

THOMAS D. MULHERN 1908-1993



Thomas D. Mulhern (about 1985)

Thomas Desmond Mulhern died on Thursday, August 12, 1993, in Morgan Hill, California. Tommy, as he was affectionately known by his friends and colleagues, was born in Brooklyn, New York on June 15, 1908.

Tommy devoted his entire professional life to activities related to the abatement and control of mosquitoes. Beginning with his first summer job in 1925, as a mosquito inspector for the Monmouth County New Jersey Mosquito Extermination Commission, to 1949, Tommy contributed professionally through the development and design of equipment and procedures used worldwide for the abatement and control of pest and vector mosquitoes. His full-time professional activity began in 1928 when working with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Department of Entomology, as a drainage engineer and administrative assistant.

Among his many professional contributions

was participation in the design and development of the New Jersey mosquito light trap and procedures for utilizing traps for the survey and evaluation of adult mosquito populations. He designed inverted-siphon, self-cleaning outlets for mosquito control ditches through sandy seashore beaches. He also designed a salt marsh ditching system to supplement the natural system, admitting saltwater minnows that preyed upon mosquito larvae, and designed and developed more efficient marsh ditching machines for salt marsh and freshwater marsh areas.

While with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Department of Entomology, Tommy managed the Sussex County (New Jersey) Mosquito Extermination Commission program from 1936 to 1945. In addition, as technical consultant in mosquito control, he provided consultation to all New Jersey Mosquito Extermination commissions up to 1949.

From the time of the formation of the Eastern Association of Mosquito Control Workers in 1935, in addition to his full-time professional activity, Tommy maintained a full-time interest and participation in the activities of this Association. He followed the Association through its renaming in 1944 to the American Mosquito Control Association and its incorporation as a non-profit corporation in 1948 in New Jersey.

In 1949, Tommy accepted a position with the California State Department of Health as a vector control specialist and moved to Fresno, California. In addition to his department duties, he provided technical guidance and consultation to the State's mosquito abatement districts. In the course of his activities, he participated in the evaluation of larvicidal and adulticidal equipment and procedures, the design of custom-made mistblowers, and development of aircraft applicators for larviciding and adulticiding. He also assisted in the development of source reduction programs. He was principal author and editor of the California Mosquito Control Association's training program designed to prepare technicians for state-administered examinations.

When Tommy moved to Fresno, California, the business affairs of the Association, which had been handled by him as Secretary-Treasurer, were moved with him. His professionalism, reputa-

tion for understanding, ability to provide practical professional guidance, and his ability to work harmoniously with professional associates and fellow workers led to a variety of assignments and services to international organizations. These organizations included WHO, PAHO and USAID, all of which were concerned with malaria eradication and the use of engineering techniques and chemicals in the control of vectors of malaria.

As a member and officer, Tommy contributed much personally and professionally through his dedicated service to the American Mosquito Control Association, its advancement over the past 50 years, and the preservation of its rich history. From 1935 to 1950, he served as Secretary-Treasurer, from 1950 to 1952 and 1974 to 1978 as Executive Secretary and was Executive Director from 1980 to 1985.

Tommy provided the cohesive leadership that was responsible for the AMCA changing from a small regional organization to an internationally known association with a worldwide membership. He developed the Central Office which not only responded to the day-to-day requirements of the members, but also provided a resource base for the many diverse groups concerned with mosquito and vector control on both local and national levels.

He received the Medal of Honor Award in 1973 and was given Honorary Membership in the American Mosquito Control Association in 1979 in acknowledgment of his long, unselfish, and dedicated service. He was made Executive Director Emeritus at the Association's annual meeting in 1985.

Tommy continued to reside in Fresno with his wife, Helen, after retirement in 1985 until her death in 1991. During these years, Tommy took time to go through his extensive records and

passed on some of this information to the California Association and the American Mosquito Control Association. He also enjoyed reading the early history of mosquito abatement.

His physical health remained frail after his 1984 heart attack, but he and Helen did try to keep in touch on a limited basis with friends from the past. They attended a few meetings during this time and were always full of enthusiasm after renewing old friendships.

After Helen's death, Tommy moved to a retirement home in Morgan Hill. He still corresponded with many friends from his years in mosquito control. He enjoyed telling his new friends about his many projects in mosquito abatement. He shared items of memorabilia with the people at Valley Pines. His year and a half living there was a very positive and contented time. He was with family he loved, and he had new friends and activities. He had a lot of pride in his 50 years with mosquito control and led a full and interesting life.

He is survived by three sons, Thomas Mulhern, Jr. of Petaluma, California, John Mulhern of San Jose, California, and Martin Mulhern of Washington, D.C.; two brothers, John Mulhern of Red Bank, New Jersey and James Mulhern of Annapolis, Maryland; a sister, Mary Rowland of Union, New Jersey; and four granddaughters, Susan, Kathleen, Charlotte, and Maureen.

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