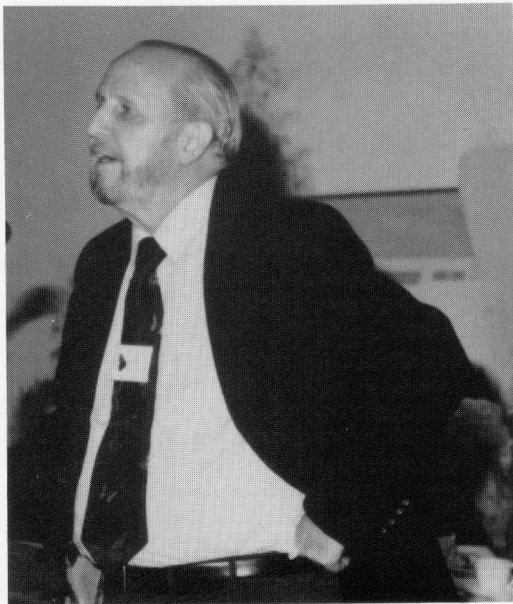


OBITUARIES

EDGAR A. SMITH

1916-1992



Edgar A. Smith addressing San Jose State Entomology Club at reunion in 1986.

Edgar A. Smith, Vector-borne Disease Specialist and Tropical Medicine Consultant, died on February 2, 1992 after a short bout with cancer in Alexandria, Virginia. He was one of the leading U.S. experts on the control of malaria and other vector-borne diseases. He was born on December 4, 1916 in the rural community of Los Banos located in the Central Valley of California and spent most of his early childhood there. He graduated from the West Side Union High School in Los Banos in June 1935.

Ed's interest in things entomological came early in his life as he took a keen interest in the collection of butterflies, moths, beetles and other insects. This aspect of entomology remained a passion throughout his life. His early field trips throughout California and many other parts of the western United States set a pattern for his later activities in the entomological field both in the United States and abroad. He was a leader in the Boy Scout movement in his home area for a number of years prior to his college career.

In 1939, Ed graduated from San Jose State University with a degree in Biological Sciences

specializing in entomology. While at San Jose, he and his twin brother, Arthur, were the principal organizers of the San Jose State Entomology Club in 1935 and Ed was its president. The San Jose State Entomology Club has continued to exist over the years and in 1986 the club celebrated with a 51st year reunion which was well-attended by entomologists from many parts of the country. Many of its members have gone on to pursue entomological careers and have made important contributions in the field. Ed later did post-graduate work in entomology and education at the University of California (Berkeley) and at Stanford University.

During World War II, from 1942 to 1946, Ed was involved with the control of malaria in Florida, Arkansas, Georgia and South Carolina working on control of anopheline species responsible for malaria in the southern portion of the United States. During this time he did early experimental work with the then new insecticide, DDT.

After his discharge from the army in 1946, he served as District Entomologist and District Manager of the Mosquito Abatement District in Merced County, California. He initiated a number of program improvements in this district which won him recognition not only in California but country-wide especially in the area of field evaluation of mosquito control measures. He returned to the San Jose area in 1953 and became the Chief of the Vector Control Division in Santa Clara County developing that section into an efficient and up-to-date organization. Ed's early focus on source reduction instead of relying on chemicals for mosquito control was on the cutting edge of environmental measures which later would become popular with many Mosquito Abatement Districts both in California and elsewhere.

In 1956 the U.S. foreign assistance program recognizing Ed's scientific and administrative skills, offered him a position as Malaria Advisor to the newly developed malaria program in Sumatra, Indonesia. Ed's early involvement with the U.S. assistance efforts in world-wide malaria eradication and malaria control programs continued for almost 35 years. Due to the scientific and organizational measures developed in Sumatra, Ed was selected for Chief Malaria Advisor in Indonesia where he established a U.S.

team of professionals that would make the Indonesia program on Java and Bali a model for other Asian programs to follow. It was estimated that Java-Bali was experiencing between 15–20 million cases of malaria a year when the malaria program was being established there. This area now has less than 100,000 cases/year. This better than 99 percent disease reduction has provided millions of people with better health and contributed to national economic and social well-being.

In 1960, Ed was assigned to malaria eradication program efforts in Thailand as Chief Malaria Advisor. While in Thailand he instituted a system of regional advisory services to the malaria program which improved remarkably the impact of the program and resulted in major decreases in malaria especially in the central portions of the country. Ed's outstanding abilities to coordinate, plan and organize a mass malaria control campaign within the culture of Thailand in coordination with his national counterparts brought on not only U.S. but Thailand recognition for his services. He was awarded Thailand's Gold Medal Award for his contributions to their National Malaria Eradication Program in 1967.

