



IN MEMORIAM

Harry Hyde Laidlaw, Jr.
Professor of Entomology, Emeritus
Davis
1907–2003

Professor Emeritus Harry H. Laidlaw, Jr., died on September 19, 2003 at his residence in the University Retirement Community. He was 96 years old.

A bee biologist since childhood, Professor Laidlaw joined the Department of Entomology at UC Davis in 1947, and made significant contributions to the department, the university, and the scientific community throughout his life. He is recognized by his peers worldwide as the "father of honey bee genetics", and perhaps is best known for developing artificial insemination technology for honey bees. His work enabled selective breeding of honey bees and the fundamental study of insect genetics. He authored numerous scientific publications and four books on honey bee genetics and breeding. He received many national and international awards for his research and his service to the University, agriculture, and the beekeeping industry. He was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1955 and the Entomological Society of America in 1991. He was honored by the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science with their Award of Distinction for his many contributions to the University and society.

In addition to his teaching and research responsibilities, Professor Laidlaw served as the first associate dean for research in the College of Agriculture in 1969. He retired from the University in 1974, yet he remained active in his research and outreach efforts on behalf of the University. In 1980-1985 he established a honey bee breeding program for the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture as part of a joint UC- Egypt agricultural development program. In addition, he continued to publish scientific papers and modify and refine his instruments for artificial insemination of honey bees, and wrote two new books. He published his last scientific paper at age 87 and his last book at 90. In 2001, he was honored by the renaming of UCD's Bee Biology laboratory to the "Harry H. Laidlaw, Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility."

His late boyhood and teen years were spent in the southeastern U.S. working as a beekeeper with his grandfather. Although he had never completed elementary school, he was able to enroll as a special student at Louisiana State University. In 1934 he completed a master's degree in entomology, and from there he went on to earn a Ph.D. in genetics and entomology from the University of Wisconsin in 1939. In 1942, he was inducted into the Army, commissioned, and served as the Army Entomologist for the First Service Command in Boston, Mass. While there, he met Ruth Collins – they were married in 1946.

In addition to his role at the University, Harry was active in many community organizations. He was an Elder in the Davis Community Church, he headed UCD's ROTC unit, and he was Faculty Fraternity Advisor for the local chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. He also was a lifelong supporter of organizations that promoted learning experiences for young people, such as the local AFS club and 4-H.

Harry greatly enjoyed travel and photography, and was able to integrate these passions into his professional life. He traveled across the U.S. and Canada, and eventually to many countries in the world — connecting with bee researchers and breeders as he went. He documented the trips and his research with his camera and leaves behind an extensive photographic record.

Although his work accomplishments put him in league with the world's great scientists, he humbly accepted the recognition he received while encouraging and praising the achievements of others. He leaves us all a legacy of friendship and love — a life fully lived and talents well used. Harry is survived by his wife, Ruth, daughter, Barb, son-in-law, Joe, granddaughter, Pam Murphy, as well as many other relatives and dear friends.

Robert Page
Barbara Murphy