

Distinguished Alumni

Distinguished Alumnus Award - 1981

G. Ledyard Stebbins '24

Through your quest for scientific knowledge and your exploration of the landscape of California and the Western United States, you have left a mark of distinction in your beloved field of botanical genetics.

Your interest in the study of sciences began when Cate teacher, Ralph Hoffman, introduced you to zoology, astronomy and systemic botany. Contributing to life on the Mesa, you edited *El Batidor* in your junior and senior years, delivered the commencement address, and graduated Cum Laude. Following graduation, you attended Harvard, where you received an A.B. in 1928, an A.M. in 1929, and a Ph. D in 1931.

Your career began at Colgate University where you served as biology instructor and continued with four years as a junior geneticist at the University of California at Berkeley. You were named an assistant professor of genetics at Berkeley in 1939 and promoted to professor of genetics in 1947. In 1950, you joined the Davis campus of the University of California, where you founded the Department of Genetics and served as its chairman until 1963. Following your designation as professor emeritus and your retirement in 1973, you spent two years traveling around the world as a visiting professor of botany and genetics.

Both the National Academy of Science and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences elected you a member in 1952, and in 1956 you received the Merit Award from the Botanical Society of America. In honor of your work as an active conservationist, in 1980 the University of California Regents named the UC Natural Reserve System Preserve after you. The Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve, a 577 acre parcel of protected land set aside for research near the Davis campus.

Beginning in 1935, you collaborated on research for the book, *Crepis*, and you have authored many books, including: *The Human Organism and the World of Life* with Clarence Young, *Processes of Organic Evolution*, and your most famous, *Variation and Evolution in Plants*. The latter distinguished you as the first biologist to apply the modern synthetic theory of evolution to synthesize artificially a new, distinct species and establish it successfully under natural conditions.

Your great love of knowledge and of the classics, which were imbued in you by Mr. Cate, reflects the spirit of the School motto "Servons." Like an outrider, the symbol for *El Batidor*, you have been a leader, innovator, and outstanding researcher in your field. The Cate School Alumni Association proudly names you, G. Ledyard Stebbins '24, the Distinguished Alumnus of 1981.