

## California Avocado Society Award of Honor 1982



Marvin P. Miller

Marvin Miller is a native Californian, born in Los Angeles County near Venice. He attended and graduated from Alhambra High School, then went to University of California at Los Angeles for two years before completing his university work with a B.S. in Animal Husbandry from U.C. Davis in 1926.

Mr. Miller gained practical experience by working on a large ranch in northern California for several years before taking a position with the Agricultural Commissioner's office in Los Angeles County. While serving in this capacity during the period of years from 1937 to 1950, Mr. Miller spent most of the time in the Glendora area where he became acquainted with the late Marvin Rounds. This is where he became indoctrinated in avocado culture and variety selection. Mr. Miller left the Commissioner's office as a senior inspector to take a position with the University of California Agricultural Extension Service in Riverside County, where he served until his official retirement in 1972. As farm advisor on subtropical fruit crops for Riverside County, Mr. Miller conducted many field experiments with avocados. He is a keen observer, and was concerned over many of the problems experienced by growers. He devoted much of his time and energy working tirelessly to find answers which contributed substantially to the knowledge of avocado culture.

Among his numerous avocado trials were studies on selective pruning to reduce alternate bearing, sprinkler cooling of trees to reduce young fruit drop during excessively hot weather, the practical use of helicopters for frost protection in both citrus and avocados, and studies of the only known field occurrence in California of manganese deficiency in avocados (which he found on a few trees in a Corona

orchard.)

Mr. Miller has been a member of the California Avocado Society since 1951, and has served as an active and valued member of its Variety Committee for many years. Evidence of his interest and proficiency in propagation and topworking can be seen in many new or trial varieties growing well on old stumps throughout Riverside County. Mr. Miller had several trials in the Coachella Valley to determine if any avocado variety would be commercially successful in that area. Plantings both in the open and under date palms resulted in the conclusion that while the trees grew well, the climate is not suited for consistent production (practically no production, for some varieties). Mr. Miller has authored or co-authored 14 articles on avocados, nine of which have been in CAS Yearbooks.

In 1972, Mr. Miller accepted a position as Agricultural Specialist and Visitor Coordinator for the Dean's Office, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, U.C. Riverside. In this capacity, which he still holds, he has arranged the programs for thousands of agricultural visitors — growers and scientists, individuals and groups — who come to U.C. Riverside for consultations with staff and for information on many phases of agricultural production.

Mr. Miller and his wife, Virginia, reside in Riverside. They have two children, Barbara and Don, and two grandchildren.