

California Avocado Society Award of Honor 1986



Eugenio Schieber

This year's recipient of the Award of Honor, Dr. Eugenio Schieber, was born of German parents on a coffee farm in the central highlands of Guatemala, near the beautiful colonial city of Antigua. Dr. Schieber began working with the Instituto Agropecuario Nacional, the government Experiment Station in Guatemala, in 1951. I first met him there when beginning our University of California search for *Phytophthora-resistant* avocado rootstocks in Latin America in 1952. Dr. Schieber became head of the Department of Plant Pathology in 1959, and continued in that position until 1971.

Dr Schieber took time off from the Experiment Station for university studies in the United States. He was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Arkansas from 1954-56, and took graduate work at the University of Wisconsin from 1956-59. He received his Ph.D. degree in plant pathology in 1959, studying under Dr. James Dickson, noted international specialist in diseases of field crops.

After his return to the Instituto Agropecuario Nacional, Dr. Schieber became well known for his research on diseases of corn, beans, and coffee. He began his international travels in 1958, and has visited many countries throughout the world in relation to coffee rust, general coffee diseases, and general surveys of tropical plant diseases.

Dr. Schieber has made two trips to Africa, under the auspices of Rockefeller Foundation and the Central American Plant Protection Institute, studying and advising on coffee rust, other coffee disease problems, and corn rust. In this work he visited Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria Rhodesia, Senegal, and South Africa. He has travelled extensively in Central and South America and the Caribbean, in consultations sponsored by USAID, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the German government's agricultural aid program (GTZ), the Organization of American

States and the Rockefeller Foundation. Included in these studies have been six trips to Brazil, largely in connection with coffee rust. Dr. Schieber also has made a tropical plant disease survey in Indonesia, with emphasis on Borneo, for the German GTZ program.

In 1971, Dr. Schieber resigned from his position at the Instituto Agropecuario Nacional to work as an international consultant in tropical plant pathology. We were fortunate to be able to employ him part-time then to work on our program of collecting native avocados and related species of *Persea* in Latin America in the search for resistance to *Phytophthora* root rot. He has continued in this position ever since and has done a very effective job, making many interesting and valuable rootstock collections, including G6, the very promising collection G755 (the apparent *Persea americana* x *P. schiedeana* hybrid from northern Guatemala), and a number of other materials. Also, he has developed an interest in the taxonomy of the genus *Persea*, a project on which he and I have collaborated during these years. Since Dr. M.D. Coffey's arrival in the position at UCR, Dr. Schieber has been working with him in this collecting program.

In addition to his travels as an agricultural consultant, Dr. Schieber has organized several coffee disease symposia and has presented invitational papers at a number of regional and international conferences in different countries. Eugenic Schieber has made many contributions to the California avocado industry during his extensive botanical explorations and collections in the past fifteen years, and is certainly a very deserving and worthy recipient of the 1986 Award of Honor.

—George A. Zentmyer