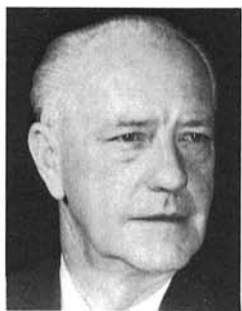


Byron R. Houston, 1914–1970

Lysle D. Leach and Edward E. Wilson



Professor of Plant Pathology Byron Robinson Houston died on December 1, 1970, following a stroke. He was born in Byron, Calif., on June 8, 1914. Upon graduation from Liberty Union High School, Brentwood, Calif., he entered San Jose State College in 1931. The following year he transferred to the University of California, Davis, where he received the B.S. degree in pomology in 1935. During his undergraduate training he won the James Monroe McDonald Scholarship in Horticulture. In 1936, he continued graduate training in the Department of Plant Pathology at Davis and Berkeley, receiving the Ph.D. degree in 1939. He was then appointed Instructor and Junior Plant Pathologist in the Department at Davis. In 1942, he was awarded a National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship, and spent that year studying in the Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin, Madison. He was advanced to Assistant Professor and Assistant Plant Pathologist in 1944, the Associate grade in 1950, and Full Professor in 1956.

Early in his career, Dr. Houston developed a strong program in research on diseases of agronomic crops. He was particularly effective in cooperative research with other members of his department and

the Department of Agronomy. Some important aspects of these research activities were proof of the transmission of alfalfa dwarf by leafhoppers and, with W. B. Hewitt, the relationship of this disease to Pierce's disease of grapevines. With J. W. Oswald, he proved that the yellow dwarf disease of barley and other cereals was caused by a virus transmitted by aphids. He was author or coauthor of 54 articles. He was also very effective as teacher of the introductory course in plant pathology and a graduate course covering the identification, nature, and control of diseases affecting vegetable and field crops.

Dr. Houston was active in the affairs of the College of Agriculture, serving on several academic committees and as Acting Dean of the College from August 1, 1956, to January 31, 1957. His interest in graduate students led to his appointment as Associate Dean of the Graduate Division in 1957 and Dean in 1961, a position held until 1967, when he returned to fulltime appointment in the Plant Pathology Department.

Dr. Houston served the Pacific Division of The American Phytopathological Society as Councilor from 1960 to 1962, as Vice President, 1962-63, and as President, 1963-64. He was also President of the Davis Chapter of Sigma Xi, 1964-65.

Surviving are six children, Douglas, Robert, Derrald, Curtis, Mark, and Marsha, his widow, Elizabeth, his sister, Hazel Cayot, and two brothers, Donald and Harold.