

Charles Edward Williamson

May 29, 1915 — May 30, 1996

Charles Edward Williamson, Professor Emeritus of Plant Pathology, died on May 30, 1996.

Professor Williamson was born in Newport, Indiana on May 29, 1915. He came to Cornell from Wabash College, an institution at which many young men had studied earlier under the tutelage of the illustrious Professor of Botany, Mason B. Thomas, and found their way into plant pathology at Cornell University. His undergraduate education culminated in the A.B. degree at Wabash College in 1937, and he then began graduate work at Cornell University. As a graduate student he was very helpful to other graduate students, particularly beginning students. He also was a good athlete and participated in many graduate student activities. Ed was a member of the Plant Pathology Volley Ball Team in 1941, which were champions of the Cornell Graduate League.

He was awarded the Ph.D. degree in 1949; the award delayed by service in the United States Armed Services from July 1942 to August 1946. Ed attained the rank of Captain and served as a meteorologist during the war. He lost much of his Ph.D. thesis material in a fire on Long Island, but when he returned from serving in World War II, he went to work and completed his Ph.D. degree in spite of this serious loss.

His assignment to the Cornell Department of Plant Pathology was made in October 1948, and Professor Williamson assumed duties in extension and research on ornamentals at the New York State Ornamentals Laboratory at Farmingdale, New York. Ed's early work was impressive as he demonstrated the relationship between ethylene production by leaf-spotting pathogen-host complexes and defoliation of affected leaves. He extended this work to show the practical importance of ethylene production by diseased plant tissues as it affects the keeping quality of flowers in storage or in transit.

Following this early work, was a series of contributions to the florist industry of New York State in the form of basic research for solution of specific grower problems, talks to audiences all over New York State and to many florists out of state at special schools and conferences, guidance to growers in outlining and carrying through successful cropping programs, and in many publications on control of diseases of florist crops. His work was concerned with soil sterilization and fumigation, nematode control, and the nature and control of numerous plant diseases affecting anemones, carnations, chrysanthemums, geraniums, roses, and snapdragons, among other flowers. Ed had a close relationship with growers, gaining their confidence and respect as he helped them with their many

cropping problems. He was particularly competent in diagnosis, and devoted many hours in the greenhouses and nurseries, helping growers to understand what was wrong, and then following through on his recommendations with them until the problem was solved. Ed's most recent work has been with control of foliar nematode disease of chrysanthemums, root rot of poinsettias, and geranium rust.

Aside from his professional accomplishments, Ed enjoyed square dancing, and he also worked with the Boy Scouts of America.

Ed is survived by his wife, Mildred Jane; two sons, Robert Bruce and David Lee; and a daughter, Judith Williamson Matthews.

Carl W. Boothroyd, William Mai, H. David Thurston