

Eugene A. Delwiche

November 26, 1917 — January 14, 1994

Eugene A. Delwiche, Professor Emeritus of the Section of Microbiology, died January 14, 1994 at Tompkins Community Hospital, Ithaca, New York.

Gene Delwiche was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1917. His father was a Professor of Agronomy and Director of the Branch Experiment Stations at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In 1941, Gene received his Bachelor of Science degree with honors from Wisconsin majoring in bacteriology. Soon after graduation, he entered active duty with the United States Infantry as a Second Lieutenant. He was placed in command of a Howitzer Company and remained in active service through the Second World War. At the end of WWII hostilities, his infantry company was stationed in Germany.

After receiving an honorable discharge from active duty in

1946 at the rank of Captain, Gene decided to go to graduate school. Dean LL. Baldwin at the University of Wisconsin, was a friend of James Sherman, the Head of the Department of Dairy and Food Science at Cornell University, and Baldwin recommended Cornell. As a result, Gene entered graduate school at Cornell with Sherman as his thesis advisor. He lived for a time in a room in the basement of Stocking Hall, a room that was used for many years to house graduate students.

Gene obtained his Ph.D. degree in 1948 and became an Assistant Professor in the “Laboratory of Bacteriology,” in the Department of Dairy and Food Science. However, in

1947 and 1948, he had supported himself by working as a Teaching Assistant in the class in introductory microbiology and there he had met a nutrition major named Constance Nott. He and Connie Nott were married in 1949. They remained a true Cornell family and their two sons and two daughters all became recipients of Cornell degrees.

Gene’s Ph.D. thesis research had focused on the propionic acid fermentations of the bacterial genus *Propionibacterium*, and he continued that research area throughout his career, teaching courses in bacterial physiology and chemistry. He was awarded many grants to fund the research in his laboratory, and that research resulted in numerous publications. In later years, he also studied aspects of the physiology of the anaerobic genus *Veillonella*. In addition

to directing research and teaching courses in microbiology, each year he advised about two dozen undergraduate students.

Gene was promoted to Associate Professor of Bacteriology in 1951 and full Professor in 1955. From 1951 to 1958, he was a consultant to the Biological Division of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. In 1963, he was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and spent a sabbatical leave at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, where he worked in the laboratory of Tord Holme, studying biosynthesis by bacteria of the genus *Bacillus* grown in continuous culture.

In 1965, his title was changed from Professor of Bacteriology to Professor of Microbiology and when the Department of Microbiology was formed in 1977, he became a faculty member in that new Department. Gene served on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Bacteriology*; he contributed descriptions of the genus *Propionibacterium* to the 7th and 8th editions of *Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology*; he served as president, vice president and secretary of the Physiology Division of the American Society for Microbiology, and served as program reviewer and in the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program of the National Science Foundation.

Gene served on numerous departmental, college and university committees, including the Area Committee, the Fellowship Board for Biological Sciences of the Graduate School, the Honors Committee, Curriculum Committee of the Division of Biological Sciences, and the Academic Achievement and the Petition Committees of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

He continued his research in the areas of microbial physiology and energy metabolism and served as the major advisor for many Ph.D. and M.S. students. He had membership in the American Society for Microbiology, the American Society of Biological Chemists, the Canadian Society for Microbiology and the Society for Industrial Microbiology. He was also elected a fellow and a charter member of the American Academy of Microbiology.

Gene Delwiche had stayed in the Army Reserve, as a member of the Chemical Corps, long after he had finished his active tour of duty. During the summer months, he would spend his required two weeks of active duty at the Army research laboratories at Fort Detrick, Maryland. He remained in the Army Reserve until his retirement at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1984. Also, in 1984, after thirty-six years on the faculty of Cornell University, Gene Delwiche retired that position and was granted the rank of Professor Emeritus.

For many years, Gene was a licensed “ham” operator of a radio transmitter and generously helped others who were interested in learning the hobby. In recent years, his interest turned to computers and he worked actively through

Cornell's Computer Internet Connection. Among Gene's other interests were hunting, swimming and vegetable gardening. As a member of the Ithaca Yacht Club, he participated in many waterfront activities, especially sailing. He was also a member of the City Club, a charter member of the Statler Club and was once an active golfer.

Besides his wife Constance, Gene Delwiche is survived by his four children and twelve grandchildren.

Norman C. Dondero, Harry W. Seeley, Jr., Robert P. Mortlock