

# Arthur Watson Dimock

*June 20, 1908 — April 22, 1972*

The death of Arthur Watson Dimock in his sixty-third year brought to an end the career of one of Cornell's most distinguished plant pathologists. He was born on June 20, 1908, in Middleboro, Massachusetts, and soon moved with his family to Richmond, California. He earned the B.S., M.S. and Ph. D. degrees from the University of California at Berkeley. Immediately after completing the doctoral program in 1936, he served as assistant plant pathologist for the Division of Forest Pathology, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in San Francisco. He joined the Cornell faculty in 1938 as an assistant professor and was promoted to associate professor in 1943 and to professor in 1947.

While pursuing graduate work at California, Professor Dimock developed an enduring interest in the diseases of ornamental plants. Because of this interest, he was selected to 'develop a research and extension program at Cornell for the practical solution of plant disease problems of commercial and noncommercial flower growers.

Professor Dimock possessed an unusually broad range of skills and abilities coupled with an intense curiosity. He was a respected scientist in several areas — plant pathology, botany, genetics, and mycology; he also was a talented engineer. His breadth of understanding, together with his ability to communicate effectively with the laity and scientists in diverse disciplines, enabled him to develop perhaps the most effective and comprehensive program of research and extension on diseases of ornamental plants in the United States. He pioneered critical work on the rust diseases of ornamentals, *Ascochyta* ray blight and virus diseases of chrysanthemums, *Verticillium* wilt of roses and other crops. The culture index procedure for establishing disease-free plants, which was developed in Dimock's laboratory, is recognized as an important contribution to saving the chrysanthemum industry in the early 1950s. This technique and modifications of it were the basis for the development of the chrysanthemum, carnation, and geranium industries as we know them today. His many contributions to the science of plant pathology and to industry, and his unselfish attitude in aiding his fellow man were instrumental in establishing Cornell as a leading center for the study of diseases of ornamental plants. His advice was regularly sought by many, including graduate students, his colleagues, international scientists, and members of industry.

In recent years his interest in the effects of environmental variables on the epidemiology of plant diseases was emphasized. He was called upon by the College of Agriculture in the early 1960s to develop methods and equipment for regulated environmental control of plant growth. He attacked this problem with zeal and imagination, and

his efforts culminated in the production of research plant growth chambers which are widely used by the plant science disciplines, both at Cornell and elsewhere.

Although he was not responsible for formal class instruction, his informal conferences and discussions, for which he was noted, attracted many students and colleagues who were not directly involved in his programs. While being demanding of his graduate students, he always had them work side by side with him in his program so that he could impart to them his critical approaches to the solution of problems. He emphasized the practical aspects of research and encouraged his students to do the same. He also championed the importance of interdisciplinary programs.

The contributions of Professor Dimock were recognized by the many awards he was accorded by the scientific community and industry. He was elected a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society and received the Award of Merit from the Northeastern Division of this society. The Foundation for Floriculture-Research Award was presented to him by the Society of American Florists. The New York State Flower Growers Industries recognized his contributions by a Special Award. He was field representative to the Graduate School for several years and a member of numerous departmental committees. He willingly served the American Phytopathological Society in many capacities. He was treasurer-business manager (1958-64), vice-president (1967), president-elect (1968), president (1969), past-president (1970), and associate editor of *Phytopathology* (1952-54). He had also served as a councilor of the International Society for Plant Pathology since 1968. He was a member of AAAS, AIBS, and Sigma Xi.

He took great pride in the Ellis Hollow community in which he lived and contributed many hours to its development. He organized or assisted in the organization of many of the activities which are a part of this community.

Professor Dimock is survived by his widow, Edith; a daughter, Anne; and three sons, Douglas, Thomas, and Bradford.

*R. Kenneth Horst, Robert S. Dickey, Durward F. Bateman*