

Wilbur Theodore Schroeder, 1911-1972

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Wilbur Theodore Schroeder, professor of plant pathology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, in Geneva, New York, died of a heart attack on February 24, 1972. Bill, as he was known to his friends and associates, was born January 28, 1911, at Des Plaines, Illinois, where his father was a successful farmer and ornamental nurseryman. He early became familiar with the practical aspects of agriculture, and appreciated these throughout his life. After completing his secondary education at Des Plaines, he entered the University of Idaho with a major in agronomy. He graduated with honors in 1937 and was awarded the M.S. degree in 1938. He then turned to plant pathology and continued his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin, which awarded him the Ph.D. degree in 1941.

After a brief association with a commercial vegetable-processing company, where he served as field pathologist, he returned to academic research, first at the University of Wisconsin and then at the Geneva campus of Cornell University. He was appointed assistant professor of plant pathology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in 1943, associate professor in 1948, and professor in 1951. This rapid promotion was in recognition of his outstanding abilities in research.

His successful career in research with a wide spectrum of vegetable diseases and their control, resulted from a unique combination of dedication, thoroughness,

persistence, and practicality. He believed that research should ideally lead to the development of practicable and economic control of plant diseases and that even fundamental studies of disease organisms and their epidemiology should be conducted with this end in view. His major interest was to identify and select genetic resistance to diseases, and this research led directly to the development of varieties of spinach, peas, beans, and tomatoes resistant to several important diseases. His versatility also enabled him to make significant contributions in the areas of fungicidal seed treatments, physiogenic diseases, concentrate fungicides, and the effects of environment on disease epidemiology and severity. His results, published in 112 technical articles and in innumerable popular presentations, led to recommendations for vegetable disease control that were widely adopted in New York State and elsewhere.

Among his colleagues and acquaintances, Professor Schroeder quickly established a lasting reputation for integrity and industry. He was forthright and outspoken about his convictions, but tolerant of the opinions of others, even when not in agreement.

His major hobby was landscaping. The grounds of his country home were maintained immaculately, filled with flowers and a tree and shrub collection worthy of envy by many arboreta. He was justly proud of this collection and delighted in discussing it with visitors. He was an active member of the First Lutheran Church of Lyons, and had served as a member of its council. He was a member of Delta Chi, Alpha Zeta, Sigma Xi, and The American Phytopathological Society.

Professor Schroeder is survived by his wife, Charmion Childs Schroeder, a son, and two daughters.