



IN MEMORIAM

Samuel Goodnow Wildman
Professor of Biology, Emeritus
Los Angeles
1912–2004

On August 16, 2004 UCLA lost Samuel G. Wildman, a dear friend, teacher and mentor. Sam, who was born on May 26, 1912 in Placerville, California, received his B.A. from Oregon State in 1939 and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1940 and 1942, respectively. After a brief stint at the U.S.D.A. during the war years, in 1944 he went to California Institute of Technology as a senior research fellow to work with James Bonner. Several other former UCLA faculty members, including George Laties, Bernie Phinney and Anton Lang were also there at the time. While there he became interested in tobacco mosaic virus, studies that he later continued at UCLA.

He came to the Department of Botany at UCLA in 1950. The Departments of Botany and Zoology merged to become the Department of Biology in 1972. Sam was a member of the Department of Biology at the time of his retirement in 1979. He helped to integrate the plant sciences curriculum that remained from the days of the UCLA College of Agriculture (1946-1955) with the curriculum in plant physiology that became possible with the arrival of the group that came from Caltech. Sam was involved with the planning for the Plant Physiology building and green houses that were built in the early 1950s. He was also one of the earliest members of the Molecular Biology Institute in the early 1970s. He also spent time as a visiting fellow at CSIRO in Canberra, Australia in the 1960s and again in the early 1970s, and took another sabbatical at Kings College, University of London in 1975.

The viral studies led to the discovery of what he first called Fraction I protein. This protein is found in chloroplasts and is an important enzyme in photosynthesis. It is also the most abundant protein in plants and probably on earth. The fact that he was able to crystallize it led to David Eisenberg's group determining its three-dimensional structure. Sam continued his interest in chloroplasts with studies of their structure and particularly the organization of the photosynthetic membranes within chloroplasts. Sam was keenly interested in observations of cells and organelles in living tissues. He and his students developed ways of preparing tissues that permitted direct observation of the dynamic nature of chloroplasts in tomato leaf hairs. Sam and his students filmed subcellular movements and the resulting film was widely distributed and used by researchers and plant physiology students throughout the world! His studies have inspired others to continue research to understand the surprising activities of chloroplasts. He had a long history of collaborations with scientists from all over the world. It was typical to see Sam with his international students and collaborators at the Bomb Shelter in lively discussions on a range of topics. In 1979, the American Society of Plant Physiologists honored Sam with its Charles Barnes Life Membership Award.

Although he closed his lab upon retirement in 1979, he remained actively involved with the careers of his friends, students and many collaborators. He maintained a lively interest in science for the rest of his life, greatly facilitated by the age of email and the internet. Sam's publication record spanned more than 60 years, with papers still in press at the time of his death. Sam will be remembered by his friends for his warmth, sense of humor and a great interest in handicrafts. Many of his close friends will treasure small stained glass

pictures, wood boxes with stone inlays, and other products of his active and creative hands. Early students and colleagues remember Sam as an avid outdoorsman and trout fisherman.

Sam is survived by Sophie, his wife of 70 years; his daughter Kate Wildman Nakai; grandson Daisuke Nakai; granddaughter Maki Nakai; and two great granddaughters, four nieces and one nephew. He is deeply missed by family, friends, former students and collaborators.

Elma L. González
Elaine M. Tobin