Reported Death

Arthur Howard Thompson

Arthur Howard Thompson, Professor Emeritus of Horticulture at the University of Maryland, died on 15 Aug. 2008 in Catonsville, MD. He was 90 years old.

Art grew up on the Minnesota Northeast Experimental Station in Duluth, a branch experiment station of the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station that Art's father established in 1913 and later served as superintendent for 40 years. The station had two research orchards, and Art developed an early interest in pomology. He received his BS in horticulture from the University of Minnesota in 1941, and his PhD in horticulture from the University of Maryland in 1945. He then worked as a pomologist at the USDA Field Station in Wenatchee, WA, from 1945 to 1950, and as a research horticulturist at the West Virginia Experimental Farm in Kearneysville from 1950 to 1952. In 1952, he was hired as a professor of horticulture at the University of Maryland, where he remained until his retirement in 1983.

During his long and productive career, Art pioneered research into the chemical thinning of apples and peaches, the chemical control of preharvest drop in apples, the role of potassium and boron in fruit tree nutrition, and the use of dwarfing rootstocks for apples. He was widely renowned and respected for working closely with both his scientific colleagues and the commercial fruit industry,

and he was also regarded as a superlative educator, having taught many of the leading growers and scientists in horticulture for three generations. A member of ASHS since 1941, he served on many important ASHS committees over the years, including three years on the ASHS Board of Directors. He was awarded the ASHS M.A. Blake Award for Distinguished Graduate Teaching in 1971, the same year he was named ASHS Fellow. He also received many other awards from organizations such as the National Food Processors Association, the International Fruit Tree Association (IFTA), and the Maryland State Horticultural Society (MSHS).

A firm believer that travel widened one's knowledge and capabilities, Art went on five international study tours sponsored by IFTA. Among the countries he visited were Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. He also spent one of his sabbaticals touring research stations and orchards in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Upon his retirement, MSHS established the "Arthur H. Thompson Travel Fellowship," which is awarded annually to a young person (age 18–30) working in the Maryland fruit industry. The Thompson Fellowship, which is given to a fruit grower or someone otherwise associated with fruit production, is intended to promote leadership within MSHS.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to have had Art as a colleague remember his fierce commitment to the field of horticulture and to those who worked in it. He also had an infectious sense of good humor, and was quite the raconteur when the occasion arose. Some of this is visible from his video biography on the ASHS website (<http://www.ashs.org/>; see "Video Biographies" under "HortTalks").

Art is survived by his wife of 63 years, Isabel B. Thompson; his sister, Genevieve Kemen; daughters, Margaret Miller and Janet Freiland; sons, James Thompson and Robert Thompson; nine grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

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