



IN MEMORIAM

Edgar Page Painter
Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus
UC Davis
1908 — 2003

Edgar Page Painter died on February 22, 2003 at the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento at the age of 94. He was born on October 2, 1908 in Schuyler, NE, the son of rancher James Byron Painter and his wife Ida Page Painter.

Ed graduated from High School in Colome, SD, in 1928, and received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1932 from South Dakota State College in Brookings. While working as a chemist for the Agricultural Experiment Station in Brookings for four years with Professor Kurt W. Franke on selenium in proteins from toxic grains, he also simultaneously pursued his Master of Science degree, which was awarded in 1935. In fall 1936, Ed continued his graduate work at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul and received his Ph.D. in 1939 working with Professor Ross Aikin Gortner, Jr., in the Division of Agricultural Biochemistry. Ed's thesis research in part continued his interests in the behavior of selenium compounds in cereal grains, specifically their decomposition in alkaline solution, and in part dealt with new methods for the synthesis of amino acids.

After leaving Minnesota, Ed first worked at the Washington State Agricultural Experiment Station for six months as an assistant chemist. Then, in the spring of 1940, he went to the North Dakota Agricultural College and Experiment Station in Fargo, ND, where he became Chairman of the Agricultural Chemistry Department and in 1945 was appointed professor of biochemistry in the Department of Chemistry. While in North Dakota, Ed's published research dealt with fatty acid composition and chemistry of linseed oil from flaxseed, and synthesis of selenium analogs of sulfur containing amino acids. In 1941 he published a lengthy review on the chemistry and toxicity of selenium compounds which continues to the present to be widely cited.

In the spring of 1947, Ed came to UC Davis as an associate professor of chemistry and Biochemist in the Experiment Station. He achieved the rank of professor in 1953. His research at Davis was on anomerization of sugar acetates, asymmetric synthesis, and substitution reactions of acyclic sugar acetals.

On first coming to Davis, Ed taught in the General Chemistry sequence and also, from 1947 until 1959 when the Department of Biochemistry was established in the College of Agriculture, he was the sole instructor of upper division level biochemistry lecture and laboratory courses. After this he taught in the organic chemistry sequences and an annual natural products course.

Ed served for a number of years as a chemistry undergraduate advisor and on the Academic Senate courses committee. He was a chair of the Sacramento Section of the American Chemical Society. During the 1950s he was active in the Davis Little League, the Boy Scouts of America and the Sierra Club. Ed was very interested in politics, was active in the Democratic Party, and had strong opinions on a variety of issues. He always enjoyed an active, outdoor life, even in his later years. As a youth he excelled at track and was the South

Dakota high school champion in the 440- yard race. After moving to Davis he became an avid backpacker and mountain climber with eleven ascents of peaks over 14,000 feet. He also liked kayaking, both alone and with friends and family. In 1974, Ed took a sabbatical leave in Munich which he remembered with pleasure. After he retired from the University in 1975 he operated a ranch in the Capay Valley where well into his 90s he raised cattle, grew garden vegetables, and made wine. He loved to invite people up to the ranch to share the joys he found there.

Ed is survived by his wife Ruth Robbins Painter, whom he married in 1940, his brother Charles Painter of Austin, MN, his children Jane Clapp of Sacramento and Page Painter of Davis, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Edwin C. Friedrich
Raymond M. Keefer
James H. Swinehart
George S. Zweifel