

THE GEORGE MERCER AWARD FOR 1962



President Murray F. Buell presents the Mercer Award to Drs. H. A. Mooney and W. D. Billings at the Annual Banquet at Corvallis. A check was presented to Dr. Mooney at UCLA by Vice Chancellor William G. Young and to Dr. Billings at Duke University by President Deryl Hart.

The George Mercer Award for 1962 has been presented to Dr. Harold A. Mooney, Department of Botany, University of California, Los Angeles, California and to Dr. W. D. Billings, Department of Botany, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Their paper entitled, "Comparative Physiological Ecology of Arctic and Alpine Populations of *Oxyria drgyna*. (ECOL. MONOG.: 31(1):1-29) was selected as the outstanding paper in the previous two years.

Harold Mooney had his first introduction to ecology at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory under Dr. Harriet Barclay. The combination of an ideal ecological environment, and Dr. Barclay's great enthusiasm, began

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an interest he has since followed. This original impetus was bolstered the following summer by association with Dr. John Marr and his colleagues Al Johnson, Bill Osburn, and Bill Rickard, as research assistant at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research. At this time his interest in mountain ecology, specifically alpine vegetation, was considerably strengthened. Throughout the remainder of his undergraduate training he was guided by Dr. C. H. Muller who not only stimulated his ecological thinking and introduced the possibilities of the experimental approach in ecology, but also helped to obtain a private scholarship which enabled him to begin graduate school.

Dr. W. D. Billings' field of research combined Mooney's interests in the alpine and in experimental ecology, and thus easily determined his selection of a graduate school. At Duke University the close association with students from all over the country broadened and intensified his ecological perspectives. The final polish to this training period was provided by the formal ecology program at Duke under the direction of both Dr. H. J. Oosting and Dr. Billings. During this time he worked as research assistant along with Ed Clebsch on Dr. Billings' National Science Foundation supported arctic-alpine project. The opportunity to work and collect at a great number of alpine areas in association with Billings and Clebsch, provided the stimulation for the problems involved, and led directly to the *Oxyria* work.

Dwight Billings became interested in botany and zoology as a student at Shortridge High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. He attended Butler University where he was introduced to ecology by Ray C. Friesner, Stanley Cain, and John E. Potzger. This ecological interest led to graduate work at Duke University where he received the Ph.D. degree under the direction of H. J. Oosting. After teaching briefly at the University of Tennessee, Dr. Billings moved to the University of Nevada where he became interested in desert and mountain ecology in the region of the Sierra Nevada. In 1952, he returned to Duke where with Professor Oosting he shares the responsibility of directing the program in plant ecology. From 1952 to 1957 he served a term as Botanical Editor of *ECOLOGY*. During 1959, he was a Fulbright Scholar in New Zealand at the University of Otago working with G. T. S. Baylis and A. F. Mark. Billings received the Certificate of Merit Award from the Botanical Society of America in 1960. His research interests are broad but are concerned mainly with three phases of ecology: (a) the comparative physiological ecology of species and ecological races in relation to distribution, using arctic, alpine, and desert plants as materials, (b) the ecology of adaptation to severe environments, and (c) productivity and energy flow in ecosystems of severe environments.