

## Dr. F. A. Wood, 1932-1985

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Dr. Francis Aloysius "Al" Wood died of cancer 22 August 1985. Dr. Wood was born 17 November 1932 in Perryville, Missouri. He received the BS degree in forestry in 1955 and the MS in botany in 1956 from the University of Missouri. From 1956 to 1958 he served in the U.S. Army, principally in the biological warfare research unit at Fort Detrick, Maryland. He received the PhD degree in plant pathology from the University of Minnesota in 1961 and then joined the faculty of the

Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, The Pennsylvania State University, as assistant professor.

As professor of forest pathology at Penn State, Al appreciated the importance of the application of modern environmental sensing and electronic data acquisition systems to phytopathological research. He and his students at Penn State made significant contributions to the quantification of the effects of the environment on spore release of Hymenomycetes. He was among the first to appreciate the significance of Vanderplank's approach to epidemiology. He not only developed a course in epidemiology of plant disease, but also was in part responsible for developing epidemiology as the core concept around which both the undergraduate and graduate courses in plant pathology were structured. He soon recognized the potential for great damage to trees and other organisms caused by air pollutants. As assistant director of the Center for Air Environment Studies at Penn State, he not only initiated studies of the effects of various pollutants on woody vegetation but also stimulated numerous others to develop research projects relating to environmental pollution.

Al developed an extensive interdisciplinary consulting team involving not only plant pathologists, but also foresters, entomologists, and chemists from three major universities. He initiated a long-term environmental impact study to document local and regional effects of air pollutants on vegetation prior to and subsequent to the establishment of a battery of three mine-mouth coal-burning electrical generating stations. At one time, this project involved over a dozen people, a greenhouse operation to rear pollution-sensitive indicator plants, and a plane for field travel. This study continues under the direction of others and has amassed a greater volume of data than any similar study in the United States. Because of his expertise, Al served extensively as expert witness regarding pollution damage to vegetation.

In 1972 he became head of the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Minnesota and soon found financial support for research on environmental pathology. His choice of new staff broadened the emphasis of the department from crop pathology to basic studies in population genetics, epidemiology, and air pollution research.

In 1977 he became dean for research in the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida. His leadership resulted in many new and effective interdepartmental, statewide, regional, interagency, and industry-related programs. Major facilities were added, including a statewide computer network and centers for mass spectroscopy and electron microscopy. Extramural funding was significantly increased, and there was major faculty involvement in long-range planning and decision making.

He was a tireless and articulate advocate at state, regional, and national levels of the benefits of biotechnology to agricultural research. He served as director for biotechnology at the University of Florida. As chairman of the National Association of State Universities and Landgrant Colleges Division of Agriculture's Committee on Biotechnology, he accepted a special three-month assignment in Washington, D.C., where he worked closely with other committee members and agencies to gain a new \$20 million appropriation for competitive funding of biotechnology research. For his efforts in this area, he received a special award from USDA Secretary John R. Block in July 1985. President Robert Clodius of the National Association of State Universities and Landgrant Colleges wrote, in a letter to Al,

The leadership you provided was truly outstanding, and, indeed, one might say there was no other person at this time in history who could have done what you did. Not only was it accomplished with a high degree of professional skill, but it reflected your own good humor, your great good will, and your patience with your fellow humans who sometimes were not as quick as you to see the importance and significance of it all.

All of us who were both observers and participants want you to know and the record to show your contribution. And we wish future beneficiaries of the fruits of agricultural biotechnology to know that they owe a debt of gratitude in some part to your great efforts.

His outstanding scientific ability, his vision, and his gift of inspiring others led to many honors and positions of trust. He also served the American Phytopathological Society in numerous capacities, including Councilor-at-Large for three years and as a member of the Organization Committee for the 1978 International Congress of Plant Pathology, Munich, Germany. He was instrumental in establishing the Pollution Damage to Plants Committee of APS.

Al was not only an outstanding teacher, scientist, and administrator, but was an individual who gave of his time, energy, and resources to many people. He was a kind and considerate person who was slow to judge and who put the interests and aspirations of others above his own.

He is survived by his wife Dolores, two daughters, Sheree and Shelley, five sons, Craig, Norbert, Bradley, Douglas, and James, and six grandchildren.