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Introduction - Special Issue in Honor of Professor John. D. Dodd on the Occasion of His Retirement

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This issue of the Proceedings is dedicated to Professor John D. Dodd on the occasion of his 65th birthday. During his long and distinguished career at Iowa State University, Professor Dodd has exemplified the very best qualities of teaching and academic research in the botanical sciences. He finds genuine and unflinching fascination in his chosen field and one senses that his fondest desire is to elevate all of his students to his own perspective so that they might share the same rewards he finds in discovery of facts and comprehension of principles. Although few can match his intellectual capacity and catholic interests, he has provided many beginning students with a unique insight into the fundamentals of biology and inspired many of the graduate students fortunate enough to work with him to pursue fundamental research, particularly in unconventional or neglected areas.

The breadth and depth of Professor Dodd's understanding of the field allowed him to anticipate many problems before they were generally recognized, particularly in the areas of ecology and environmental quality. He has been particularly interested in these problems in the context of the state and local region and has published, and encouraged his students to publish, pioneering investigations in these Proceedings.

Perhaps most importantly, Professor Dodd's approaches to life and to his work are truly humanely inspired and marked by a rare degree of personal humility and candor. On one occasion, following a somewhat heated discussion of the future (or lack thereof) of a particularly errant graduate student, one of his departmental colleagues was moved to

remark that, "John Dodd is the world's last true believer in the inherent perfectibility of mankind." Although the remark was not, at the time, delivered with entirely kind intent, it captures the essence of the man. Throughout his career he devoted himself to teaching at the most difficult ends of the academic spectrum. He always participated in entry level courses and was also substantially responsible for development of several advanced speciality courses. At the same time he was always available to listen to the raw ideas and sometimes improbable enthusiasms of beginning research students and to, ever so gently, mold them into valid scientific inquiry. He neither pushed nor led his students, but traveled with them on the road to discovery.

It is certainly impossible to thank a person of Professor Dodd's stature for his contributions, and perhaps unnecessary when he finds reward in the giving. Nevertheless, contributors to this volume do hope to convey some small measure of the appreciation felt by a much larger group of colleagues and students who have been privileged to work with a keen and perceptive scientist, a great teacher, and one of nature's true gentlemen.

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