

## Harvey W. Rankin, 1893-1973

Homer D. Wells and Curtis R. Jackson



Harvey W. Rankin, Emeritus Head of Plant Pathology Department, University of Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, Georgia, and former member of The American Phytopathological Society, died in the Tift General Hospital June 24, 1973. Harvey is survived by his wife, Helen, and two sons, Dr. Robert L. Rankin of Lawrence,

Kansas, and Dr. James E. Rankin of Marietta, Georgia.

Harvey was born September 23, 1893, in Monongahela, Pennsylvania. The family moved to Georgia when he was eight years of age and lived in Valdosta and Tifton before settling in Blackshear in 1906. He graduated from the Presbyterial Institute in Blackshear in 1910 and attended the University of Missouri for one year (1911-1912). During the next five years he assisted his father in operating their East Georgia farm.

In 1917, Harvey volunteered for officers training in the U.S. Army, served as a field artillery officer during WWI in Europe, and was discharged as a Captain in 1919. He served in the Army Reserves from 1922 until he was called to active duty for WWII in 1942. After a severe back-injury, Harvey was given a disability retirement at the rank of Major in 1945.

From 1919 to 1923 Harvey worked in Technical Direction and Production with the Aluminum Company of America in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. He entered the University of Georgia in 1923 and earned his B.S. degree in Agriculture in 1926, and the M.S. degree in Agriculture in 1927. He taught from 1927-1930 at the South Georgia A & M College and the Georgia State College for Men (now Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College). It was during his tenure at Georgia State College for Men that Harvey met Miss Helen Engel from Chicago to whom he was married May 24, 1930.

In 1930, Harvey entered Graduate School in the Plant Pathology Department at Cornell as instructor and completed his course work toward a PhD degree in Plant Pathology. He left Cornell in 1935 to become the University of Georgia's first Extension Plant Pathologist. In 1937, he left the University of Georgia to accept a position as Extension Plant Pathologist at Pennsylvania State where he served until his recall to active military duty in 1942.

The back injury suffered while in the Army had incapacitated him to the extent that he could not return to his position as Extension Plant Pathologist at Pennsylvania State. On the advice of his doctors he moved to Arcadia, Florida, where warm sunshine and time were prescribed as the best medicine. By 1947, he had regained his health sufficiently to accept the position of Head of the Plant Pathology Department at the University of Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station at Tifton. In spite of the fact that he continued to be plagued by his back injury, Harvey carried on a heavy research load until his retirement in 1961. His research at Tifton was devoted primarily to developing seed treatments, agronomic and horticultural practices, and spray programs for control of diseases of most of the agronomic and horticultural crops grown in the area. He worked extensively on internal cork of sweet potatoes and was the first to demonstrate insect transmission of this disease. At the time of his retirement, Harvey was pioneering in the use of general soil fumigants for multiple pest control in cooperation with nematologists, entomologists, and herbicide specialists.

While convalescing in Arcadia, Harvey began working as a volunteer with the American Red Cross. His love for the American Red Cross remained with him in Tifton and he served on the Tift County Board of Directors for many years. He was general chairman and was primary founder and, for eight years (1961-1969), chairman of the bloodmobile program. Harvey also helped to start the local United Givers organization. He was volunteer Executive Secretary of the organization for the first two years and also served on the board of directors.

Harvey was above all a man of unquestionable integrity and straightforward sincerity. He was incapable of dissembling, a fact that occasionally led him to speak plainly and forcefully on issues that he believed to be important. His gentlemanly good humor, friendly optimism, and complete lack of personal pretense were characteristics that endeared him to all who knew him. He was an inveterate reader of prose and poetry and had a lifelong love of music and dancing. Harvey was an excellent conversationalist and an unparalleled story teller. Those in attendance at the Southern Division Annual 'Smokers' were always delighted when Harvey could be prevailed upon to relate a portion of his extensive repertoire of succinct stories. Harvey's many friends and associates not only valued his professional advice, but also sought his philosophic approach and guidance on personal matters.