

James Herbert Jensen, 1906–1993

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James H. Jensen, President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Botany and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University, Corvallis, passed away on February 10, 1993, in Bellevue, WA, after a distinguished career as a highly respected scientist, educator, and administrator. Jensen was born on June 16, 1906, in Madison, NE. He received B.S. and M.A. degrees in Agriculture (1928) and Botany (1930) from the University of Nebraska. He then spent a year as assistant plant pathologist at the Tropical Plant Research Foundation in Baragua, Cuba.

In 1931, Jensen married Lucille Christopher who was also a Nebraskan. Chris, as she was known, was a very supportive and enthusiastic partner in all of Jensen's professional and personal activities. They had a full and rewarding home life with four children: James, Karen, Stephen, and Roger. Chris died in 1985.

During 1931–1932 as Fellow of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Jensen worked at the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research at Yonkers, NY, and then as an assistant on the staff of the Rockefeller Institute at Princeton, NJ, under Louis O. Kunkel. Fundamental advances in understanding the nature of plant viruses were being made by the plant science research group at Princeton, and Jensen completed one of the initial studies on tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) that provided clear evidence of the existence of distinct strains of the virus and support for the concept that strains arise by mutations. He demonstrated the existence of 26 distinct strains of TMV. Jensen initiated graduate studies in Botany at Columbia University, New York, (1931–1932), and in 1935, he completed his Ph.D. in Plant Pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under Benjamin M. Duggar, an outstanding plant pathologist and leader in virus research.

From 1935 to 1937, Jim served as a plant pathologist and assistant director of the Puerto Rico Agricultural Experiment Station in Mayaguez. His research involved studies on diseases of sugarcane, grapefruit, and papaya. In 1937, he joined the faculty of Plant Pathology at the University of Nebraska, where he taught and conducted research with emphasis on diseases of beans and potatoes. Jensen also served as a member of the Dominican Republic Survey Staff with the Brooking Institution of Washington, D.C., assisting in a study on the economics of refugee settlements in the Dominican Republic.

Jensen joined the faculty of North Carolina State University, Raleigh, in 1945 as head of the section of Plant Pathology. From 1948 to 1949, Jensen took a leave of absence to serve as chief of the biology branch of the Division of Biology and Medicine of the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C. After this assignment, Jensen resumed his position as head of the Department of Plant Pathology (1949–1953). He was awarded a prestigious William Neal Reynolds Professorship in 1951. During his tenure as head, the number of faculty and staff doubled, and programs in graduate education, research, and extension were strengthened and expanded. Jensen was a persuasive advocate for plant pathology and, in particular, saw the opportunity to develop a strong program in plant nematology. Subsequently, the nematology program became one of the strongest centers for research and graduate training in the United States.

In 1953, Jensen became provost at Iowa State University, Ames, and after 8 yr, he accepted an appointment in 1961 as president of Oregon State University, Corvallis. He served with distinction in this office during student unrest and tension associated with the Vietnam War, as well as pressure for changes in the emphasis of undergraduate education. During his tenure, Oregon State University experienced the largest expansion in facilities and faculty in its history. When Jensen retired in 1969, the recognition

dinner in his honor attracted 550 attendees. The Governor of Oregon, Tom McCall, served as master of ceremonies at the banquet and commended the Jensens for the contributions they both had made to the University and the entire state of Oregon.

Jensen was active in the American Phytopathological Society, as president of the Southern Division (1953), associate editor of *Phytopathology*, councilor-at-large (1947–1948), vice-president (1953), and president (1954). For his contributions to his profession, Jensen was made a Fellow of the Society in 1967. Jensen also served as: president (1958–1959) and director (1959–1965) of the Associated Midwestern Universities; president of the organization that is now the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (1966–1967); member of the Research Advisory Committee of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research (1960–1969) and the Advisory Committee on Special Projects of the Science Education Section of the National Science Foundation; member of the Policy Advisory Board of the Argonne National Laboratory (1961–1967); and chairman of the Pesticide Residue Committee of the National Research Council (1964–1965). Jensen was an honor society member of Phi Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Xi, the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C., as well as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In 1966, Jensen was awarded honorary Ph.D.s from North Carolina State University and the University of Nebraska, and in 1977, he received a Distinguished Service Award from Oregon State University.

After his retirement in 1969, Jim and Chris spent 4 yr on an assignment with the Rockefeller Foundation in Bangkok, Thailand serving as Rockefeller representative in Thailand, Rockefeller Agricultural Project leader, and acting vice-rector for Kasetsart University. His next assignment was as senior research advisor for the Development and Research Corporation in Teheran, Iran. After completion of these assignments, the Jensens returned to their home in Corvallis and later spent several years in Green Valley, AZ. They traveled extensively, visiting family and friends.

After Chris's death in 1985, Jim continued to live for a short while in Arizona and then went to stay with his daughter, Karen Jensen Bailey, in Bellevue, WA. There, he had the loving support of his daughter and son, Stephen C. Jensen. James Jensen was preceded in death by two sons, James M. and Roger A. Jensen. His survivors include 11 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

At the time of his retirement, Jim Jensen's personal attributes were described in a gracious editorial in the *Corvallis Gazette Times*, June 11, 1969. In the editorial, reference was made to thoughts Jensen had expressed in his final University commencement address. He had said that possession of such traits as faith, loyalty, pride, devotion, spiritual dedication, patriotism, and compassion gives essential meaning to intellectual attainment. The editorial writer then stated, "James Jensen possesses in great abundance the individual values that he so much wants to be inculcated in each of his students. And added to the list should be personal qualities of dignity and courage. Dignity on all occasions, but not stuffiness; courage to take the difficult course when the easier out was more popular. Through his own personal conduct, Dr. Jensen has given the students and faculty of Oregon State University an example of how a man with a deep sense of personal values and moral order lives his own life and discharges his responsibilities. His departure and that of Mrs. Jensen from Corvallis and the University is a loss to every citizen of Oregon."

A deep sense of loss is shared by Jim Jensen's many friends and colleagues who remember him for his many professional contributions and the personal attributes described above. The Chris and Jim Jensen Library Fund has been established by the Oregon State University Foundation to which memorial contributions may be directed.