Excellence in Teaching Award

This award was established in 1987 by the APS Council in recognition of excellence in teaching plant pathology. The award is presented to individuals with active responsibility for one or more courses in plant pathology and recognizes the individual's distinguished proficiency in teaching, as indicated by development and effectiveness of courses taught.

Gail L. Schumann

Gail L. Schumann was born in Cincinnati. She received a B.S. degree in botany from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in plant pathology from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. In 1987 Dr. Schumann became an assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she successfully integrated plant pathology into an upper-level course in integrated pest management. She also developed several new and modified courses, including a course in plant pathology for nonscience majors that serves to educate students of diverse backgrounds about critical issues in agriculture and plant pathology. A textbook developed for the course, Plant Disease: Their Biology and Social Impact, was published by APS Press, St. Paul, MN, in 1991 and is one of the few current texts on plant pathology written for nonspecialists.

Dr. Schumann's excellence in teaching has been widely recognized. One of her students in the course using her text, wrote "that every student should be required to take this course prior to graduating from this University. It enables you to appreciate the world around us. I will never look at it the same way. She is outstanding. Although I had no interest in this course initially, I found it to be a very interesting class. The class is designed to teach intro biology and it does a good job. . . . What is best about the class was that many of the issues covered are relevant to the present. Gail Schumann was an energetic teacher who always made herself available to students."

In another written course evaluation a student commented that she was "one of the few who is truly professional and still remains a humanitarian." Not surprisingly, her students have nominated her for the University Distinguished Teaching Award and for Advisor of the Year. She received the Outstanding Teacher Award from the Turf Management Program in 1988 and from her college in 1991; the APS Genesis Award for Teaching in 1988; and the Lilly Faculty Teaching Fellowship from her university in 1991. This Excellence in Teaching Award is especially fitting for this professional and caring teacher who carries the banner of plant pathology into the classroom.

Excellence in Extension Award

This award was established in 1988 by the APS Council in recognition of excellence in extension plant pathology. The Award is presented to those involved in formal plant pathology extension with recognized superior contributions in developing or implementing leadership roles in local, regional, or national honor societies or professional organizations.

Thomas A. Kucharek

Thomas A. Kucharek was born in Cleveland. He developed an interest in agriculture while attending Kent State University, Kent, OH, and worked as a summer helper at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station in Wooster. He earned an M.S. degree from the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, then moved to Stillwater, OK, under an exchange program in which he continued his graduate studies. He completed his Ph.D. research and received his degree from the University of Minnesota. He began his career as extension plant pathologist at the University of Florida in 1970.

Dr. Kucharek is recognized for his development of an outstanding extension plant pathology program in Florida and for his role in helping growers utilize research information effectively in a systems approach to plant disease control. His first goal in Florida was to organize a plant disease diagnostic clinic based on contemporary technology.

Dr. Kucharek developed control strategies for numerous diseases of vegetable and agronomic crops in Florida. He improved spray programs and urged use of resistant cultivars as ways to develop more integrated systems of disease control. He was involved with southern corn leaf blight and soilborne wheat mosaic outbreaks and helped identify resistant germplasm. He developed a disease control program for peanut based on field trials, which includes use of predictive models, effective spray techniques, and crop rotation. Dr. Kucharek established a downy mildew warning service for watermelons and developed a sanitation program that has significantly reduced black rot on commercial crucifer farms. He designed an integrated pest control program for home garden use that has been widely adapted, even in other states. He has most recently been involved in developing control programs for tomato spotted wilt virus.

Early in his career Tom developed a reputation for staying in inexpensive motels located near fishing piers. One night he rented a small motel room for $4. The manager guaranteed that he would need no air conditioner because the room had a fan and the evening breeze was cold. The fishing was enjoyable, but sleep was impossible. Tom learned never to rent a room with a one speed fan. I am glad that Tom has a high-speed extension program. We are proud to present this Excellence in Extension Award to Tom Kucharek for developing this program.