

Prof. Gustav Holz retires as professor in Plant Pathology at Stellenbosch University

Prof. Gustav Holz has retired as lecturer in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Stellenbosch in December 2006, after 34 years of dedicated research and student guidance and training. During his years as lecturer and chairperson of the Department, he highly valued the interests of the department, his colleagues and students, and in doing so promoted the welfare of the Department and Faculty.

Prof. Holz obtained a BScAgric degree at the University of the Free State in 1970, where after his career commenced as researcher at the Horticulture Research Institute in Pretoria. During this period he also initiated his studies in a BScAgricHons and a MScAgric degree at the University of Stellenbosch, of which the latter was awarded to him cum laude in 1973. In 1975, he was appointed as Lecturer in Plant Pathology at the University of Stellenbosch where he also obtained his PhD(Agric) in 1983. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1986, and to Professor in 1992, as well as chairperson of the Department of Plant Pathology, a position that he held for the most part until his retirement in 2006.

During his academic career, Prof. Holz dedicated himself to the training of under- and postgraduate students, where he not only fostered a love for plant pathology in students, but also cared for their personal wellbeing. Prof. Holz was promoter of three PhD(Agric) candidates, supervisor of 23 MScAgric candidates, co-promoter of two PhD students and co-supervisor of nine MScAgric candidates. He was examiner of various MSc thesis and PhD dissertations at national as well as international Universities. His involvement in undergraduate training involved teaching Introductory Plant Pathology, Integrated Disease Management, Economical Plant Pathology, Economical Aspects of Plant Diseases, Physiological Plant Pathology, Plant Pathological Micro-techniques and Experimental Plant Pathology. His dedication to teaching was rewarded with the Rector's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2000. Prof. Holz also served as a member of various committees at the University of Stellenbosch, as well as industry related committees, including the Peer Review Group of the Deciduous Fruit Producing Trust, where he made significant contributions. Prof. Holz mainly served the deciduous fruit industry, where he established an outstanding research programme on various diseases of deciduous fruit.

During his career he was honored and recognized for his research and contributions to plant pathology as a discipline with the Rector's Award for Excellence in Research in 2003, the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology's Publicity Award in 2003, and the Wynand Malan Floating Trophee for excellent service to the SA table grape industry in 2004. His research mainly included the following themes: physiological plant pathology (behaviour of fungal pathogens on fruit surfaces, infection pathways, influence of nutrition and cuticle characteristics on growth of fungi and fruit surfaces, and host resistance), post-harvest pathology (ecology of various inoculum types of *Botrytis cinerea*, *Monilinia laxa* and *Alternaria alternata* under different epidemiological conditions) and integrated disease management (fungicide resistance, sanitation, soft chemicals, and biological control). Research projects in these areas resulted in the publication of 61 articles in peer reviewed scientific journals, as well as the presentation of 55 and 89 papers at international and national congresses respectively. During his research career, Prof. Holz also collaborated with various well-known national and international researchers.

Prof. Gustav Holz is an internationally recognized plant pathologist, especially for his research on *Botrytis cinerea*, the causal pathogen of grey rot on grape and stone fruit. His knowledge and experience in this field has resulted in two invitations for being senior author of book chapters, one chapter in the well-known manual "Compendium of Grape Diseases" and the other in "Botrytis: Biology, Pathology and Control". He was also an invited speaker at the 13th Botrytis symposium in Turkey, as well as two other international congresses. Prof. Holz has not only played a leading and influential role in the Department of Plant Pathology, but has also contributed on a wider scale to the Faculty of AgriSciences, the University of Stellenbosch and plant pathology internationally. Prof. Holz, his experience, all-embracing approach to life and institutional knowledge will surely be missed.