



## WALTER SAMUEL FLORY, Jr. 1907 - 1998<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Walter S. Flory, Jr., Babcock Professor Emeritus at Wake Forest University, was born on October 5, 1907 in Bridgewater, Va., and died on June 8, 1998 at the age of 90 in Winston-Salem, NC.

Professor Flory served the Virginia Academy of Science in many capacities: Flora Committee (1949-63); Research Committee (1949-50); Chairman, Research Committee (1951-54); Council (1952-62, 1964-72); President (1955-56); Chairman, Long Range Planning Committee (1960-62); Natural Resources Committee (1962-63); Chairman, Biology section (1962-63); Chairman Publications Committee (1964-72); and, Awards Committee (1974-77). He won the J. Shelton Horsley Research Award in 1949, and the Ivey F. Lewis Distinguished Service Award in 1969. He was named a Fellow of the Academy in 1972. For the 50th anniversary of the Academy in 1973, he wrote *History of the Virginia Academy of Science*. Dr. Flory was very active in the Academy and he set an example for us all – he expected his students to attend the annual meetings and to present papers.

Walter was an outstanding young Virginian. As a teenage farm boy in Bridgewater, he was on the state 4H Judging Team at the International Dairy Congress in Syracuse in 1923; and again in 1924 at the International Livestock Show in Chicago. He was “Big Chief” (President) of the Virginia State 4H, 1927-28.

<sup>1</sup> Submitted by Dr. Raymond O. Flagg, Carolina Biological Supply Company. Photo shows Dr. Flory (left) being presented UVA President & Visitors Research Prize by Dean Ivey F. Lewis in 1951.

Walter was an outstanding student. He was class president his junior and senior years at Bridgewater College. After graduation from Bridgewater College in 1928 with honors and a double major (chemistry and foreign languages), he entered the University of Virginia as a Blandy Fellow. He earned an M.A. (1929) under William A. Kepner in one year and a Ph.D. in Biology (1931) under Orland E. White in another two years, at the age of 23. He enjoyed a year of post-doctoral work (1935-36) at Harvard as a National Fellow and Research Associate in Biological Science with E. M. East and Karl Sax. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Sigma, Tau Kappa Alpha and Sigma Xi.

Dr. Flory was an outstanding geneticist, botanist and educator. He served with distinction at several institutions: 1931-32, Charge of Technical Work for Shaver Bros. Inc.; 1932-34, Instructor of Science at Greenbrier Jr. College; 1934-35, Prof. of Biology at Bridgewater College; 1936-44, Horticulturist at Texas Agricultural Experimental Station (Tex. A&M); 1944-47, Horticulturist at Virginia Agricultural Experimental Station (V.P.I.); 1945-48, Collaborator with the US Dept. of Agriculture; 1947-63, Prof. of Experimental Horticulture at U.Va., and Vice Director and Manager of the Blandy Experimental Farm; 1955-63, Curator of the O. E. White Research Arboretum; 1964-76, Director of Reynolda Gardens; 1969-72, President of Highlands Biological Station; 1972, Research Consultant for Fairchild Tropical Garden; 1963-80, Babcock Prof. of Botany at Wake Forest University.

Dr. Flory contributed significantly to professional organizations other than our Academy: the Association of Southeastern Biologists (Exec. Committee 1956-59; VP 1960-61; Pres. 1962-63; and wrote A 50-Year Historical Perspective 1937-87 of the ASB for its 50th anniversary); Am. Assn. Bot. Gardens and Arboretums (Editorial Bd. 1962-64); Am. Boxwood Soc. (Co-founder, Treas., Ed., Dir. 1961-63); Am. Magnolia Soc. (VP 1968-74); Bot. Soc. of Am. (Chrm. Southeastern Sect. 1951-52); So. Appalachian Bot. Club (VP 1962).

Dr. Flory was AAAS Fellow, and was elected an honorary life member in Am. Begonia Soc., Am. Boxwood Soc., Fairchild Tropical Garden, Friends of Blandy, and La. Soc. for Hort. Research. Other honors bestowed upon him include: President and Visitors Research Prize, U.Va. (1951 for paper on rose pollen and associated phylogenetic factors); Sc.D., Bridgewater College (1953); Alumni Award, Bridgewater College (1956); Special Citation, Highlands Biological Station (1973); Herbert Medal, American Plant Life Society (1978 for work on amaryllids); Outstanding Service Award, Bridgewater College (1981).

Dr. Flory's involvement and recognition exceeded national boundaries. He was a delegate to the International Botanical Congress in Paris (1954), in Montreal (1959), in Edinburgh (1964), in Seattle (1969) and in Sydney (1981). He was a member of the International Genetics Congress in Montreal (1958) and in Tokyo (1968). He was a member of the International Horticultural Congress in College Park, Md. (1966) and in Sydney, Australia (1978). He was an invited lecturer at the International Seminar on Chromosomes in Calcutta (1968 and 1976). He was also honored as a Bicentennial Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society.

In the passing of Walter S. Flory, Jr. the Virginia Academy of Science has lost one of its most able, loyal and enthusiastic members. Dr. Flory was an outstanding scholar, and a person who was enthusiastic and devoted to his work, his plants, and the interests of the many individuals who crossed his paths.