



IN MEMORIAM

Robert W. Allard
Professor of Applied Genetics
Davis
1919–2003

Robert “Bob” W. Allard died March 25, 2003, in Davis. He was born September 3, 1919, to Alma Roose Allard and Glenn Allard, in the San Fernando Valley, where he grew up.

When he was ten years old, he decided he wanted to be a plant breeder. To that end, he developed a hands-on love of growing plants and graduated from the College of Agriculture at UC Davis. He then earned his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. After World War II, he started his academic career at UCD, where he served until his retirement.

He was one of those singular people who can be said to have founded a scientific discipline, in his case, the field of plant population genetics. He was a world figure in plant genetics, whose contributions ranged from the genetic dissection of complex traits to ecological genetics to crop breeding to mathematical and statistical theory in genetics.

Perhaps his most important work was embodied in a long series of articles on the genetics of predominantly self-fertilizing plants. This comprehensive series of articles used all the tools then available to science to investigate the impact of extreme inbreeding on the genetic architecture of plant populations. Allard not only focused on the genetics of plant populations, but was keenly aware of their ecological setting and led efforts to integrate genetics with ecology in the 1960s and 70s.

In addition to his contributions in basic research, Allard was a master of applied genetics. He was one of the leading plant breeders of his generation and he wrote the major textbook on plant breeding, which was widely adopted in the U.S. and abroad. He was at ease in the two worlds of basic and applied science and he contributed importantly to developing and then applying new knowledge for the improvement of agriculture.

Allard's contributions to his science spanned more than 50 years, beginning before World War II and continuing long after his retirement in 1986. He was a teacher and mentor of monumental proportions, having trained 56 doctorate students and more than 100 master's students over his career. His students have gone on to influence the sciences of crop breeding, population genetics and molecular evolution and many have assumed leadership positions in industry, academics and government.

He also contributed greatly to his university by leading in the development of genetics at UCD and by chairing a department that was widely viewed as one of the world's leading genetics departments during his tenure. He also served as president of several scientific societies, including the Genetics Society of America, the American Genetic Association and the American Society of Naturalists.

Allard's contributions to his science and to his university earned many honors over the years. He was elected to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Election to both of these national scientific honor societies is in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the field of plant genetics. He was a recipient of both the DeKalb- Pfizer Distinguished Career Award and the Crop Science Award by the Crop Science Society of America. He was honored as the Nelsson Ehle Lecturer of the Mendelian Society of Sweden and as the Wilhelmine Key lecturer of the American Genetic Association. He

was also named Faculty Research Lecturer at UCD and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Helsinki in Finland and the University of Leon in Spain.

It was at the University of Wisconsin where he met and married Ann Catherine Wilson, who was his wife of 59 years. Bob and Ann have five children who all grew up in Davis. The couple also has seven grandchildren. His family benefited greatly from the rich and intellectually stimulating friendship of his scientific associates and his worldwide travel, which included three sabbaticals, frequent international lecturing and visits to the National Academy of Sciences.

He is survived by his wife Ann Allard, of Davis; his brother Leland Allard, of Modesto; and his daughters Susan Allard, of Davis, Jane Allard Allen, of Petaluma, Gillian Allard, of Bainbridge Island, Wash., and Stacie Allard, of Flexweiler, Luxembourg. His grandchildren are Gabriel and Meryl Craig of Davis, Thomas and Jackson Allen of Petaluma, Emma Kirchner, of Bainbridge Island, Wash., and Ella and Lukas Tikka, of Luxembourg.

Allard spent his career in advancing the field of plant genetics producing new knowledge and mentoring a number of students who have achieved recognition for their major contributions to the field of molecular and population genetics. Professor Robert W. Allard represents the best in what is expected from a University faculty member and he will be missed by his colleagues and his family.

D. William Rains
Shu Geng
Jan Dvorak