In 1967, Ed moved to one of the biggest working challenges of his life when the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) assigned him to India as Chief Malaria Advisor to the Government of India. In a country which had been experiencing an estimated 75 million cases of malaria in the late 1940s and had a long history of anti-malaria activities, Ed's technical and management advisory skills were soon recognized and sought after by the Indian malariologists—a no small feat. India's Malaria Eradication Program developed a number of field techniques especially in epidemiology, operations and surveillance which resulted in a 97% reduction of malaria from its former 1940–50 levels. Ed enjoyed the confidence of the national malaria control leaders and accompanied them on numerous field visits and activities. He took part in several of the annual countrywide evaluation activities which involved a variety of multinational and bilateral scientific organizations as well as the Government of India.

The siren's call of Washington reached Ed and in 1971 he left India to accept the position of Chief of Malaria and Vector-borne Diseases for the Agency for International Development and was assigned in the Office of Health under Dr. Lee Howard. During the next 10 years Ed's contributions to the science of vector-borne disease control expanded enormously in two major directions—support of the overseas malaria field operations and malaria vaccine and vector control research. Ed, more than any person in the

Office of Health, pulled together the various bilateral and multilateral agencies which were working in the field of malaria control overseas into a more coordinated and focused effort which not only was more cost effective but better served the needs of the assisted countries through provision of a multi-agency approach to meeting their assistance needs. In the field of research, Ed, with the support of Dr. Howard, began the long search for a malaria vaccine. Ed established a project with Paul Silverman at the University of Illinois (later New Mexico) and slowly moved the effort into what became a major research and development project. In 1980, Ed received the A.I.D.'s Superior Honor Award in recognition of his exceptional achievements in the field of malaria control.

An opportunity arose in 1982 from the University of South Carolina (U.S.C.) to develop a graduate program leading to a master's degree in public health at their newly formed International Center for Public Health Research and Training near McClellanville which led Ed to retire from A.I.D. and move to South Carolina. The "Wedge" as the institute is called, was a former rice plantation which had been obtained by the University from its former owners for a public health research institution. A more difficult training and research organizational task cannot be imagined, but Ed's resourcefulness, past experience and management skills proved invaluable in quickly initiating a series of short term classes for U.S. and foreign students on vector control and related disease problems, field research and developing this former plantation into the effective U.S.C. institute that it is today.

Ed returned to the Washington, DC area and his home in Alexandria in 1984. He continued to play an active role in world-wide and domestic malaria and mosquito control efforts through numerous consultant assignments to A.I.D., the World Bank, World Health Organization and other such agencies which included the writing the report of the WHO workshop on Manpower Development for Disease Vector Control in Asia; a proposal for a malaria control program in the Comoro Islands for the African Development Bank; participation in the evaluation of the malaria control programs in Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan and Belize; and a plan for the World Bank for a water development project in India. He was a long time and active member of the American Mosquito Control Association and regularly attended the annual meetings to participate in the program and to share his knowledge and fellowship with others. His wealth of experience both domestically and overseas made him a sought after speaker and panel member for a variety of organizations. Ed was awarded

the AMCA Superior Service Award in 1981 for his contribution to vector control both internationally and in the U.S.

Ed Smith's skills and abilities were broad. He was a highly effective field malariologist, entomologist and ecologist as well as an effective administrator and project manager. He was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable ornithologist, herpetologist and lepidopterist. He and his wife, Joyce, maintained a sizable collection of orchids and other exotic plants at a large greenhouse they constructed on their property in Alexandria. Ed's interest in photography was a life-long hobby and many of his pictures won awards. His home is filled with books and papers on malaria, vector control, natural science and, of course, butterflies. At the time of his death, Ed was working on a manuscript based on his

many years devoted to malaria and control of vector-borne diseases throughout much of the world. He and his brother, Art, were also collaborating on an autobiographical account of their parallel careers. Ed was a man of many facets, interests and character—we shall not see his like often again.

Ed Smith is survived by his wife, Joyce Y. Smith of Alexandria; three sons, Brandon Smith of Chicago, Garrett Smith of San Francisco and Kirk Smith of Boston; a brother, Arthur Smith of Watsonville, California; and three grandchildren.

Larry Cowper
1046 West Cliff Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95060