

## MAXWELL JAY DORSEY

The sudden death, on July 22, 1966, of Dr. Maxwell Jay Dorsey, emeritus Professor of Horticulture, marked the passing of an individual widely known and respected, not only by his University colleagues and many friends in the community, but also by members of such allied scientific disciplines as botany and genetics, and by personnel of all segments of the horticultural industry.

Dr. Dorsey was born near Dresden, Ohio on May 3, 1880. He graduated from Michigan State College in 1906, and received the Ph.D. degree from Cornell University in 1913.

He was Horticulturist at the University of Maine, 1906-07; Assistant Horticulturist at the New York Experiment Station, 1907-10; Horticulturist in charge of Fruit Breeding at the University of Minnesota, 1911-21; and Head of the Department of Horticulture, West Virginia University, 1921-25. He came to the University of Illinois as Head of the Division of Pomology in 1925, was selected Head of the Department of Horticulture in 1940, and retired in 1948, following which he was Secretary-Treasurer of the National Peach Council from 1949 to 1957.

His professional life began in an era of change in horticultural experimentation. His graduate work resulted from his recognition of the need for training in the basic sciences in the solution of the ever-increasing problems in horticulture. He was one of a relatively small group of horticulturists who changed the methods of investigation from simple experimentation to research that made use of the techniques of other areas of knowledge, and thus inaugurated the impetus for the development of the present intensive search for knowledge concerning the basic facts about the life processes of horticultural plants.

To obtain information and experience to be used in the conductance of his research and in the interpretation of the results therefrom, Dr. Dorsey traveled to all of the major fruit regions and experiment stations, both State and Federal, in the United States. As a result he was widely acquainted with, and respected by, the leading horticultural research workers. In travel through the British Isles and continental Europe he visited the most important fruit regions and experiment stations.

Dr. Dorsey was a skilled anatomist and cytologist, techniques which he used in the study of the development of the reproductive organs of fruits in relation to sterility, fruit drops, and fruit development, and in the determination of the characteristics of spring-frost injury to fruits and of its effect on their subsequent development. The results were applied in his fruit breeding research.

While at Minnesota he made the crosses which resulted in the introduction of the widely grown Latham red raspberry, and of apple varieties adapted to the Minnesota climate. At the University of Illinois he carried on an extensive program in peach breeding, in addition to his administrative duties and other research. From this work he introduced peach varieties which are

still used in breeding because of their hardiness and resistance to the bacterial spot disease.

The published results of his research activities number approximately 150, including research bulletins, papers in scientific journals and transactions of horticultural societies, and his contribution to the monumental series of books on the Fruits of New York.

In recognition of his contributions to horticultural science he was elected to Honorary Life Membership in the National Society of Horticulture in France, President of the American Society of Horticulture Science in 1924, and as a Fellow in the latter society in 1966. Michigan State University honored him with the Alumni Award for Distinguished Service in 1953, and the Centennial Citation in 1955. The American Pomological Society awarded him the Wilder Medal on January 7, 1967, in recognition of his outstanding leadership and service to the fruit industry of the State of Illinois.

He was a member of The American Pomological Society, The American Society for Horticultural Science, American Society for the Advancement of Science, Botanical Society of America, Sigma Xi, Gamma Alpha, and Alpha Zeta.

Dr. Dorsey had wide-ranging interests other than horticulture. He was an accomplished archer, competing successfully in regional and national meets. For many years, he made an annual trip to the North Woods to hunt deer with bow and arrow, usually successfully. Among other uses of his highly-developed wood-working skills was the construction of his bows and finely-balanced arrows, usually made from carefully-selected osage orange logs collected from many parts of the state.

Among his many other interests were anthropology, genealogy, camping, fishing, and mountain climbing. His very genuine interest in people, particularly young people, endeared him not only to the students he worked with at the university but with many other young people whose lives he helped to influence over the years. This interest in people and things led him to form the Dial Club at the University of Illinois, a discussion group which represents a cross section of the university. He enjoyed these monthly meetings, and never missed one unless his work necessitated his absence from the campus. He was also an active member of Rotary International.

To his widow, the former Jean Muir, whom he married December 9, 1914, their son John Muir Dorsey and his family, we extend deepest sympathy, and appreciation for his contributions toward the enrichment of the lives of his students, colleagues, and friends.

John C. McGregor  
William A. Neiswanger  
John S. Titus  
Richard V. Lott, Chairman

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Sub-committee of the Committee on Resolutions of the University Senate

June 5, 1967