

## Forrest Cook Strong, 1896-1965

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The Michigan State University Department of Botany and Plant Pathology lost one of its most beloved emeriti when Forrest Cook Strong died on October 1, 1965, from heart failure as a consequence of pneumonia. He had been convalescing at home after abdominal surgery, and apparently was making a good recovery.

Forrest Strong was born in Chicago, Illinois, on August 16, 1896. After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War I, he entered Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University), and received the B.S. degree in Horticulture in 1924, and the M.S. degree in Plant Pathology in 1927 under the guidance of the late Ernst A. Bessey. Mr. Strong also did advanced graduate work toward the Ph.D. degree in Forest Pathology at the University of Michigan in 1929 and 1930 under the direction of C. H. Kauffman. He completed all requirements except finishing his thesis research, which was concerned with the anthracnose disease of sycamore and white oak.

While an undergraduate student, Mr. Strong did summer work in the barberry eradication program of the Office of Cereal Investigations, USDA, in the Great Lakes area. In the summer of 1927, he was an Assistant in the USDA Division of Forest Pathology in the southern Appalachians, where he worked on the chestnut blight disease. With this latter experience began a life-long love of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky mountain region.

Mr. Strong was a member of the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology at Michigan State University for 38 years. He was appointed Assistant Botanist in 1924, and held the rank of Instructor from 1925-1929; he was Assistant Professor from 1930 until 1957, and Associate Professor from 1957 until his retirement in July, 1962.

He married Miriam Carpenter, then a graduate student in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, in 1928. Miriam Strong also became a plant pathologist in the department, and the Strongs became one of the few husband-wife teams in The American Phytopathological Society.

Mr. Strong had an active research career which emphasized control of numerous diseases of forest and shade trees and of woody ornamentals important to Michigan. His knowledge of diseases was encyclopedic,

and he freely gave of this knowledge to others. State agencies, industry, private individuals, and plant pathologists elsewhere frequently sought his advice and counsel. Mr. Strong played a leading role in establishing regulatory and control measures for the Dutch elm and oak wilt diseases through cooperation with state, county, and municipal officials. These practices served as models for those in other states. He set up the first laboratory for the diagnosis of these diseases in Michigan, an operation since assumed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and cooperated with this agency in numerous programs during his career. He published over 50 articles on descriptions, occurrence, and control of important diseases of woody plants in Michigan.

Mr. Strong's contributions as a teacher were perhaps even more significant than those of his research. His courses in Diseases of Shade Trees and Diseases of Forest Trees drew consistently large enrollments, and his engaging personality and dedication to his students made him a uniquely popular teacher. At various times, he also taught General Botany and Mycology. He trained several graduate students who earned the Ph.D. degree.

The personal qualities of Forrest Strong are probably his most permanent and affectionate memorial. He possessed an open, attractive personality with a hearty sense of humor. He was a genuine and generous friend, and a delightful and considerate companion. The Strongs, without children of their own, gave generously to more than a few students in need of financial assistance to pursue an education. Forrest and Miriam were an exceptionally devoted couple, sharing a love of good music, good theater, and good dining. They loved travel, and particularly enjoyed annual trips in the area of the Great Smoky mountains. Forrest faithfully attended Miriam during her long illness, which began shortly before their retirement, often to the point of near exhaustion. It is indeed tragic that they were denied the fulfillment of a dream of a rich retirement life together.

Mr. Strong held membership in The American Phytopathological Society, Sigma Xi, AAAS, the Botanical Society of America, and the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters. He was particularly active in the National Shade Tree Conference, serving as a member of its Board of Governors for many years, and as its President in 1944-1946. He was President of the Michigan State University Chapter of Sigma Xi in 1947.