

Richard A. Chapman, 1918 to 1994

David A. Smith



Richard A. Chapman, Emeritus Professor of Plant Pathology at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, and first chairman (1963 to 1968) of the department, died suddenly of an apparent heart attack following a long illness at his home in Lexington, KY, on 23 October 1994. The son of Edgar Wright and Elsie May Alexander Chapman, Dick was born on 5 July 1918 in Akron, OH, where he spent his early childhood.

Dr. Chapman graduated with a B.S. degree in biology from Kent State University, Kent, OH, in 1940. He then joined the University of Illinois, Urbana, from 1940 to 1942, as a graduate teaching and research assistant. From 1942 to 1944, he was employed as a control chemist by Hiram Walker and Sons, Inc., Peoria, IL. Dr. Chapman served in the United States Navy from 1944 to 1946, thereafter returning to the University of Illinois to complete his Ph.D. degree in plant pathology and biochemistry in 1948. From 1948 to 1950, Dr. Chapman worked as an assistant plant pathologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven, where he was a Crop Protection Institute Fellow.

In 1950, Dr. Chapman initiated his long association with the University of Kentucky, Lexington. Over the next decade, he was affiliated with the Agronomy and Botany departments, holding the titles associate plant pathologist, plant pathologist, assistant professor and associate professor, until attaining the rank of professor in 1960. Dr. Chapman played a formative role in establishing the Department of Plant Pathology, in 1963, and served as its first chairman for about 5 years. In 1965, Dr. Chapman was also chairman of the Department of Botany. With the exception of a sabbatical leave at the University of Florida, Gainesville, in 1969 to 1970, Dr. Chapman provided 34 years of dedicated service to the University of Kentucky.

Dr. Chapman directed a major research effort in nematology that concerned nematode parasites of red clover, alfalfa, soybean,

and corn. He was particularly interested in the variability of root-knot and cyst nematodes and factors influencing their population dynamics. Dr. Chapman significantly impacted Kentucky agriculture through his research and control recommendations for nematodes. Especially important was his advocacy of the use of KY 31 fescue in rotation or as a cover crop with Burley tobacco for control of lesion and root-knot nematodes. Dr. Chapman was also involved early on in investigations of the tall fescue fungal endophyte, addressing studies of fescue toxicity in 1964.

During his years at the University of Kentucky, Dr. Chapman devoted considerable energy to instructional activities and teaching courses including "Nematode Diseases of Plants," "Introduction to Plant Diseases," "Plant Pathology," "Agrichemicals in Pest Management," and "Mycology" as well as various introductory courses in agronomy and botany. Dr. Chapman was noted for his considered and wise counsel.

Dr. Chapman was active in several professional societies and fraternities. He was a member of the American Phytopathological Society, the Society of Nematologists, the Botanical Society of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Helminthological Society of Washington, the Kentucky Academy of Science, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Sigma Delta, and Omicron Delta Kappa. Following his retirement in July of 1984, Dr. Chapman worked with Operation Read. He was a member of St. Raphael's Episcopal Church in Lexington.

Dr. Chapman's survivors include his wife, Evelyn Rose Holligan Chapman; daughter, Ann Elizabeth Chapman Bates; son-in-law, Daniel Lynn Bates; and three grandchildren.

Dr. Chapman played a key role in the development of plant pathology endeavors in Kentucky, and he was instrumental in founding the academic program in plant pathology at the University of Kentucky. His foresight and energy generated substantial rewards for Kentucky. Dr. Chapman was greatly admired and respected by his colleagues for the gentleman and scholar that he was. He will be fondly remembered.