In Memoriam

Charles Kazys Labanauskas
Professor of Horticultural Sciences, Emeritus
UC Riverside
January 3, 1923-May 3, 2014

Chuck Labanauskas was born in Upyna, Lithuania. He spent two years at Dotnuva Agricultural College in his home country. In 1941, he escaped Lithuania ahead of the Russian front with his sister Ursula and brother Jonas and moved to Germany. There he worked as a research assistant in Halle before enrolling at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, where he received a bachelor's degree in agronomy in 1947. He was a translator for the U.S. Army from 1947 to 1949. He then moved to the United States and enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Illinois. He earned a master's degree in 1952 and a Ph.D. in 1954 -- both in agronomy -- and became an American citizen.

In 1955, Chuck Labanauskas joined the UC Riverside faculty as a Junior Horticulturist in what was then the Department of Horticultural Sciences. His research interest was the trace-element nutrition of plants, especially citrus. At the time, the effects of mineral nutrients on the yield, size and quality of citrus fruit was not well understood. A UCR research team that included Dr. Labanauskas studied the effects of different nutrients on fruit quality and developed leaf composition analysis as an important tool for growers. The team developed standards that are still in use worldwide. He retired in 1988 as Professor of Horticultural Sciences and Horticulturist.

Chuck Labanauskas was also a well-liked and respected teacher, known for his personal warmth, interest in his students and willingness to give of his time. Chuck's primary teaching responsibility was a course in plant mineral nutrition. He was always supportive of his family and friends, and over and over again he was described as a consummate gentleman. At the time of his death he was survived by his brother Jonas, sister Tevosa, cousins Ed and Albert Tarvyd, and nephew Ray Ilgunas.

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