

Edwin Bruce Collins, Food Science & Technology: Davis

1921-1991

Professor Emeritus

Edwin B. Collins, Professor Emeritus of Food Science and Technology, an authority on dairy and food microbiology, died on July 22, 1991, in Woodland after a long illness, just two weeks before reaching 70 years of age. He had been a member of the faculty at University of California, Davis, for 38 years at the time of his retirement in 1987.

A native of Conway, South Carolina, Professor Collins received his bachelor's degree in dairying from Clemson University in 1943 and went on to earn his master's and doctoral degrees in dairy microbiology from Iowa State University in 1948 and 1949, respectively. He served three years in the United States Army during World War II as a first lieutenant in the European theater of operations. Upon retirement from the army, he became a captain in the army reserve.

Collins joined the UC Davis faculty in 1949 in the Department of Dairy Industry which merged in 1959 with the Food Technology Department to form the Department of Food Science and Technology. A dairy microbiologist, Collins specialized in fermentation and food spoilage problems. His research focused on the nutrition and physiology of culture bacteria and how these bacteria might better be used in manufacturing dairy products. He investigated the biochemistry involved in forming flavor compounds with these bacteria, methods for circumventing the actions of viruses on the bacteria and the potential health benefits of the bacteria. His research was recognized with the presentation of a Fulbright Award for 1958-59 for research in the New Zealand Dairy Research Institute, and by the Pfizer Paul-Lewis Award from the American Dairy Science Association in 1962. He was a member of numerous scholarly organizations including Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Lambda Epsilon, Phi Eta Sigma, Alpha Zeta, Sigma Xi, the American Dairy Science Association and the American Society for Microbiology. He was an active supporter of several national and state dairy industry associations, including California Dairy Industries Association and California Association of Dairy and Milk Sanitarians.

He taught classes in dairy bacteriology for 10 years and then in food microbiology until his retirement. Collins had a deep commitment to undergraduate teaching and the concerns of students. As master advisor for the food science major, he guided generations of students in achieving their academic goals. His advice was invaluable to junior colleagues in the department who sought his guidance in balancing teaching with research responsibilities. He supervised the research of numerous graduate students. Collins was particularly active in faculty governance at UC Davis. His offices in the Davis Division of the Academic Senate included Secretary, Vice-Chairman, member of the Representative Assembly, the Executive Council, the Committee on Committees, seven years as Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction, Chairman of the campus Rules Committee, and he was appointed by the Chancellor to serve on several task forces. His activities for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences included Chair of the faculty. His advice regarding faculty affairs was widely sought by colleagues on the campus.

Away from his campus commitments, Collins enjoyed playing golf and bridge. He was president of the Yolo Fliers Country Club in 1982, after having served on the board of directors.

Dr. Collins is survived by his wife, Jeanne, two daughters, three sons, nine grandchildren, a brother and a sister.

The Edwin B. Collins Memorial Fund has been established for the purchase of dairy and food microbiology books for the Food Science and Technology departmental library.
Walter L. Dunkley John C. Bruhn Lloyd M. Smith