

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

### LEONAS L. BURLINGAME (1876 – 1950)

Leonas Lancelot Burlingame was born in Guernsey County, Ohio, August 25, 1876, and received his training at Ohio Northern University and the University of Chicago, taking his Ph. D. with John Coulter in botany at the latter institution in 1908. He was appointed to the staff of Stanford University in 1908 and rose to full professorship in 1925. He spent most of his academic life at Stanford with the exception of summers at East Illinois State Normal University (1906) and at the University of Oregon (1924-25) and a period as Field Assistant in the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1918.

His country surroundings early interested him in plants and he took his graduate work in botany; this remained his dominating interest except that he gradually became interested in the principles which underlay all biology including the biology of man. He left his earlier studies in plant structure to pioneer in the study of plant heredity at a time when much of the work was being done on animals. His early plan was to establish for plants many of the phenomena which had been observed in animal heredity. He started work with a flowering plant, Clarkia, in 1917 and continued these studies until his retirement. In the meanwhile he interested a number of able students in the genetics and cytology of a number of other plants. He regularly taught courses in genetics, cytology and evolution and for some time in microtechnique.

Being an ardent fisherman, he built a cottage at Fallen Leaf Lake where he spent most of his summers. He filled his cottage with books scientific and general - and much of what he was to write was planned and organized in the leisurely and invigorating atmosphere of the mountains. He was widely read and had an insight into books and people. Those who knew him will remember how, with a twinkle in his eye, he would penetrate to the heart of the matter and, pipe in hand, discuss the issue he was frank and direct.

He was active in the Men's Faculty Club for his gregarious nature and interest in people led him to associate with others whenever the opportunity was available. The golf links offered another chance for friendly exchanges with his colleagues.

He pioneered in the field of teaching biology and in 1920 laid down the principles on the basis of which, in collaboration with Professors Heath, Pierce and Martin, he wrote General Biology (1922). He took an active part in organizing the course in biology in which he interested as participants not only the staff of the departments dealing with biology, but even the president himself. So successful was the text that it was revised in 1928. It has been of great influence in the country in changing the teaching of biology for general students from the training of specialists to training of citizens for living. His concept of biology as a unit underlay the integration of the scattered departments of biology at Stanford into a single well-knit Department of Biological Sciences.

As the years passed he became increasingly interested in the importance of biology in the solution of social problems and gave a course by that name. This resulted in another book: Heredity and Social Problems (1940) published just before his retirement in 1941. He was

keenly interested in population problems and on his retirement made an extensive transcontinental trip contacting many individuals, and institutions interested in human betterment and collected materials for a new project. This interest continued throughout his retirement - a logical outgrowth of his long experiences in heredity. Just before his death he outlined a book on biology and human population problems. We are the losers for his having been unable to finish this last study.

In his later years as a professor, Dr. Burlingame put his greatest effort in to guiding his graduate students of whom he had many. He assigned them fruitful problems and gave them unstintingly of his advice and time. Of them in return he asked only intelligence and a critical attitude which he developed in them by discussions which at times became heated, but were always tempered by good humor and understanding. He extended this privilege to the younger men and women associated with him in teaching general biology. Those who engaged in these discussions cannot but have had their wits sharpened and their understanding improved. He enjoyed young people and tried to bring out the best in them. To those who responded he showed a warm and kindly friendship which they will always treasure.

He is survived by his widow and two daughters, of whom one continues the academic tradition, and by three grandchildren. Be it resolved, that this resolution be incorporated into the minutes of the Academic Council and that a copy be sent to his survivors with the sympathy of his colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

Ira L. Wiggins, Chairman  
J. P. Baumberger  
A. C. Giese