

From the Oat Newsletter, volume 21, 1970:

DR. ALVIN THOMAS WALLACE, 1921-1971--IN MEMORIAM



Dr. A. T. Wallace, Assistant Dean for Research with the Florida Agricultural Experiment Stations, and a scientist of international reputation, died April 18 following a long illness.

Dean Wallace was born near Millen, Georgia. He entered the University of Georgia after serving in the U. S. Navy from 1940 to 1942, graduating with a B.S.A. in 1946 as the valedictorian of his senior class. He continued his career at North Carolina State University receiving the Ph.D. in 1950, with a major in plant breeding and genetics and minors in statistics and botany. Dr. Wallace took post-doctoral training in statistics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and in radiation biology at the Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago. Since 1950 he served as a teaching and research professor at the University of Florida, beginning as an Assistant Agronomist in the Agronomy Department and advancing to professor in 1958. He served as professor of the University's Plant Science Section for six years, and as head of the University's cross-discipline genetics program before being named Assistant Dean of the Agricultural Experiment Stations in October 1968.

In his professional career, Dr. Wallace made many significant contributions to agronomic science, as exemplified by authorship or joint authorship of more than seventy publications. His scientific accomplishments include: significant contributions to development of five major improved varieties of oats, rye, tobacco, and lupines; the first estimate of genetic variance and genotypic correlations of quantitatively inherited characteristics in oats; the first estimates of induced mutation rates at specific locus in higher plants; first person to relate the induced mutation rate at a vital locus with lethal

mutations in higher plants; and taught students who contributed to both applied and theoretical genetics. His special research was with oats in the field of mutation genetics.

Most of this was accomplished while in an administrative position from 1958 to 1968, when he operated a sophisticated research program in mutation genetics, the cobalt-60 gamma radiation source, taught two graduate and undergraduate courses, directed graduate students, consulted with the Atomic Energy Commission and represented agriculture on University wide policy making committees.

Dr. Wallace was active in many organizations. He was elected a fellow in both the American Society of Agronomy and American Association for the Advancement of Science; was an officer in the Genetics Society of America; Associate Editor, Crop Science; one of three American scientists who took part in international genetics meetings behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany in 1967, and received the Gamma Sigma Delta Senior Faculty Award in 1968. He was also a member of the Florida Soil and Crop Science Society, Sigma Xi, Gamma Sigma Delta, Alpha Zeta, numerous National Technical Committees, the Gainesville Kiwanis Club, and the University United Methodist Church.

Dean Wallace was dedicated to the highest calibre of scientific endeavor. His energy and enthusiasm backed by a perceptive and inquiring mind resulted in significant contributions to national agriculture. He had an insatiable desire for new knowledge and new ideas. This desire usually culminated in lively conversations and discussions initiated by a deliberate statement to raise a question. Often his answer to a statement was "What do you mean by that?" He was a vigorous administrator whose influence was felt in every facet of Florida agriculture and many aspects of the national program. He had a real balance between a broad and extensive repertoire of technical knowledge and a compassion for people. These characteristics plus total unselfishness account, in part, for his tremendous success as a scientist and administrator.