

Elwood George Fisher

November 10, 1916 — April 25, 1961

Elwood George Fisher, Professor of Pomology, passed away suddenly April 25, 1961, following a very brief illness. His untimely death at the age of 44 ended a relatively short career marked by numerous contributions to fruit production problems.

Professor Fisher was born in Washington, D.C., November 10, 1916. During his summer vacations from high school he worked in the fruit orchards of his uncle, Rolland Reitz, in Monroe County, New York. Here he gained an interest in fruit growing which was nurtured by the years. Later in his professional career he conducted experimental field trials in his uncle's orchards. After graduation with the B.S. degree from the University of Maryland in 1938, he worked as an assistant in horticultural research at the University of New Hampshire. In October of 1939 he was appointed junior pomologist with the United States Department of Agriculture on the Florida and Louisiana Tung Project.

In January of 1942 he started his naval career at Officer's Training School, Columbia University. He was commissioned and served on a mine sweeper (U.S.S. A.M.C. 24) based at Cape May for about thirteen months. He was then transferred to the Caribbean theater where he served on a mine sweeper (U.S.S.Y.M.S. 309) for eighteen months, the last six months of which he served as captain of the ship. After "V.E." day he was assigned to a new ship on the West Coast until "V.J." day terminated his active service with the Navy.

On June 23, 1945, he married Ruth Elsbeth Burrage at Long Beach, California. They had four children—David George, Allen Burrage, Susan Trumball, and Robert Leslie. Professor Fisher is survived by his wife, children, and mother, Mrs. Clarence G. Fisher of Washington, D.C.

With the close of World War II Professor Fisher returned to his position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a nine-month period before coming to Cornell in September 1946. He was a recipient of the DeWitt Clinton Scholarship in 1946-1947. During the remainder of his graduate work at Cornell he held a graduate assistantship. He had a major in pomology and minors in plant physiology and biochemistry. He was granted the Ph.D. degree in 1949 and immediately accepted an appointment as Assistant Professor of Pomology at Cornell. He advanced to Associate Professor in 1952 and Professor in 1959.

During the summer of 1950 Professor Fisher took a course in radioisotope techniques at the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies. While on a sabbatic leave in 1955-1956 he did research and advanced study at the Institute of Agricultural Research, Wageningen, Netherlands, and at the Long Ashton Research Station near Bristol, England.

At Cornell Professor Fisher divided his time between extension and research in pomology. As an extension worker dealing with fruit tree nutritional problems he won great respect from fruit growers. His quiet, unassuming attitude, along with his patience in dealing with practical problems of farmers, won him many friends. He was a very productive scientist in his research specialty—the application of biochemistry and plant physiology to the solution of practical problems in mineral nutrition of deciduous fruits. The Soil and Leaf Analysis Service offered by Cornell as a guide to orchard fertilization was an outgrowth of his special interest and research in this field. The pioneer effort has proved to be of considerable economic importance to the fruit industry in improving the yield of high-quality fruit. His work with radioactive isotopes contributed valuable information on the absorption of various compounds by the foliage of trees and their transport to other parts of the tree. He also made valuable contributions on the control of soil nematodes attacking sour cherry trees and on the use of herbicides as a substitute for orchard cultivation.

While he did no formal teaching, Professor Fisher served as major and minor adviser to a number of graduate students. His careful and critical approach to their problems gained their respect, and his pleasing personality and sympathetic understanding won their affection.

He was a member of the American Society for Horticultural Science, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Alpha Zeta. He was author or co-author of some twenty technical papers and numerous popular articles and extension bulletins.

His many close friends, including colleagues and fruit growers throughout New York State, share with his family a deep sense of personal loss.

O. F. Curtis, Jr., M. B. Hoffman, R. M. Smock