

Joseph Minoru Ogawa, 1925 to 1996

Harley English and Jerry K. Uyemoto



Joseph M. Ogawa, professor emeritus of plant pathology at the University of California, Davis (UCD), died on 20 January 1996. He was born on 24 April 1925 and raised on a farm near Sanger, CA. During World War II, Dr. Ogawa and his family were incarcerated in government camps in several western and central states. While in camp, he graduated from high school in Poston, AZ. During 1944 to 1945, Dr. Ogawa attended the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, where he was governmentally classified 4C, an enemy alien!, and then drafted into the United States army; ironically serving in the Counterintelligence Corps.

After the war, his family returned to California and Dr. Ogawa enrolled at UCD, earning a B.S. degree in plant science in 1950 and completing his Ph.D. degree in plant pathology with H. English in 1954. His thesis was on the comparative pathogenicity of *Monilia laxa* and *M. fructicola* to *Prunus* spp.

In 1953, Dr. Ogawa was hired in the Department of Plant Pathology, UCD. During his 38-year tenure, Dr. Ogawa developed into an outstanding teacher and a brilliant researcher. His major teaching contribution was a graduate course, "Diseases of Fruit, Nut, and Vine Crops." This is a core course in the department's training of graduate students and involves not only lectures and laboratory exercises but also extensive field trips to the major production areas of the state. Student ratings of his course were consistently high and earned him the reputation as a truly outstanding and devoted teacher. In addition, Dr. Ogawa guided 31 students in their M.S. or Ph.D. degree programs. Most of these students now enjoy highly productive careers in various universities, government facilities, or industrial companies.

Dr. Ogawa's research was devoted largely to fungal diseases of tree fruit and nut crops and fresh market tomatoes. The funds for his research came mostly from the various agricultural industries in California with the purpose of developing control measures. In this pursuit, Dr. Ogawa did a thorough study of the etiology and epidemiology of the diseases and the biology of the pathogens, which enabled him to intelligently devise cost-effective disease control.

Some of Dr. Ogawa's research accomplishments deserving mention include i) clarification of the life cycles of the two species of *Monilinia* that cause the brown rot disease of *Prunus* spp.; ii) discovery that a dormant application of benomyl inhibits the formation of sporodochia of *M. laxa* on blighted blossoms and twigs of almond and apricot; iii) recognition that postharvest decay of stone fruit is controlled best by treatments containing combinations of several chemicals; iv) elucidation of the role of quiescent infections of green fruit by *M. fructicola* in the subsequent decay of ripening fruit; v) in collaboration with Brazilian scientists, identification of brown rot resistance in Bolinha peach (germ plasm now being used in a peach breeding program); vi) extensive pioneering studies on the development of resistance in plant pathogenic fungi to fungicides; vii) discovery of the etiology of a serious and baffling disorder of the developing pistachio nut

named epicarp lesion; and viii) demonstration, for the first time, that coccoid bacteria are plant pathogens (a decay of tomato fruit).

Dr. Ogawa published more than 150 research papers, mostly in refereed journals. He coauthored two books on diseases of fruit and nut crops and coedited the recent American Phytopathological Society (APS) *Compendium of Stone Fruit Diseases*. Dr. Ogawa was recognized worldwide as one of the leading authorities on diseases of tree fruit and nut crops, which resulted in his being invited to visit several foreign countries and to participate in international congresses and workshops.

Several factors contributed to Dr. Ogawa's outstanding research accomplishments: adequate financial support, several talented graduate students and research assistants, and his ample endowment with the qualities essential for successful research—keen observation, an inquisitive and analytical mind, tremendous enthusiasm, and a seemingly inexhaustible work ethic. Although retired in 1991, Dr. Ogawa continued work on several research projects, advised his last Ph.D. degree graduate, completed two books, and wrote 15 refereed journal articles. His lifetime of research in plant pathology was truly remarkable.

Although Dr. Ogawa's primary interest was research and teaching, he also served on the APS Council for 2 years and on several APS committees including chairmanship of the Awards and Honors Committee; was associate editor of *Phytopathology* and *Plant Disease*; and was vice-president, president, and councilor of the Pacific Division of APS.

In recognition of his outstanding accomplishments, Dr. Ogawa was elected an APS Fellow and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the society's Pacific Division. Among his most treasured awards were plaques and honors given him by several agriculture organizations in recognition of his tremendous help in controlling diseases of their crops.

Dr. Ogawa was unpretentious and preferred sport shirts and blue jeans to more formal attire; and he enjoyed field research fully as much as that in the laboratory. He was "Joe" to all who knew him. The motivation for his research was based as much on helping growers as on making some outstanding scientific discovery. His impact on California agriculture was well stated recently by an almond grower: "He spoke the farmer's language and his philosophy was: 'How can I save money for the growers and at the same time increase production'; in all his work that's what stands out."

One of his former students wrote "Joe imparted a sense of plant pathology's contributions to California agriculture and a sense of excitement that we were part of it all. His enthusiasm was infectious. From Joe we learned that hard work and fun could be constant companions. He took his students seriously and guided them into excellent careers."

Joe Ogawa will be long remembered not only for his professional accomplishments, but also for his friendliness, sincerity, and delightful sense of humor. We who knew him well have gained tremendously from our association with him.

Dr. Ogawa is survived by his wife, Margie; two daughters, Julie and JoAnn; a son, Martin; three grandchildren; two brothers; and four sisters.