

H. R. 'Mac' MacCarthy (1911-2004)

H. R. 'Mac' MacCarthy was a rancher during the depression and served in the army for six years before going to the University of B.C. and the University of California at Berkeley. He joined Agriculture Canada and worked for twenty years at the Vancouver Research Station on the UBC campus and as an adjunct professor at UBC. After retirement he served as the Acting Director of the Master of Pest Management Program at Simon Fraser University and as the thesis editor and mentor to numerous graduate students there.



I first met Mac in the summer of 1976, when he became the coordinator of the SFU Master of Pest Management summer courses after retiring at age 65 from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. At that time, I was taking the Agricultural Pest Management summer course (BISC 603 for those who care), and I was immediately impressed by Mac's keen knowledge of agricultural pests, and his gripping tales of various research endeavours and battles against pestilence in BC. It was not just the stories that impressed me but the way that he told them, with his perfect, clear and enthusiastic 'Henry Higgins-like' command of the English language. Over the years, I would hear the same stories from Mac, and almost always they were told in the same clear way and with the same relish. What impressed me about Mac was that he was always consistent and dependable, always fair, always giving, always interesting, and for some reason never seemed to age.

Mac was actively involved in the executive of the Entomological Society of BC (ESBC) for the majority of his professional career. He was a past president and the editor of the Journal of the Entomological Society of BC for an incredible 34 years (1955-1988). I cannot think of another individual who has given so much to ESBC since its inception. As editor, Mac would go over each and every manuscript with a fine toothed comb, and I'm sure that all of us who published during that time benefited greatly from his comments and critiques. From time to time, even into the 1990s, I would pass various manuscripts by Mac for review. Although most of us despise being asked to review a paper, Mac actually seemed to enjoy the task and within a day or two I would get a call from him saying "Are you ready to do battle?" I would then take the short drive to his house, which was close to the Vancouver Research Station, feeling rather like a student going to see the results of his English final exam. We would then sit down at his incredibly uncluttered desk or kitchen table and literally word-by-word plod through the manuscript. When we came to the disputed text, which was quite plentiful (usually beginning with the title), sometimes he would give me the opportunity to defend myself, or sometimes simply and matter-of-factly insult my "Germanic" style of writing. He would write his "suggested" revisions on the paper in perfectly crafted handwriting that you just don't see anymore. I never once saw him stroke out what he had written, and I often marvelled at what an organized and concise mind he had. At the end of the "Battle", in which I was always thoroughly defeated, he would lead me to his basement and give me a bottle of his homemade Sherry. A peace offering I'm sure. I would then go back to my office and place my paper in a filing cabinet under "Miscellaneous MacCarthy Massacres", which I still refer to today. I would drink the Sherry later of course. He was a maker of fine wines. He learned and mastered the art of Bonsai, and established a formidable collection (somewhere between 50 and 100 as I recall) which he simply gave away to his friends and family when he downsized from house to apartment. I remember him handing me a Giant Sequoia that was over 20 years old and a whopping 1 foot high. Mac was a mentor to me and many others, and he will be sincerely missed.

In 1990, the H.R. MacCarthy Pest Management Lecture was launched at Simon Fraser University, and featured Marcos Kogan as the inaugural speaker. The lecture was founded by a number of

Mac's colleagues and friends to honour his broad contributions to Entomology and Pest Management and included: the Entomological Society of B.C.; the Professional Pest Management Association of B.C.; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; the Centre for Pest Management, SFU; Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, UBC; the Association of Professional Biologists of B.C.; and numerous donations from private individuals. Needless to say, Mac was very proud to have been given this honour, and attended the lectures until poor health eventually overtook him. Mac will be remembered for his generosity, integrity, intelligence and wit.

— Bob Vernon, Agassiz, BC