

A. Frank Ross, 1911-1989

W. F. Rochow



A. Frank Ross died on March 28, 1989, at the Baptist Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona, following a heart attack. Frank was a modest scholar whose combined programs of teaching and research provided a model for many others. He applied his background in agriculture and biochemistry to his specialty in plant pathology—plant virology—with a success all out of proportion to the fact that he never had any formal training in plant pathology. Frank was a good example of the potential

of a solid scientist working in a field different than that of his training.

Professor Ross was born in New Hampton, Missouri, on April 20, 1911. His B.S. in agriculture, with distinction, was awarded in 1933 by the University of Missouri, where he also earned the M.A. degree. At Missouri his lifelong interest in virology began when he worked in the virus laboratory of Dr. C. G. Vinson. His Ph.D. degree in agricultural chemistry was obtained at the University of Wisconsin in 1937.

He studied plant viruses for three years at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research at Princeton University and for six years as biochemist at the University of Maine. During World War II, he served as a consultant on food dehydration and preservation for the Office of the Quartermaster General. He came to Cornell as associate professor of Plant Pathology in 1946, became professor in 1949, and was appointed professor emeritus in 1973. The first course in plant virology at Cornell, which Frank initiated, became one of the most effective graduate courses in the Department of Plant Pathology. He also served the Department as acting head and as graduate field representative. Other assignments included visiting plant pathologist, University of Puerto Rico; visiting professor, University of California, Berkeley; and visiting scientist, Laboratory for Virology,

Wageningen, The Netherlands, under the auspices of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Fulbright Award.

Frank was active in affairs of the American Phytopathological Society. In addition to serving as a member or chairman of numerous committees, he represented the Society on the Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was editor-in-chief of *Phytopathology* from 1955 through 1957. Frank was associate editor of *Virology* and a member of the editorial committee of the *Potato Association of America*. He was a member of the *Virology and Rickettsiology Study Section* of the National Institutes of Health.

Professor Ross held memberships in the honorary societies of Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Sigma Delta, Alpha Zeta, and Pi Mu Epsilon. In 1968 the American Phytopathological Society presented the Fellow Award to him. Frank was also honored by invitations to lecture at many national and international meetings, such as the Third International Symposium on Virus Diseases of Ornamentals.

Frank made many contributions in research on the isolation and characterization of viruses, the analysis of mixed infections, and the nature of mechanisms that restrict virus replication and movement within plants. His balanced programs of research and teaching were supported by the National Science Foundation and by the National Institutes of Health during many of his 27 years of service at Cornell. Graduate students benefited from the quality of his research, the clearness of his writing, the soundness of his teaching, and the preciseness of his editing. He was the major advisor for 20 students and the informal advisor for many others. His insistent seeking of reasons and facts caused many students and colleagues to re-examine their concepts and statements. He really made a productive application of the motto of his home state—"Show me!"

Frank is survived by his wife, Avis Lucille Ross of Sun City, Arizona; his daughter Rebecca Irene Ross of Phoenix, Arizona; his son John Charles Ross of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; and by grandchildren.