

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

CHARLES E. CLIFTON

It is with much regret that this Committee records the death, on October 7, 1976, of Charles Egolf Clifton, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Medical Microbiology since 1969.

Charles Clifton's 40 years as a member of the faculty of this University spanned periods of considerable changes in institutional character and prestige. These evolving trends never swayed his own sense of purpose or his convictions about what he perceived as of central importance, namely, work well done, a strong sense of helpfulness to students, colleagues, and mankind generally, and a gentle but firm impatience with hyperbole and with proliferations of formalized guidelines for the conduct of affairs, professional and other.

He arrived at Stanford in 1929 with experience that had included training through a Master's degree at Ohio State University (his birthplace was Etna, Ohio) and a Doctorate at the University of Minnesota, the first awarded by that institution in the then embryonic discipline of Biophysics. He remained in Minnesota as a Fellow of the Mayo Foundation for the subsequent years 1927 and 1928, and then had a taste of commercial work in the laboratories of Eastman-Kodak for part of a year. In Minnesota he met a lovely young nurse, Esther Ora Carlson, who joined him, after their marriage in 1932, in the California adventure.

Dr. Clifton's professional interests were concerned with the metabolic activities of bacteria, during the era when biochemical pathways were being unraveled and found to apply as well to higher forms of life, including man. He made important contributions in the area of energy metabolism to this developing, understanding, and in the process trained a number of graduate students and Fellows who later made their own marks in this and related fields. During the World War II years he turned his attention to providing a method for producing the newly discovered penicillin by a continuous flow process, with considerable success. This product was the first penicillin used in a patient in the then Palo Alto Hospital by Dr. Blake Wilbur. Meanwhile, he wrote two textbooks: *An Introduction to the Bacteria* and *An Introduction to Bacterial Physiology*, both of which were for some years standard volumes in the field. In the mid-1930's he spent a year abroad, working at Cambridge and at Delft, where he and his wife fostered friendships that endured throughout his life. He took pride also in an annual course in General Bacteriology for undergraduate students, managing to provide through homely laboratory exercises, such as the preparation of sauerkraut, a feeling of fun along with an appreciation of the microbial maneuvers that produce such products. For many years he and his wife provided a weekly seminar session at their home in Los Altos, where a discussion of science was preceded by gustatory delights and a game of softball in the next-door half-acre, which they eventually bought in order to be able to continue this custom in the face of a burgeoning local population. He participated as well in courses for medical students, and on several occasions was Acting Head of his Department. Following his retirement, his former students expressed their appreciation of his guidance and friendship with a book of assembled letters and the presentation to the Department of a photographic portrait and a library fund in his name.

Among his professional activities outside the University, a notable one was his Editorship of *Annual Review of Microbiology* from the year of its inception in 1947. These

volumes remained under his guidance until 1972; during those years they attained and held international esteem. He served at various times on the editorial boards of other professional journals, and was a member of The American Society of Microbiologists, The Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, and Sigma Xi.

Dr. Clifton's concerns for others were manifested by his community activities. For many years he was an enthusiastic member of Kiwanis, and in Los Altos he served at various times as a member of the School District Board of Trustees, of the Water Commission, and of the Capital Improvements Committee. At home he was a talented gardener, and over a period of some years developed unusual gifts as a water colorist. Charles Clifton was, to resort to a hackneyed but appropriate phrase, "A man for all Seasons."

Dr. Clifton is survived by his wife and two sons, Charles, Jr., who is a member of the Department of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, and John, of Sunnyvale, co-owner of a camera shop in Palo Alto, as well as five grandchildren. His colleagues, associates, and many friends join this Committee in expressing great sorrow at Dr. Clifton's passing, and in offering heartfelt sympathy to his wife and family.

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