

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JAMES EUGENE KUNTZ**

Professor Emeritus James Eugene Kuntz died on April 4, 2012 in Madison. Jim was born on August 14, 1919 in and raised on the family farm in Leipsic, Ohio. He completed undergraduate studies at Ohio Wesleyan University in 1941 and then began to study plant physiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning his MA degree from the Department of Botany in 1942. His graduate studies continued in the Department of Plant Pathology and involved inhibition of plant viruses by vegetable extracts. After receiving his PhD in 1945, Jim worked for the Wisconsin Seed Company in Racine where he developed the Wisconsin 55 tomato, which is still in production today. In late 1946, Jim rejoined the Department of Plant Pathology as an assistant professor to become a member of the nascent program of forest and shade tree pathology. He also was affiliated with the Department of Forest and Wildlife Management after its inception in 1959. After almost four decades of dedicated service to our university, Jim retired in 1984.

Jim's research contributed greatly to the field of forest pathology as it developed in North America. After joining our faculty, he traveled extensively in Europe and brought knowledge in this field, more advanced at the time on that continent, to the United States. Studies by Jim and his students provided the most fundamental knowledge of the causes of diseases of trees, especially ecologically and commercially important hardwoods. He was among the earliest investigators of oak wilt, a lethal disease caused by an exotic fungal pathogen. Jim pioneered in use of physical and systemic chemical treatments to prevent the disease and use of radioactive isotopes in tree disease research. Studies provided basic information on translocation in trees, vascular occlusion, root grafting, and both local and overland pathogen dissemination. He and his students also discovered the cause of the butternut canker disease and characterized and named the exotic fungal pathogen that threatens the existence of this native North American tree. Other studies focused on etiology and epidemiology of maple blight and urban maple decline, hardwood stem canker diseases, walnut seed rot and root rot in nurseries, and nematodes as tree pathogens. Additional contributions included tree improvement projects with emphasis on oaks and poplars and use of chemicals for management of competing vegetation in reforestation.

Due in part to his own studies of devastating tree disease of foreign origin, Jim also had strong international interests. As part of a partnership of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the U.S. Agency for International Development, his family traveled to Nigeria. There they spent two years, with Jim serving as head of the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Ife in Ile-Ife.

Jim was also a dedicated teacher and mentor of students. In addition to expertise in forest pathology, he taught courses in introductory plant pathology and plant disease control and the Farm and Industry Short Course. Jim particularly emphasized the biological foundation underlying practices selected to implement the principles of plant disease management. A prolific photographer, he was recognized as an advocate for the use of visual aids in the teaching of plant pathology. As a research advisor Jim also made a lasting contribution to forest pathology. Over 20 graduate students mentored by Jim advanced into private practice, academic positions, and government employment to build the science and practice of plant pathology and develop tree and forest health management policies in the United States other countries.

Jim also contributed professionally as a member of the American Phytopathological Society and the Society of American Foresters. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the American Association for the Advancement of Science as well as numerous other professional, scientific, and honorary societies. He was an active participant in working groups of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations, the National Oak Wilt Technical Committee, and served as chairman of the Northcentral Forest Insect and

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Disease Conference. Jim was a respected authoritative source of information generously provided to private tree care practitioners, municipal forestry departments, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Before and after retirement, Jim was active as a member of the First United Methodist Church in Madison, where he also served as chair of its administrative board. He fostered appreciation and enjoyment of the outdoors as a Boy Scout leader and as a supporter of the youth and family Pine Lake Camp, a ministry of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. Jim was devoted to this camp in central Wisconsin, where he oversaw the planting of tens of thousands of trees. There, through the nature programs of the Kuntz Environmental Education Center of the Pine Lake Camp, Jim's love of trees, nature, and the beauty of creation continue to educate and inspire.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE  
Glen Stanosz