

Remembering Dr. Donald E. Moreland

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On this anniversary of his passing, it is time to reveal some of the secrets created by a truly good man. His ability to do good things while avoiding publicity kept most of us in the dark as we worked with a person we thought of as a semi-retired professor of horticulture. It has been said “True Charity is anonymous” and that, apparently was a hallmark for Dr. Donald E. Moreland.

A Short History of the ASA Archives: A request came from Don Moreland to the *The Azalea* back issues mailbox for a number of issues to fill the gaps in the set of our journals kept at the D. H. Hill Library located on the campus of North Carolina State University in Raleigh. When the issues were sent, the question was posed about the library’s interest in archiving the records of the Society. Dr. Moreland responded positively and began the work of setting up our archives (more on this later). After passing the criteria for acceptance by the library, I was told that Dr. Moreland’s name and his work was not to be discussed; that, in effect, I was to take all the credit.

That promise is no longer valid or appropriate and here are the facts. Dr. Donald Moreland, in his capacity as a retired professor and long-time supporter of the library, set up the Trust Fund which would sustain the preservation of the ASA papers from his own resources. He assigned the necessary personnel and space to accomplish his goal and worked with us along with the dedicated staff at the library, and his willing accomplice, Ms. Susan Nutter, vice provost and director of libraries. Dr. Moreland faithfully attended our conventions with his wife, Verdie, as long as she was able to travel. I was gently reminded at each happy reunion of my promise to keep his secret.

Setting up the ASA archives is only the tip of the iceberg. On top of a distinguished career in educating young people at the university and post graduate level, Don Moreland excelled in many areas. Like many, he served in the U.S. Army during World War II attaining the rank of Colonel. From 1952 to 1953, he was employed as a Plant Physiologist by the Research Foundation, New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse. From late 1953 until retirement in 1995, he was employed by the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a Plant Physiologist and was a member of the faculty at North Carolina State University. He served in various capacities with the USDA including Research Leader and Location Coordinator. In recognition of his research accomplishments, he was honored with a Superior Service Award by the USDA in 1976. In 1987, he became a charter member of the U.S. Government’s Senior Executive Service and received a Meritorious Presidential Rank Award for being a Meritorious Executive based on his research leadership and administrative accomplishments. At the time of his retirement, he held an academic appointment as Professor of Crop Science, Botany, Forestry, and Toxi-



▲ Dr. Donald E. Moreland and his wife, Verdie.

cology. During his career, he guided the research activities of both graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Together with co-workers and graduate students, Dr. Moreland published more than 200 scientific papers and abstracts.

He was a member of the Azalea Society of America and the American Camellia Society. He was an active and long time supporter of the North Carolina Museum of Art, North Carolina State Alumni Association, the Wolfpack Club and the Friends of the NCSU Libraries. He was instrumental in establishing facility, staff, and book endowments with the NCSU Libraries and graduate fellowships and scholarships in several NCSU colleges.

The author contacted Dr. Gregory Raschke, associate director for Collections and Scholarly Communication, for a picture of Dr. Moreland to include with this article. The answer back was both clear and to the point “Well, you will not find many pictures of Don without his wife, Verdie.”

My memories of Don Moreland include his attentions and loving care for her as her needs increased. It is fitting that when he set up a scholarship fund, the name given to it was the Donald E. and Verdie S. Moreland—John T. Caldwell Alumni Scholarship Endowment. This fund benefits undergraduates in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ plant sciences curricula at the University.

Dr. Moreland’s gifts did not stop with his passing. The Azalea Research Foundation recently received a gift from his estate which more than doubled the resources of the foundation. This generous gift will make it possible for the foundation to begin its primary function of supporting research into all aspects of azaleas, including disease, propagation, hybridization, education, and many other areas of interest. This first major contribution to the ARF should give the rest of us an incentive to follow Dr. Don Moreland’s example.

John Brown is a past president of the ASA and coordinates requests for back issues of The Azalean.