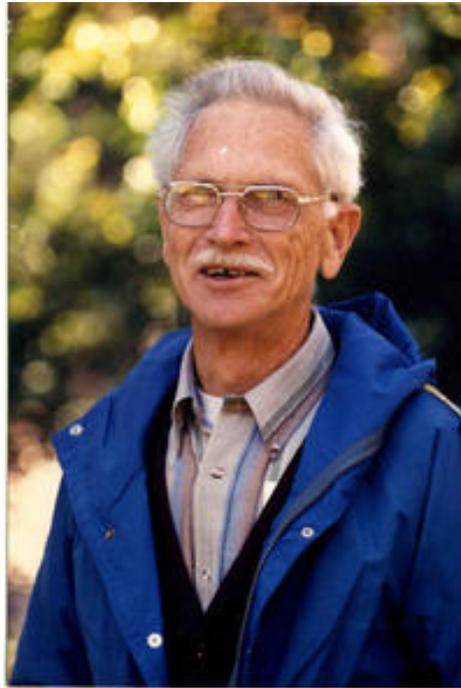


In Memoriam
Robert Kenneth Soost
Professor of Genetics, Emeritus
UC Riverside
November 13, 1920 – March 8, 2009



Dr. Robert K. Soost, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Botany and Plant Sciences, died on March 8, 2009. He was 88.

Dr. Soost was internationally known for his work in citrus breeding. His research included a focus on nuclear embryony and the cytology of citrus, and he was considered a world authority on citrus genetics and breeding. He consulted in other countries, trained visiting scientists from foreign nations, and spoke at international conferences. Dr. Soost and colleague, Dr. James Cameron, developed the Oroblanco and Melogold grapefruits, which were patented by the university in 1981 and 1986 respectively and received wide distribution among California growers, and the Pixie and Gold Nugget mandarins. The Pixie has become a favorite for backyard planting, while the Gold Nugget, which was released in 2000, was both seedless and had exceptional sweetness and flavor.

Born on November 13, 1920, in Sacramento, Dr. Soost attended Sacramento Junior College, and in 1942 graduated from UC Berkeley. He served in the Army Signal Corps during WWII. In 1949 he earned his Ph.D. in plant genetics from UC Davis. Dr. Soost was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi, and a Fellow of the American

Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Society for Horticultural Science.

Dr. Soost joined the staff of the Citrus Experiment Station in 1949 as a junior geneticist. In 1961, seven years after the Riverside station had turned into a university, he was named to a teaching post and now bore the title Associate Professor of Genetics and Associate Geneticist; he reached full rank three years later. His major teaching contribution was an undergraduate course in Plant Breeding. In 1968 he was appointed chair of the Department of Botany and Plant Sciences, a post he held for the next seven years. His service work did not end with his chairmanship. An Academic Senate colleague once estimated that Dr. Soost "must have spent about 2-3 days every week during the academic year on committee duties," going on to rank him "among the best [committee] chairs I have ever served under." During one year (1977-78) Dr. Soost served on 24 committees, chairing 4 of them. He continued his active life after he and his wife, Jean, moved to Inverness, California. Dr. Soost was an honored Fellow of the California Native Plant Society and a dedicated volunteer researcher with the Pt. Reyes National Seashore rare plant monitoring group.

Dr. Soost was survived by his wife of 59 years, Jean Soost of Inverness, daughters Anita Soost, Janet Clinton, and Elaine Soost, and four grandchildren, Stacy Clinton, Brian Clinton, Soquel Schafer, and Simon Schafer.

Compiled from various sources by Darleen DeMason.