

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT



DR. ROBERT FISKE GRIGGS

Professor Robert F. Griggs (nearly 81), eminent botanist, ecologist and explorer, esteemed teacher and beloved friend of many died after a brief illness at Carroll Hall Sanatorium, Kensington, Maryland (an unofficial suburb of Washington, D. C.) on June 8, 1962. He was born in Brooklyn, Connecticut August 22, 1881. He received great encouragement from his parents and teachers who early stimulated his inherent bent and precocious interests as a naturalist. His B. S. degree was awarded in the field of botany by Ohio State University in 1903, his M. S. degree by the University of Minnesota in 1906, and his Ph.D. in botany in 1911 by Harvard University.

Dr. Griggs had a broad background training in botany, zoology and geology. He traveled and studied widely and published important papers not only in ecology and botany, the specialities where he was best known, but also in taxonomy, zoology, geology and exploration.

The highest peak, Mt. Griggs, a spectacular, majestic volcanic cone of Katmai's National Monument of Coastal Alaska was officially named in his honor in 1959, at the request of the governor and congressional delegation of Alaska, the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the National Geographic Society. This was in partial recognition of the six expeditions Dr. Griggs led to Alaska, beginning in 1915, to study the re-establishment of plant and animal life after the devastating and almost unprecedented volcanic eruptions of Katmai in 1912. On this first expedition he discovered the "Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes", so named because of the innumerable funeroles or vents of heated water pockets near the surface that were emitting clouds of steam.

In 1916, Dr. Griggs received the National Geographic's Franklin L. Burr Award for his explorations and brilliant ecological studies of the 2.7 million-acre Katmai region of the Aleutian Range. This rugged, spectacular, awesome, yet beautiful mountain wilderness area comprises the largest unit of our National Park System. Dr. Griggs' Alaskan expeditions, and especially his description and pictures in a NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE article of the "Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes", so impressed President Woodrow Wilson that by executive order he created the Katmai National Monument and declared, "This wonderland may become of popular scenic as well as scientific interest for generations to come inasmuch as all its phenomena exist upon a scale of great magnitude."

Dr. Griggs was Professor of Biology at Fargo College, North Dakota from 1903 to 1906, Professor of Biology at Ohio State University from 1906 to 1921, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Botany at George Washington University of Pittsburgh from 1947 until his retirement in 1952, at the age of 70. Until his death, he was Professor Emeritus of both George Washington and Pittsburgh Universities.

His early explorations and studies in a variety of fields were conducted along the Pacific, Canadian and Alaskan Coasts, Mt. Washington, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico (1901), Guatemala (1902), and Texas, where he studied the ecology of cotton and the control of the boll weevil during several summers. Later, as a leader in the field of ecology, he spent several summers studying alpine flora and the effects of environment near timberline. He also made extensive studies of plant re-establishment and succession after forest fires.

From 1940 to 1947, while teaching at George Washington University, Dr. Griggs accepted the Chairmanship of the Division of Biology and Agriculture of the National Research Council, the operating arm of the National Academy of Science. During this critical war period he served with great distinction in soliciting the help of outstanding scientists at a time when their services were most needed. As an ex-officio member of the National Food and Nutrition Board (of NRC) during the war he helped to bring about legislation requiring enrichment of white bread and margarine. Because of his service many health practices were inaugurated by this country and by its allies.

Dr. Griggs served as consultant, advisor or researcher to a number of private firms and government agencies. He was a prominent member of many professional organizations and honorary societies. Among these may be listed the governing board of the American Institute of Biological Sciences; Natural Resources Council (honorary member); Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science; Ecological Society (President 1943-1944); National Geographic Society (honorary life member); Botanical Society; Society for the Study of Evolution; Wilderness Society (Executive Committee member); National Parks Association (Executive Committee member and Trustee); Biological Society of America; Washington Academy of Science (President 1933); Botanical Society of Washington (Recording Secretary 1923 and President 1928); Geological Society of Washington; N. H. Academy of Science; Cosmos Club; Sigma Xi; Phi Beta Kappa; Sigma Gamma Epsilon; honorary member Veterinary Medicine Association.

He authorized many important papers on a considerable variety of technical subjects which reflect his great versatility and exceptional training. These dealt with biography and autobiography, botany, ecology, taxonomy, zoology, cytology, geology and exploration. A few of these im-

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portant publications include "The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes", 9 maps, 223 ill.; 341 pp., *Nat. Geog. Soc.*, 1922; "We Two Together", 320 pp., autobiography and biography of Dr. Griggs and his lovely wife (written primarily for his four children and closest friends), The Boxwood Press; "Scientific Results of Katmai Expeditions" by Griggs, et al; "A Key to the Families of Flowering Plants, Wild or Cultivated in North Eastern United States 1932, 32 pp.; "The Willows of Ohio", **Monograph, Ohio State Academy of Science**, Vol. 4, Pt. 6, pp. 257-314; "The Buffalo River, An Interesting Meandering Stream", **Am. Geol. Soc. Bull** (38): 168-177)1906; "A Botanical Survey of Sugar Grove Region", Ohio State University 1914, 18 (25): 247-340. A number of important contributions dealt with the ecology of alpine and timberline ecology and of plant reinvasion and succession after a fire and the ecological effects of other limiting factors such as wind, frost and fire.

Dr. Griggs lived an active, happy and productive life. He contributed enormously to science and to human welfare. Thousands of students came under his kindly, magnetic and stimulating influence. He demanded quality performance and possessed the ability to bring out the best in students and associates. Many owe much of their success to his understanding and helpful guidance. The Griggs home was a mecca for graduate students. While his direct accomplishments were great, perhaps his greatest contributions were the indirect ones that came from the many students and associates who were fortunate enough to work with him or who came under his guidance or influence. This world is a far better place because of the rich life, good works and great character of Robert Fiske Griggs.
Clarence Cottam and William W. Diehl.