

THE GEORGE MERCER AWARD FOR 1960



(photo courtesy U. of Texas News & Info. Serv.)

Dr. Calvin McMillan, on right, receives \$100 check for the Society's Mercer Award. Dr. H. H. Ransom, President of The University of Texas, presents the check.

The Mercer Award for 1960 has been presented to Dr. Calvin McMillan, Department of Botany, University of Texas. His paper, titled "The role of ecotypic variation in the distribution of the central grassland of North America" *Ecological Monographs* 29: 285-308) was selected by the judges as the outstanding eligible paper published in the preceding two years.

Dr. McMillan, in response to the editor's request for a brief sketch of his background leading to the Award-winning paper, has written the following:

"The enthusiasm of Walter P. Cottam played a decisive role in my becoming interested in vegetational problems. Under his direction, I completed a survey of the vegetation of the Deep Creek Mountains of Western Utah for a Master's Degree in 1948. During my undergraduate years at the University of Utah, the summers were in range research with the late Lincoln Ellison and Selar Hutch-

ins of the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. The range work throughout Nevada brought me into contact with W. Dwight Billings and it has been my privilege to have felt his ecological influence along with his friendship since that time. At the University of California, I undertook a study of the edaphic restriction of **Pinus** and **Cupressus** under the direction of Herbert L. Mason. At Berkeley, H. L. Mason stimulated my interest in evaluating ecological concepts and G. Ledyard Stebbins strongly influenced my interest in variations in plants. These influences along with the impressions I received of the work being conducted by J. Clausen, D. D. Keck and W. Hiesey in California at the Carnegie Institute of Washington determined the direction of my work in Nebraska. Prior to moving to Nebraska in 1952, I had been introduced to the outstanding work of C. E. Olmsted on latitudinal races of **Bouteloua** and this work suggested the direction that the experimental studies of grassland vegetation eventually took. Teaching and doing research in Nebraska was extremely challenging for it provided the vegetation on which F. E. Clements had based his original ecological concepts. In 1958, following six years at the University of Nebraska, I moved to the University of Texas to extend the studies into the southern grasslands. Most of the plants that were studied in Nebraska were moved to Texas and are currently being compared with collections from throughout the Southwest and the Eastern United States. Collections currently being added from Mexico are making it possible to study the mechanisms governing the distribution of common grassland species throughout North America. The studies at Nebraska were originated with funds from the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station. The latter part of these studies was aided by the National Science Foundation, whose continued support has greatly facilitated the expansion on these studies."