

Carl W. Nichols, 1924 to 1995

Dan Y. Rosenberg and George Nyland



Carl W. Nichols passed away suddenly on 13 April 1995 at his home in North Highlands, CA. Dr. Nichols was born in State Center, IA, on 1 June 1924 and lived in Hart, MI, during his early years. He entered Michigan State University, East Lansing, in 1941, but his college career was interrupted by World War II.

Carl served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1946 and afterward reentered Michigan State University and received his

B.S. degree in 1948. He entered graduate school at the University of Idaho, Moscow, and received his M.S. degree in plant pathology in 1949. That same year he entered the doctoral program in plant pathology at the University of California (U.C.), Davis, and obtained his Ph.D. degree in 1952 under the direction of G. Nyland.

Carl spent nearly 2 years in a post-doctorate program at U.C. Berkeley with T. E. Rawlins. He accepted a position as an associate plant pathologist in the Bureau of Plant Pathology, California Department of Agriculture, in August of 1953. In June of 1955, Carl married Marilyn Orr.

Carl was promoted in 1966 to chief of the Bureau of Plant Pathology, and in 1972 was appointed assistant director of plant industry. In 1976, Carl was appointed chief of analyses and identification; he served in that position until June of 1986 when he retired.

Dr. Nichols served on the Western and National Plant boards. During 1980 to 1981 and 1981 to 1982, he served as chairman of the National Plant Board. During that period, Carl was instrumental in revising and updating the National Plant Board's Principles of Plant Quarantine.

Dr. Nichols published over 50 papers on plant pathology. Included in his many accomplishments was his work on crop loss assessment. His interest was triggered by previous work in plant disease detection and the pear decline problem in California in the early to mid 1960s. It was during this period that Carl was appointed an associate in the experiment station at U.C. Davis.

Carl Nichols was an innovative and creative scientist. His interests and perceptions in analyzing plant disease problems were well recognized by those who worked with him throughout his career.

Carl is survived by his wife Marilyn; three sons: Steve, Andy, and Mike; and seven grandchildren. He also is survived by his brother, David Lloyd Nichols of Howe, TX.