

CLARENCE MITCHELL TUCKER, 1897-1954

T. W. Bretz

Clarence Mitchell Tucker, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Botany at the University of Missouri, died after a prolonged illness on February 3, 1954, in Columbia, Missouri.

The son of Joseph Davis and Lena Theophilus (Swinney) Tucker, Mitchell was born in Centralia, Missouri, on October 28, 1897. He received the baccalaureate degree in Agriculture from the University of Missouri in 1920, after having served with the U. S. Marine Corps in 1918-19. He became Professor of Plant Pathology at the University of Puerto Rico in 1920, and in 1923 was appointed Plant Pathologist in the Federal Agricultural Experiment Station, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, a position he held until 1930. He spent the academic years 1926-27 and 1929-30 in research and graduate study at the University of Missouri and the Boyce Thompson Institute. In 1930 the University of Missouri awarded him the degree, Doctor of Philosophy. Dr. Tucker served as Associate Plant Pathologist in the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station the following year, and returned to the University of Missouri as Associate Professor of Botany in 1931. In 1937 he was appointed Professor and in 1938 became Chairman of the Botany Department, in which capacity he served until the time of his death.

As an outgrowth of work on coconut bud rot, caused by *Phytophthora palmivora* Butler, during his first years in Puerto Rico, Professor Tucker became interested in the taxonomy of the genus *Phytophthora* de Bary. Through his researches he acquired an international reputation as an authority on this group of fungi, and he maintained his eminence in this field throughout his career. He will be best remembered in Missouri for his work on the development of tomato varieties highly resistant to Fusarium wilt that yielded exceptionally large harvests when grown under typical Missouri field conditions. His active research in this and other phases of plant pathology were recorded in a continuous series of publications, and attracted a growing group of advanced students who profited much from his warm personal interest and broad technical knowledge.

Through his quiet dignity and modesty, Mitchell Tucker's high motives and incisive mind were ever apparent. Appointments and elective offices that required objective judgment and trust gravitated to him. He served as Councillor-at-Large in the American Phytopathological Society during 1946-47, as its Vice President in 1949 and its President in 1950. During 1946-48 he was an Associate Editor of *Phytopathology*. He held several key administrative posts in the University of Missouri including the chairmanships of the University Policy Committee, the Wildlife Council, and Arts and Science Personnel Committee. During the academic year 1951-52 he served as Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. His University



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colleagues elected him President of their chapter of Sigma Xi, President of the University Club, and Arts and Science Representative on the University Committee on Tenure. He held memberships in the American Society of Botany, the Mycological Society of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Missouri Academy of Science, the Missouri Historical Society, Sigma Phi Epsilon, and Rotary International.

On September 15, 1920, he married Helen Baskwell Jones of Ocala, Florida. Besides his wife he is survived by their only child, Jacqueline Lee (Mrs. James C. Dowdy), one brother and two grandchildren.

The memory of Professor Tucker's inspiring scientific leadership, his sense of fairness, and his insight into human values will remain an enduring influence at the University of Missouri and among his colleagues in the field of plant pathology.

Chairman
1938-1954
Scientist