



James Cason

August 30, 1912 – November 3, 2003

James Cason, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, died November 3, 2003. He was born August 30, 1912, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and attended Vanderbilt University, where he obtained an A.B. Degree in 1934. He earned a M.S. Degree from the University of California at Berkeley (1935) and Ph.D. from Yale (1938), both in organic chemistry. He was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship to Harvard and worked with the National Defense Research Committee during World War II. He taught at DePauw University (1940-41) and at Vanderbilt University (1941-45), before joining the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1945.

From its early beginnings until the end of World War II, Berkeley had been characterized by exceptional strength in physical chemistry, mainly through the influence of Gilbert Newton Lewis, who passed away in 1944. In 1945, Dean Wendell Latimer recognized the need to offer a more balanced program and set about to recruit a cadre of organic chemists and subsequently hired Cason, William Dauben, and Henry Rapoport in 1945-46.

For almost four decades, Cason taught organic chemistry at Berkeley and served as Dean of the College of Chemistry in 1955-56. He authored four college textbooks on organic chemistry and published more than a hundred articles in major scientific journals. He served on the *Organic Syntheses* active board from 1951-1959 and edited Volume 37, which was published in 1957. His last publication was an autobiography, published three years before his death ("Things Remembered," Rutledge Books, Inc., Danbury, CT, 2000).

Cason retired from the University of California in 1983 and for the last twenty years of his life, he and his wife Rebecca split their time between their home in the Berkeley hills and their old-growth redwood property, named "Camelot," near Garberville, California. For a number of years, the Casons operated a profitable 75-acre almond

orchard in the Central Valley of California. Rebecca Marsden Cason passed away in 2004.

Clayton H. Heathcock

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