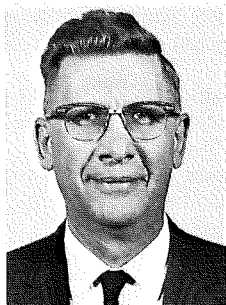


Kermit William Kreitlow, 1913-1971

S. A. Ostazeski



Kermit William Kreitlow, phytopathologist and Assistant Chief, Forage and Range Research Branch, USDA, died September 21, 1971, at the age of 58, in the Holy Cross Hospital, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Kermit, the only child of William A. and Ida Bade Kreitlow, was born July 24, 1913, in Minneapolis, Minn. He attended the local schools and the University of Minnesota, where he was awarded a B.S. degree in Agronomy and Plant Genetics in 1936. He took his M.S. degree in 1938 and his Ph.D. degree in 1940 in Plant Pathology at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

From 1938 to 1940, he was a teaching fellow in the Department of Botany, Bacteriology, and Plant Pathology at LSU. He was Research Fellow for the year July 1940-June 1941 at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Princeton, N.J.

In July 1941, Dr. Kreitlow joined the USDA as Plant Pathologist at the U.S. Regional Pasture Research Laboratory, University Park, Pa. Here he studied stripe smut of bluegrass, with emphasis on the morphology, physiology, pathogenesis, and economic importance of this pathogen. Later, at the Pasture Laboratory, he described other pathogens of grass species, and initiated new work on diseases of some leguminous hosts. While at the Pasture Laboratory, he began a search for practical measures to control forage crop diseases. He found host resistance to some diseases, and suggested alternative controls for others. Some of the diverse problems that he worked on at this time were crown rust of ryegrass, *Sclerotinia trifoliorum* on clover species, virus diseases of clovers, and bacterial wilt of alfalfa. Always practical, he demonstrated a talent for devising low cost techniques and simple equipment for mass screening of forage species.

In August 1950, Dr. Kreitlow was transferred to Beltsville, Md. At the USDA Plant Industry Station, he developed into one of the world's authorities on diseases of forage crops. Part of his new assignment was to supervise the work of plant pathologists of his Branch stationed at the experiment stations. This required extensive travel, and undoubtedly it was during this time that he won the friendship of so many, and earned fame for his extraordinary knowledge of forage crop diseases. Supervising the work of plant pathologists was soon routine, but he also had the responsibility of advising the Branch's agronomists, plant breeders, and geneticists. Some of these men were isolated from professional plant pathologists, and were frequently confronted with

unfamiliar diseases often listed only in the literature, and with control measures nonexistent or uneconomical in practice. As witness to his depth of knowledge, the titles of his 102 publications concern, singly or in various combinations, 20 different hosts and 21 different pathogens, excluding viruses.

In August 1964, Dr. Kreitlow became Assistant Chief of the Forage and Range Research Branch. Although administration occupied the bulk of his time, he still kept his keys to the laboratory and greenhouse. He managed a few experiments where maintenance could be done by others, but where the observations made and notes taken were his pleasurable responsibility.

Dr. Kreitlow served The American Phytopathological Society well. With the first issue of PHYTOPATHOLOGY in 1951, the name of K. W. Kreitlow appeared regularly as Editor of the News. He continued as such until this single-page item was replaced by the separate and more comprehensive *Phytopathology News* in 1967. In the Potomac Division, he served as Vice-President in 1956, and as the Division President in 1957. He also served on the Society's publication committee, and as its representative to the American Forage and Grassland Council. In this capacity, he was Chairman of the Diseases of Herbage Plants session at the meeting of the 8th International Congress which met at Reading, England, July 11-21, 1960. In addition to The American Phytopathological Society, Dr. Kreitlow was a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi, the Washington Academy of Sciences, the Botanical Society of Washington, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Until his illness, he was co-chairman of the United States-Australian Rangeland Panel, which fosters cooperation in research on rangelands and exchange of scientists between the two countries. He was an enthusiastic worker in the congregation of the First Baptist Church of Silver Spring, Maryland, where he served on its Board of Deacons, worked with the congregation's youth groups, and taught Sunday school classes.

Dr. Kreitlow was meticulous in everything he did. His extensive catalogued file of references and aids and his personal wealth of information were frequently sought and willingly shared. To have had Kermit Kreitlow as a colleague was to work with a man of great energy, high standards, a generous spirit, and an optimistic outlook. A friendly quip and ready smile were characteristic of the man, no matter how hurried or harried. Though we mourn the loss of this good friend and able scientist, we are grateful for the legacy he left, one of distinct scientific contribution, and of enduring memories.

Dr. Kreitlow is survived by his wife, Matie Ditlevson Kreitlow, his sons, William and Donald, and his mother, Ida Bade Kreitlow.