

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Aaron J. Sharp

Class of 1927

Dr. Aaron J. Sharp, botanist of international acclaim and distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee, applied to Ohio Wesleyan with the intention of becoming a Methodist minister, and, indeed, became a licensed minister during his sophomore year. Changing direction, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in botany.

In 1929 he joined the faculty of the University of Tennessee as instructor in botany, where his specialty became bryology, the study of mosses and liverworts, and where he has been known affectionately by his students as “Uncle Jack.”

He was the first botanist in the country to speak out for the “silent earth,” and has trained a number of the world’s leading botanist, including two from Japan.

Owner of the world’s largest collection of bryophytes, he has collected plants and mosses from every county in Tennessee every state in the union, and at least a dozen foreign countries, including Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, Russia, Tanzania, Finland and India.

Dr. Sharp has received many honors and awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Merit Award of the Botanical Society of America, and, recently, the Government of Japan’s prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, which recognizes him for contributing to the education of Japanese researchers. In 1952, he received an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from Ohio Wesleyan.

With more than 200 publications to his credit, he has served as consultant for Time-Life Books, BBC, Encyclopedia Britannica and National Geographic. He holds membership in 43 professional and learned societies and has served on editorial committees of a number of journals.

Retired from teaching in 1974, Jack Sharp has continued an active commitment to his profession and to environmental education and to writing, editing and researching.

It is a privilege to salute this outstanding graduate of Ohio Wesleyan for extra ordinary contributions, through science, to humankind.

May 15, 1993

