

Ruth V. Dippell

Professor Ruth V. Dippell's early life was spent in Huntington, Indiana, where she was born. Her father was a physician, and when she entered Indiana University as an undergraduate, it was with the expectation that she would prepare for a career in medicine. Instead, she chose to pursue studies in fundamental biological research, and she has been associated with Indiana University ever since. She is retiring early in order to live with her older sister in Arizona. She leaves despite the vigorous protests of her colleagues and friends. There can be no substitute for her warm friendship and cheerfulness. In departmental and University committees we shall miss her ability to assess difficult problems accurately and to come up with reasonable solutions or judgments.

Soon after Professor Tracy M. Sonneborn arrived at Indiana University, Ruth, then an undergraduate majoring in zoology, enrolled in a course given by him. As had already happened to a few, and was to happen to many more in the future, she felt the great excitement of the work going on in his laboratory. After receiving the A.B. degree she became a research assistant in Professor Sonneborn's laboratory. During the difficult years of World War II, when so many were forced to leave the campus, she continued as a research assistant and also was able to embark upon and complete much of the work for the Ph.D. degree in genetics under Professor Sonneborn's direction. She received her Ph.D. degree in 1950. In Professor Dippell's earliest work with Professor Sonneborn they continued to exploit his discovery of mating types in paramecium. Later they turned to the story of "killer" paramecia and in 1946 shared the Newcombe Prize of the American Society for the Advancement of Science for their work. Her dissertation dealt with this phenomenon.

Later, Professor Dippell started work in the new and promising field of electron microscopy. A stay at the Rockefeller Institute helped get her investigation under way and led to a long series of profitable studies that have continued until the present time. Relatively late in her career she turned to teaching, receiving a part-time faculty appointment in 1967 and a full-time appointment in 1970. She took on teaching duties with her customary thoroughness, industry, and self-sacrifice. Whatever the course, it always seemed to have a laboratory, exciting for the students, but time-consuming for her. Her courses were popular and the enrollments were large. No matter how many times she gave a lecture, she always meticulously reviewed it and brought it up to date. She could be depended upon by the department to do the big job, the difficult job, and do it well; and her students and fellow faculty members have appreciated her. Her services as a teacher will be greatly missed.

In 1947 Professor Dippell was awarded an A.A.U.W. Fellowship, in 1949 the Sigma Delta Epsilon Research Award. She was a member of the Board of Directors of Sigma Delta Epsilon and Vice President of the American Society of Protozoologists.

Estimates of Professor Dippell's achievements must always be inextricably involved with those of Professor Tracy Sonneborn. She was the chief person in charge of his laboratory for the better part of his career, and certainly during the most successful part of both their careers. She has been a prodigious and exacting worker. Their impact in their field has been great; they made an impression on protozoology as few others ever have. Ruth has earned her place in the sun.

John R. Preer, Jr.