

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

HAROLD HEATH (1868 – 1951)

Harold Heath, Professor Emeritus of Embryology, died at Pacific Grove, April 22, 1951, at the age of 82. While not quite one of the original faculty of Stanford, he joined the department of zoology as Instructor in 1894, and practically his entire scientific life was spent at the university campus and at the Hopkins Marine Station. Hundreds of zoology and pre-medical students came under his inspiring scientific and personal influence.

Harold Heath was born in Vevay, Indiana, the son of Charles Wesley and Sarah Ann Heath, June 5, 1868. He graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1893, having also instructed in biology there from 1890 to 1893.

There followed a year as Professor of Biology at College of the Pacific, and two years as instructor at Stanford. He then pursued graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania, holding a Harrison Fellowship there in study under the famous Prof. E. G. Conklin. He there obtained his M.A. and Ph.D., the latter in 1898. His alma mater, Wesleyan, awarded him an honorary Sc.D. in 1919.

Dr. Heath returned to Stanford as Assistant Professor of Zoology in 1898, became Associate Professor in 1904, and Professor in 1909. He participated in many scientific expeditions, among them those of the "Albatross," in U.S. Fish Commission investigations of the salmon on the Alaska Coast in 1903, along the California coast in 1904, and to Japan in 1906. He spent the summers of 1910 and 1917 in fur seal investigations on the Pribilof Islands, was on the Stanford expedition to Brazil in 1911, and at Forrester Island in 1913. During his last trip to Alaska, he was severely injured in a fall over a glacial cliff.

Dr. Heath's connection with the Hopkins Marine Station began in 1895; he was instructor in the summer course there from 1895 to 1900. He taught again in 1919 and regularly every summer from 1924 onwards. He became a resident member of the Marine Station staff in 1925, and was made Professor of Embryology in 1931. He retired in 1933, but carried on scientific work, especially in connection with the Pacific Grove Municipal Museum for many years until failing health curtailed these activities. But he still retained a keen interest in people and affairs, and it was a pleasure for members of the Marine Station staff to visit him at his home facing the laboratory and the sea.

Dr. Heath's scientific publications were numerous, in the fields of invertebrate zoology and embryology. His monograph on the Solenogastres (of the Albatross expeditions) beautifully illustrated from his own drawings is perhaps outstanding. Other important work included the development of Ischnochiton, and a description of Polyclads of Monterey Bay. During his later years he was especially interested in the termites. But these are only a few of his many zoological works.

As a teacher he was pre-eminent: kindly, quizzical, and inspiring. He collaborated with Professors Burlingame, Martin and Peirce in installing Stanford's very successful General Biology course, and he helped write the textbook for it. He contributed greatly to Stanford's high position in the biological sciences. This was recognized by his "starred" position as one of the 1000 outstanding scientists (150 zoologists) in the first edition of "American Men of Science." He was a member of the Western Society of Naturalists, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, American Society of Zoologists, and a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Heath married Elsie Shelley of San Jose in 1897. She survives him, as do two sons Ronald W. Heath and James P. Heath, a daughter Mrs. Phyllis Heath Walker, a sister Mrs. Mary Heath Lee, and seven grandchildren.

William B. Owens
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