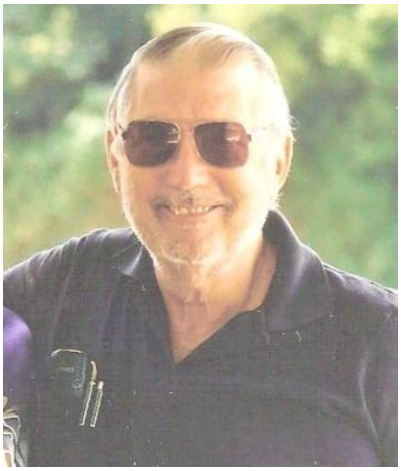

IN MEMORIAM

John R. Parmeter Jr.
Professor of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, Emeritus
UC Berkeley
1927 – 2010

John Richard (Dick) Parmeter Jr. was born on September 16, 1927, and died of heart failure on October 27, 2010. Dick grew up in The Dalles, Oregon. At the age of 17 he joined the U.S. Marines, and was preparing for the invasion of Japan when the atomic bomb ended the war.

He attended Eastern Oregon College from January 1947 to June 1948, and then transferred to Oregon State College, where he graduated with honors in 1951, earning a degree in botany with a minor in forestry. He then went east to the University of Wisconsin, where he earned a Ph.D. in plant pathology in 1955 and as a bonus met and married his wife, Anita. His dissertation was entitled "Oak wilt development in bur oaks." Following graduation he worked for the U.S. Forest Service at the Lake States Experiment Station studying "Microclimate in relation to distribution of white pine blister rust." In 1957 he was hired as assistant professor of plant pathology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he stayed until his retirement as professor in 1990.

Since Dick was the first professor in the Department of Plant Pathology to teach and conduct research primarily on forest diseases, the challenges of developing a teaching and research program were daunting. His stated philosophy was a "desire to do good work, to entertain and amuse my curiosity, to maintain a high standard for myself and the department, and to somehow balance these goals in reasonable proportion."

He taught courses on the biology of plant parasitic fungi and forest pest management, and lectured in several classes in the College of Natural Resources. Dick mentored many graduate students and was sought after as a teacher and counselor who had the interest and would take the time to guide students in their studies and research programs.

He loved research and teaching, but he believed that if you earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree you should also have some understanding of classical literature. For example, he might ask a student, "What do you think was the strategy and significance of the Greeks' victory over the Persians at the Battle of Marathon?" Dick did not necessarily expect an answer; he just wanted to see how the student would respond. A favorite comment of his was Klipstein's "Law No. 2: Firmness in delivery dates is inversely proportional to the tightness of the schedule." In a serious world, Dick enjoyed such relaxing moments.

Dick's research achievements were many and varied. He authored and co- authored dozens of scientific and technical papers on various aspects of forest pathology. He became a world authority on the root pathogen Rhizoctonia and contributed a substantial amount of new information on the biology, epidemiology, and control of a serious disease of conifer forests caused by the dwarf mistletoes in the genus Arceuthobium. He was the first to identify air pollution as the cause of the death of pines in southern California and later

contributed substantially to a better understanding of the disease and its mitigation. He worked in Yosemite National Park to identify and aid in developing management strategies for diseases that were causing serious tree losses as well as hazardous conditions to the public in this national treasure. Other examples of his interests and achievements are studies on the interactions of weather, insects, and pathogens on death and damage in conifer forests; the lethal effects of components of smoke on forest fungal pathogens; research on "gall rusts" of conifers with regard to their potential impact if introduced on conifers elsewhere in the world; research on the identification of several unknown diseases in California's urban forest environment. Dick was also among the earliest investigators to embrace the concept of integrated pest management (IPM) (1981), and along with a few others, recognized and published on the effects of weather modification (climate change) on forests and forest diseases and pests.

Dick was an enthusiastic supporter of the College of Natural Resources and departmental functions. Over the years he chaired and served on numerous college and departmental committees, including supervising many Ph.D. candidates in plant pathology. He was also an active member and served in many outside organizations: American Phytopathological Society; Western International Forest Disease Work Conference; California Forest Pest Action Council (Advisor to Governor); and, Mycological Society of America.

Dick's leadership, along with his joy in research and working with others, led to a very productive career. Through these cooperative efforts he was often granted substantial financial research support from the state and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

On a more personal note, I had the honor and pleasure of being Dick's first graduate student. He was a new professor and I a forestry graduate and recently discharged GI. We seemed to connect with one another immediately. Through patience and understanding he mentored me to completion of my graduate program. By good fortune I was employed by the U.S. Forest Service Experiment Station in Berkeley and had the opportunity to collaborate with Dick on pathology research over the duration of our careers. Over that time we not only became working colleagues, but also close friends. We both loved the out of doors, and spent many days together camping, fishing, and hunting. He was an accomplished artist, but painted mostly for his own enjoyment. He also loved music. We spent many hours together in the lab or traveling to and from field research listening to his taped classical music.

Shortly after retirement, Dick and his wife Anita moved to Florence, Oregon, where they could enjoy the beautiful coastal environment. Unfortunately, I saw less of him after that. In 2008, former students organized a reunion in Idaho, in which many of his students and colleagues paid tribute to their beloved professor and friend.

Dick is survived by his wife Anita, son Jack, and daughter Amy.

"To sit on a rock or log where no one has sat before and to contemplate the sweep of geology or biology unfettered by civilization is close to a religious experience. The only things like it are love and music."

John R. Parmeter (1927-2010)

Robert F.
Scharpf
2011