

Proceedings  
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Part III  
Highlights



**DePauw's Dr. Welch Honored by  
N.Y. Botanical Garden Publication**



The New York Botanical Garden has devoted a special issue of its scientific journal *Brittonia* to the work of Winona Welch, DePauw University professor emerita of botany and native of Jasper County, Indiana. The issue's date, May 5, was Dr. Welch's 92nd birthday.

The tribute recognizes the transfer last year of the Truman G. Yuncker Herbarium from DePauw to the garden.

Dr. James M. Hester, president of the New York Botanical garden, called the Yuncker Herbarium "the most significant acquisition of research specimens since the

1940s when the garden acquired the Princeton University collections." The garden has the largest herbarium in the U.S.

THE 135,000 SPECIMENS from the Yuncker collection represent the life research of Dr. Welch and Dr. Yuncker, who was her predecessor as chairman of Botany and Bacteriology at DePauw. He came to the faculty in 1919 and served as department head until 1956, then as curator of the herbarium (named by DePauw in his honor) until his death in 1964.

Winona Welch was his first major student, graduating in 1923. She returned to the DePauw faculty in 1930, becoming department head in 1956 and continuing herbarium work until her eyesight failed a few years ago. She had begun working with the herbarium in her student days and was its curator after Dr. Yuncker died in 1964. Together they represent more than a century of service to DePauw and of collecting for the herbarium.

Dr. Patricia K. Holmgren, director of the NYBG Herbarium, came to Greencastle to present the first copy of the commemorative issue of *Brittonia* to Dr. Welch personally. She was joined in the ceremony at Asbury Towers, where Dr. Welch lives, by DePauw President Robert G. Bottoms.

"IT IS RARE INDEED for research collections of the magnitude and classic quality of the Yuncker Herbarium to become available. The garden is pleased indeed to have the opportunity to make these valuable specimens available to researchers throughout the world." Holmgren said.

DePauw's decision to approve the garden's purchase of the Herbarium was made in deference to Dr. Welch's wishes.

Calling the 40,000 specimens of mosses and liverworts her "life's savings," Welch said she decided "it would serve science best to have all the collections at the New York Botanical Garden where they are accessible to botanists everywhere in the world."

Dr. Welch is the world authority on two families of mosses, the Fontinalaceae (water mosses) and the Hookeriaceae (a tropical family). Her monographs still serve as standard references, as does her pioneering volume, *Mosses of Indiana*.

*Remarks made by Dr. Patricia K. Holmgren, Director of the Herbarium, The New York Botanical Garden, at the formal presentation of the Festschrift*

#### **Presentation of Winona H. Welch Festschrift, 5 May 1988**

To know Winona Welch is to respect and love her. We are here today to pay tribute to this remarkable lady who combines boundless optimism with a talent for friendship. I have thought a long time about what I wanted to say on this day, but how can I who have known Winona for only a year, tell you, her lifelong friends, anything you don't already know about her. It finally occurred to me that I should simply read to you a few of the statements written by the many friends who have contributed to this volume in her honor. This sounds simple, but to select a few quotes when this entire volume is filled with quotable statements about her was not an easy task. This in itself reveals the genuine affection so many have for Winona.

#### **Listen to what is said about Dr. Welch as a person.**

Dr. Winona Welch impresses all who meet her with her strength, her intellectual vitality, and her unaffected joy in life. It is not given to all of us to live so long; it is given to even fewer of us to have lived so well.

Truly, she is a good person. I don't think she is capable of doing a mean or selfish thing. I can't believe that she has an enemy in the world.

Her brilliance, her energy, her perseverance, her insistence on quality, and her love of people are all attributes that make her life such a productive one.

She is the salt of the earth.

There is a trail of Winona's good deeds that won't be erased soon. Dr. Welch was a role model.

**Listen to what is said about Dr. Welch as a teacher and researcher.**

Dr. Welch's achievement as a scientist would be impressive in anyone. It is especially impressive when one remembers that through all these years, she was carrying a full teaching load. If in science she found her intellectual satisfaction, in teaching she found her purpose and direction. One suspects that the honor that touched her heart most deeply was to be considered one of the outstanding teachers at DePauw University. She was a born teacher, a natural teacher, efficient and conscientious but also enthusiastic, sympathetic, and beloved.

Gifted individuals, such as Drs. Yuncker and Welch, possessed a genius for recognizing talented students, arousing their interests, and kindling them with the motivation to tackle graduate school.

Winona Welch was a charmingly pleasant teacher and a loved and thoughtful friend ever attentive to the wishes of her students.

She had a dominating influence on the direction of my career. She opened for me a new world of beauty but also organization and logic.

She was the one person who always believed in me.

I am constantly reminded of the admiration and affection you have generated among former students. You are their mentor, their inspiration, and most important, you are their friend.

She was an excellent scientist—she has been a *great* teacher.

Winona was a phenomenon—a legend on the DePauw University campus—because of her stringent work habits.

Winona will be long remembered for the carefulness and the scholarly thoroughness of her work.

Admiration for this work was universal.

One of the absolutely best monographs ever written in the world in bryology.

**Comments from her family.**

You have been a loving and knowing sister, kind to everyone with whom you came in contact.

To the Lee children and grandchildren, she is beloved Auntie Winona as she was to us. Now that our parents are gone, when we "go home" it is Winona to whom we go.

Winona, Betty-Jane, and Barbara are still "family," still part of each other's lives, still sharing and enjoying memories.

**Comments about her as a leader.**

Dr. Welch has long been a pillar in our Academy's operations. In 1948,

she became its 63rd president, as the first woman to hold that office.

The high respect of your colleagues was symbolized in your selection as the first woman to head a science department.

She became the elder statesman of the "moss ladies," always a little ahead of the rest of us.

Without question she was the best secretary-treasurer the Society has ever had. Winona is by nature a well-organized, neat, and tidy person. She kept meticulous records and frugally guarded the treasury against any excesses and extravagances.

She is so exemplary a secretary of an organization that she has always been in great demand.

And now we know her as the inspirational leader at the retirement home.

In spite of three attempts she never did get the hang of retiring. At age 72, she is quoted as having said, "You'll just have to change your mind about what people this age can do." Meeting her today, you would have to change your mind about what people aged 92 can do. The gradual loss of her eyesight could have defeated an ordinary person. To her it has been a challenge. I am still amazed that she has read every word of this Festschrift herself on her visual aid machine, too modest to allow anyone else to read the many nice things being said about her. "Oh mercy," she exclaimed, when she learned that we actually planned to publish all these tributes, amazed that we should find extraordinary what she considers ordinary.

Charming, gracious, beautiful, Winona is above all visibly happy. Firm of voice, clear of mind, large of spirit, and active as all get out.

Well, Winona, I haven't mentioned the word herbarium once in this presentation, and that after all, is what brought us together in this very special friendship. You and Dr. Yuncker assembled one of the best small research herbaria in the country. Its value to the scientific community is enormous. There is no question that this is the most significant single acquisition of specimens by the Garden since 1945 when the Princeton University Herbarium came to the Garden. It is rare indeed for research collections of the magnitude and classic quality of the Yuncker Herbarium to become available. The Garden is pleased indeed to have the opportunity to make these valuable specimens available to researchers throughout the world. We are and I am personally, most grateful to you for your decision, which has given me the added pleasure of producing this Festschrift for such a deserving person. Those of us at the Garden who have come to know you have been delighted and enriched. It is an honor to present this tribute to you with our gratitude, with our admiration, and with our affection. Happy birthday, Winona!