

Memorial of Charles D. Campbell 1905–1988

JOSEPH W. MILLS*

Department of Geology, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 99164-2812, U.S.A.

Charles Duncan Campbell, Emeritus Professor of Geology and long-time teacher at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, died December 10, 1988, at his home in Carmel, California, after a lengthy illness. Death was attributed to heart failure. He was 83 years old.

Charles Campbell was born November 12, 1905, at Ann Arbor, Michigan. He was the son of Jennie Ives Campbell and Edward D. Campbell, Professor of Chemistry, University of Michigan. Following high school, Charles attended the University of Michigan from which he was graduated (B.S. with high distinction) in 1930 and with an M.S. degree in geology in 1931. He earned his Ph.D. degree at Stanford University in 1934, specializing in petrology and mineralogy. His excellent academic and research record resulted in his election to Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Xi. Proficiency in his chosen field was supplemented by developing a reading knowledge of French, German, Spanish, and Russian, and a speaking proficiency in French and German.

While attending Stanford University he met his wife-to-be, Dorothy Jones, who was pursuing graduate studies at Mills College. They were married in Hayward, California, in 1938. Following Charles's retirement, they moved to California in 1975. Since his death, Dorothy has moved to Tucson, Arizona.

For the 45 years since Charles's early studies in Michigan, his life work was entirely in the western United States, particularly the Pacific Northwest. During the summers of 1932 and 1933 his Ph.D. research study of alkaline syenite rocks of southern British Columbia and western Washington resulted in his developing a liking for the Pacific Northwest so that when he learned of a teaching position in geology at Washington State College in 1934 he welcomed the opportunity to apply for it. The outcome was his appointment as instructor and subsequently he advanced through the ranks of assistant and associate professor to professor and chairman of geology in 1950. He retained the chairmanship until 1961 when health problems necessitated his resignation from that office, though he continued to teach courses at all levels until his retirement in 1971.

Throughout his long tenure at Washington State University he taught courses in general geology, mineralogy, petrography, and petrology. All of his teaching was marked by thoroughness and clarity enlivened by his keen wit. He had a great interest in providing a geological background to current news events such as floods and earthquakes. This he did by means of 15-minute weekly radio talks over radio station KWSU, Pullman, Washington. Similarly, he was especially interested in how geology influenced past historical events, such as voyages of discovery, battlefield site selection, etc., even events of Greek mythology. This interest was instrumental in his selection of the Mediterranean area to study and explore during a sabbatical leave and the subsequent incorporation of his findings of the frequent close relationship of history and geology into his classes. His interest in improving undergraduate science education in geology was acknowledged by the National Science Foundation in the form of grant support for two years in the early 1960s.

Field work during his teaching years included geologic mapping of northeastern Washington for the Washington State Division of Mines and Geology and studies of lead and zinc deposits, mostly in Washington State, for the U.S. Geological Survey.

Charles Campbell was a Fellow of the Geological Society of America and the Mineralogical Society of America, and a member of the American Geophysical Union, the Geochemical Society, the American Geological Institute, the Northwest Scientific Association, and the National Association of Geology Teachers, for which he served as vice-president, 1959–1960, and president, 1960–1961.

Incipient tuberculosis plagued him from the time he was 18 years old, but it was kept under control by medication. However, he experienced enormous fatigue throughout his life. Additional health problems evolved after he moved to Carmel, California, in 1975. Despite such problems, which were rarely apparent to others, he never lost his sense of humor and his wit. He led a happy life and died as gently as he lived.

The Department of Geology, Washington State University, is establishing a Charles D. Campbell Endowment fund, supported by present and former faculty, students, staff, and friends who enjoyed and benefited from their association with him.

* Present address: P.O. Box 288, Mary Esther, Florida 32569, U.S.A.

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