



IN MEMORIAM

Frank X. Ogasawara
Professor of Avian Sciences, Emeritus
Davis
1913 — 2002

Frank X. Ogasawara died at the age of 88 on June 8, 2002 of complications from surgery for a recently diagnosed cancer. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Kay Ogasawara, daughter, Pam Ogasawara and her husband, Mike Corson, daughter, Patty Sanui, son, Paul Ogasawara and his wife, Christie Guth, and 5 grandchildren. His academic career had been on the Davis campus, originally in the Department of Poultry Husbandry, later renamed the Department of Avian Sciences.

Frank's father was a section foreman for the Southern Pacific railroad, stationed in Battle Mountain, Nevada. Frank's mother died when he was about 7 years old and his father was left with the responsibility of bringing up the young boy. They routinely ate dinner with their neighbors, an Italian family, and Frank played with their son and often accompanied the family to mass. Frank's daughter, Pam, says that this knowledge explains two enigmas in Frank's life; how he became a Catholic, and why he preferred spaghetti and meatballs to sushi.

Frank graduated from high school during the depression and worked on the railroad as a section hand for several years. By 1939 he had saved sufficient funds and was able to come to UCD as a freshman. When the campus was closed in 1942, Frank went to Utah, working in the sugar beet fields, harvesting fruit and helping process turkeys. Frank married Kay Inouye, originally from Carlin, Nevada, in 1945.

When the University reopened after the war, Frank and Kay came to Davis where Frank continued his studies, leading to the B.S. degree in poultry husbandry in 1949 and continued on to receive his Ph.D. in physiology in 1957. He was appointed to the faculty, eventually climbing the academic ladder to full professor. His specialty was avian reproduction; Fred Lorenz was his major professor. He and Fred pioneered many of the techniques for artificial insemination of turkeys. Frank also organized a crew, which went out on weekends to several ranches in the valley to inseminate turkeys, before such a service was available commercially. He and Fred identified sperm nests as storage sites for semen in the oviduct of turkey hens. This finding explained the long period of fertility following a single mating. He also did extensive work in developing methods for diluting and freezing avian semen, which must retain viability for extensive periods of time. This makes it a much more demanding and difficult process than that involved with mammalian semen. He worked on these projects with Dr. Tom Sexton at the USDA, Beltsville and with Dr. Peter Lake of the Poultry Research Center in Edinburgh. Frank also worked with the reproduction of many avian species, focusing on improving the chances of survival of endangered species and the possibility of preserving genetic material. Frank was one of the founders of the UCD Raptor Center, which has become important in raptor rehabilitation and in teaching. Frank collaborated effectively with other departmental members. An example is his work, notably with Dr. V.S. Asmundson, on the creation of hybrids between various avian species, pheasant/ chicken, pheasant/ turkey, chicken/ quail, etc. These were important in studies of avian relationships, chromosomal structural changes during evolution and even genetic differences in behavior. An article on the Japanese long-tailed fowl, published in the National Geographic magazine provides another example of his diverse interests.

Many academic honors came to Frank, such as the National Turkey Federation Research Award, the Ralston Purina Teaching Award, election as a Fellow of the Poultry Science Association and an honorary member of

the Japan Zootechnical Society. Dr. Peter Lake at the Poultry Research Center in Edinburgh commented “in scientific research, Dr. Ogasawara has established a reputation in the field of reproductive physiology and particularly with regard to semen physiology, turkey breeding and studies on hybridization.”

Frank was an outstanding teacher; he offered an introductory poultry course and a physiology course, and participated in a specialized reproduction seminar. He was a caring and effective advisor with a personal interest in every one of his advisees. His graduate students have excelled in various positions in academia and the poultry industry. His commitment to service to the industry is exemplified by the outstanding outreach activities of his former student, Dr. Francine Bradley. Frank’s good friend and past president of Kasatsart University in Thailand, Dr. Phaitoon Ingkasuwan, wrote, “I learned with a heavy heart that Frank Xavier Ogasawara passed away. Frank is remembered as a good friend, a good teacher and a good spiritual mentor, and most appropriately as an excellent husband and father. He was boundless in wisdom and energy, trying to help others who needed assistance and/ or spiritual comfort.” In recognition of his contributions to the undergraduate experiences of UC Davis students, Chancellor Vanderhoef recently announced that one of the new residential complexes will be named in Frank’s honor.

Frank was a giving, caring and generous person. He treated everyone with respect and dedicated himself to the success of others. He was concerned that he not be a burden to anyone else. He had an uncanny sense in detecting where help was needed and lending a helping hand. He served effectively on many college and departmental committees. His was the guiding hand behind the local chapter of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, both during and even after his long service as its secretary.

Frank displayed his usual vigor and enthusiasm in community volunteer work. He was a coach for a Davis Little League team, and very active in many organizations such as the Davis- Woodland Gem and Mineral Society, the UCD Emeriti Association, the Davis Chapter of AARP and St. James’ Knights of Columbus.

Frank loved people and kept in contact with the students, scholars and visitors with whom he had become acquainted over the years. His own travels took him to many parts of the world. He was the unofficial host for many visitors and would assist them with their U.S. travel plans. Conversely, he assisted many of his friends, colleagues and students in planning trips abroad, arranging often for them to meet friends of the campus in other countries.

All who knew Frank were sure to encounter his unique sense of humor. Even long- time friends could have difficulty in determining whether he was serious or not. He was meticulous in organizing the details of social activities for the benefit of others. Even in the hospital during his last stay, he asked the priest who came calling, “Why are you here? I’m not ready for you yet.”

Ursula K. Abbott
Barry W. Wilson
F. Howard Kratzer