development and effectiveness of courses taught.

George W. Hudler and William Merrill, Jr.



George W. Hudler was born in Cloquet, Minnesota, on August 19, 1947. He received his primary and secondary education in the schools of Cloquet and was awarded a B.S. degree in forest resource development from the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, in 1970. He continued his studies at the University of Minnesota, where he received an M.S. degree in plant pathology in 1973. Dr. Hudler then went to Colorado State University, Fort Collins, where he was granted a Ph.D. degree in plant pathology in 1976.

In November 1976, Dr. Hudler was appointed extension associate in the Department of Plant Pathology, Cornell University, and he was promoted to assistant professor in 1978. He currently is associate professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at Cornell University. His teaching responsibilities include three courses: Pathology and Entomology of Trees and Shrubs, Plant Disease Diagnosis, and Magical Mushrooms, Mischievous Molds. In extension, Dr. Hudler serves as an educational and technical resource to residents of the state of New York who are involved in production or maintenance of woody ornamental plants and Christmas trees. His research is directed toward improving our understanding and control of canker diseases of trees caused by facultative parasites and toward developing an integrated pest management program for Christmas tree production. Hudler is an enthusiastic teacher, and his outstanding accomplishments in teaching are many. He shared this enthusiasm and expertise at a discussion session of the national meeting in San Diego, served as chairman of the Teaching Committee of The American Phytopathological Society, and successfully organized the disease recognition contests at several national meetings. Recently, he developed a popular course in plant pathology for nonmajors and nonscientists. "Magical Mushrooms, Mischievous Molds" has been a great success. When the 165 students evaluated the course after it was first offered, they rated it outstanding (4.8 out of 5.0), and they rated the instructor outstanding as well (4.85 out of 5). Outstanding ratings for teaching and for course material are also typical for the other courses he teaches. To quote from a letter written by a former undergraduate student: "Professor Hudler brings an unequalled enthusiasm and professionalism into the classroom. His attention to detail in preparing lectures and laboratory exercises results in exceptionally productive sessions. Equally important, however, is his good nature and ability to relate to his students. This combination of professionalism and personality has proved to be extremely successful. The courses which George teaches have proved to be extremely important in my professional development. I am constantly relying on the foundation of knowledge which Professor Hudler helped to build. I am indebted to his commitment, motivation, and ability to educate."

Professor Hudler is one of those individuals whose purpose in life is to teach, and he does so in an outstanding and exemplary manner. He has inspired many to successful careers in teaching and research and has given to all who have taken his courses a greater appreciation of the complex and fascinating world of microorganisms, plants, and animals.



William Merrill, Jr. was born in Haverhill, in northern New Hampshire, on September 5, 1933. He was raised on a small farm and received his primary and secondary education in the schools of Haverhill. After three years in the U.S. Navy, he began undergraduate studies at the University of New Hampshire and was awarded the B.S. degree in forestry, magna cum laude, in 1958. He then started graduate studies in plant pathology and forest products at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, under the direction of Dr. David W. French. He completed

the requirements for the M.S. degree in 1961 and a Ph.D. degree in 1963. From 1961 to 1964, he served as an instructor in plant pathology.

In 1964–1965, he held an appointment as research staff pathologist in the School of Forestry at Yale, where he conducted studies on the biochemistry of wood decay in collaboration with Dr. Ellis B. Cowling.

Dr. Merrill joined the faculty of plant pathology at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, as an assistant professor with responsibilities for teaching, advising graduate study, and conducting a program of research in forest pathology in 1965. At the same time, he was appointed as a senior member of the graduate faculty.

Soon after his appointment at Penn State, and on his request, Dr. Merrill took on responsibility for teaching the undergraduate introductory course in plant pathology. He immediately strengthened the content and quality of the course, and enrollments changed from primarily general education majors to science majors. In 1973, he offered a totally new, innovative beginning course in plant pathology. During 1965–1976, enrollment grew from about 30 to 240. From 1973 to 1985, Dr. Merrill taught beginning plant pathology with emphasis on lectures in principles and concepts to more than 2,000 majors in agronomy, horticulture, entomology, biological sciences, plant science, and plant pathology, while also attracting students from computer science, biochemistry, and economics.

In 1967, Dr. Merrill accepted the responsibility for advising undergraduate students majoring in plant science. Because of his success in attracting outstanding students to the major, he was appointed as chairman of the Plant Science Academic Policy Committee and as professor-in-charge in 1972. From 1976 to 1985, Dr. Merrill advised an average of 33 students annually.

In addition to his teaching and advising, Dr. Merrill has given outstanding service to many teaching and teaching-related committees. For The American Phytopathological Society, he served as chairman of the Teaching Committee (1970–1973), the Special Illustrations Committee (1980–1981), and the Phytopathology Classics Committee (1978–1979). He served as chairman of the International Society of Plant Pathology Commission on Teaching (1973–1974). For Penn State, he served as chairman of the College of Agriculture Pest Management Curriculum Committee (1972–1973), Scholarship and Loan Committee (1976), the Lindback Award Selection Committee (1977–1978), and on

the University Scholars Program (1980–1987).

Because of Dr. Merrill's outstanding teaching, he was awarded The Christian H. and Mary L. Lindback Award for distinguished undergraduate teaching in 1975. This is Penn State's most prestigious teaching award, and it carries the title, "Master Teacher." In addition, he was awarded the Penn State Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit for undergraduate teaching in 1976 and the Northeast Division, APS, Award of Merit for distinguished teaching in 1984.

In 1965, Dr. Merrill designed and conducted a highly productive program of research in forest pathology. In recent years, these activities have focused on the diseases of Christmas trees, an economically important industry in Pennsylvania. He has

published more than 290 papers, popular articles, and abstracts, including books, book chapters, and major text revisions. He is an internationally recognized forest pathologist and is nationally recognized as an authority on Christmas tree diseases. He received a Certificate of Appreciation and cash award in 1987 from the USDA. He is a member of several honorary and fraternal organizations, including Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi, Xi Sigma Pi, Alpha Zeta, and Gamma Sigma Delta.

Dr. Merrill is dedicated to education and has given outstanding service to science and to his profession through teaching and research. He has been recognized locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally for his contributions, and those he has taught have carried on his high ideals.