



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

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Prof. Pedro Crous, President of the IMA
CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Center
PO Box 85167 3508 AD Utrecht
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13 June 2010

Dear Professor Crous and IMA Awards Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to nominate Dr. Emory G. Simmons for the IMA Ainsworth Medal recognizing his truly extraordinary service to world mycology. Throughout his career he has directly and indirectly, officially and unofficially, intentionally and unintentionally been a strong voice and a driving force for international mycology. In this letter I will highlight his significant international mycological activities over the past half century, especially his tireless efforts in the development, maintenance and preservation of biological resource collections. I also will discuss his significant role in the establishment and success of the community to which I write this letter, the International Mycological Association (IMA). It is clear to me that Dr. Simmons is highly deserving of this prestigious award.

Dr. Simmons has contributed significantly to the living collections community. His influence has been enormous and the outcomes remarkable. From 1953-74 Emory was the Director of the US Army Quartermaster Culture Collection of Fungi. The collection was an essential component of U.S. studies on the resistance of fabric, glass, wood and other surfaces to degradation by fungi. Additionally, many of those strains have proven to be economically important. One isolate of *Trichoderma*, determined to produce high yields of cellulase and used to make 'stone-washed' blue jeans, has significant applications to biofuel production. In addition to developing and maintaining collections throughout his career he has ensured that those collections are available in perpetuity to others in biological resource centers, including CBS and the USDA ARS collection in Peoria Illinois. Emory also was an active member, Secretary and part of the Executive Board of the World Federation for Culture Collections to which he was elected an Honorary Life Member. He is a Centennial Fellow of the British Mycological Society. He has served in an advisory capacity to the American Type Culture Collection, President of the U.S. Federation for Culture Collections, and numerous other positions in which he positively influenced the development of collections and educated administrators, politicians, and others on the importance of those collections for industrial, economic, and biological uses.

During the time that Emory was the Director of the Quartermaster Collection and after he moved to the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, he traveled extensively throughout the world providing instruction, consulting and training courses at regional culture collections and research centers. He continues to be an important mentor to students and young professionals alike throughout the world,

teaching them the essentials of *Alternaria* systematics, helping them identify their isolates, educating them on nomenclature, and promoting the study of ascomycetes worldwide. For several decades Dr. Simmons was a visiting professor and researcher at the Department of Microbiology of Kasetsart University in Thailand. The deep appreciation and high regard in which his colleagues in Thailand held him was manifest in an honorary Doctor of Science degree in 1988. This honor was presented to Dr. Simmons by their beloved King, indicating the high degree of their respect and appreciation for Emory.

Dr. Simmons played a major role in the founding and development of the IMA. His involvement started in 1967, while he was President of the Mycological Society of America, in the form of correspondence with G.C. Ainsworth whose brainchild became the IMA. Emory was a strong proponent of supporting and promoting mycology worldwide and served as an ambassador for the concept of an international organization in those early years. Dr. Simmons served as Chairman of International Delegates during the first IMC in Exeter in 1971. He was Chairman of the Executive Committee and President of the Board for the second IMC hosted by the Mycological Society of America in Florida in 1977. Dr. Simmons has been a continuous supporter of the IMA for more than 40 years, since it was first conceived and as it has become a mature and effective organization whose objective continues to be "...the encouragement of mycology in all its branches, particularly international aspects, by promoting International Mycological Congresses and by liaison with other international bodies having mycological interests." As a testament to the esteem in which Dr. Simmons is held by the IMA, he was elected in 2002 as Honorary President of the IMA for life.

It is impossible to close this nomination letter without mentioning the publication of his recent tome "*Alternaria: An Identification Manual*" in 2007 in the CBS Biodiversity Series. Many of the species included in the Manual were discovered during his work with international colleagues. His tireless efforts to clarify the taxonomy and nomenclature of this complex and important group of fungi are brought together in this Manual which he finished several years after his 80th birthday. Emory has done the hard work; now it is up to the rest of us to use that knowledge base to further study the group and add to the great body of work that he has produced.

Thank you for considering this nomination of Dr. Emory Simmons for the Ainsworth Medal. This would be the ultimate honor for the man who helped Ainsworth make an idea become a reality in the form of the IMA.

Sincerely

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