

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS ROBERT FRANKLIN PATTON

Professor Emeritus Robert Franklin Patton died on Saturday, July 10, 2004 in Madison. Bob was born on October 28, 1919 and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He began studies at the University of Chicago and after two years transferred to the University of Michigan to earn a B.S. degree in Forestry in 1940. Bob continued his study of forestry at the University of Idaho and received his M.S. degree in 1942. He served in the U.S. Army including assignment as a photo intelligence officer in Italy during World War II. After working briefly in mycology research for Parke, Davis and Company, Bob became one of the first forest pathology graduate students at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He earned his Ph.D. degree and joined the faculty of the Department of Plant Pathology in 1951. Rising to the rank of professor of plant pathology, Bob also was an affiliate faculty member of the Department of Forestry and served as acting chairperson for each department. He retired and was granted emeritus status in 1987.

Bob contributed greatly to the study and practice of forest pathology as it developed in North America. He studied the details of etiology and epidemiology of regionally and internationally important diseases caused by native fungi that gained prominence due to changes in nursery and forest management practices, as well as exotic pathogens that caused severe damage to trees in natural and planted forests. Bob was known for the meticulous care with which he conducted research and communicated results to the international forest pathology community. Of special interest to Bob were the details of penetration and establishment of fungal pathogens in their tree hosts, including meticulous descriptions of infection by the pine shoot blight and canker fungus *Gremmeniella abietina* and the white pine blister rust fungus *Cronartium ribicola*. Bob was among the first forest pathologists to recognize and exploit genetic resistance in forest trees to fungal pathogens, and selections of eastern white pine that he made in Wisconsin are still utilized in efforts to restore this ecologically and economically important tree species to its former status in the forests of North America.

Bob was also a dedicated teacher and mentor of students. His depth and breadth of knowledge was shared in classes from undergraduate introductory plant pathology to an advanced graduate course focused on forest tree pathogens. Bob expressed the philosophy that graduate studies and research were as much about “process” as “product.” He trained over a dozen graduate students, who advanced into academic or government positions responsible for building the field of plant pathology and developing forest health management policies in the United States and Canada.

Bob was professionally active as a member of the American Phytopathological Society and the Society of American Foresters. He also routinely attended and contributed to forest pathology meetings of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations and Northcentral Forest Pest Workshop, and was a long-time associate editor of the European Journal of Forest Pathology. Bob also served as a scientific resource for the Wilderness Research Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and was a selfless contributor to his department.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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