



MG 31 – Thomas Johann Arnason fonds

Dates: 1948-1965 (inclusive); 1956-1960 (predominant).

Extent: 7 cm of textual records.

Biography: Thomas Johann ("Tom") Arnason was born in Brown, Manitoba, in 1905. Dr. T.J. (Tom) Arnason was one of Canada's best known and respected biologists. During his long career at the University of Saskatchewan he did much to stir the interest of legions of students in biology in general and genetics in particular. His protégés who conducted graduate research under his direction now are to be found as staff members in various capacities at universities and research institutions around the world.

He was a successful teacher in a broad range of specialties in plant biology — morphology, evolution, cytology and genetics. This is reflected in his astonishing fund of biological lore. His research activity included studies on gene transfer in wheat hybrids, meiotic behaviour of corn—teosinte hybrids, sterility in potatoes, maternal inheritance in the cereals and mutagenesis by ionizing radiation and alkylating agents. He and one of his students, M.E. Cumming, were among the first to demonstrate chromosome anomalies induced by absorbed radioactive isotopes in plants and this resulted in an invitation to participate in the Cold Spring Harbour Symposium (on Biological Applications of Tracer Elements) in 1948. Since that time he continued to make a substantial contribution to the published literature on mutagenesis in plants.

He was active in the formation of the Genetics Society of Canada and served as its president in 1957-1958.

Tom was made Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biology in 1972. He continued to conduct research on mutagenesis in barley, and as he has done for many years still leavens the conversation over morning coffee with his penetrating wit, sagacious observations on the universe, and an inexhaustible fund of unprintable anecdotes, parables and limericks. He passed away in 1990.

Scope and Content: This fonds contains Professor Arnason's genealogy; correspondence regarding W.P. Thompson's retirement; material relating to the planning and formal opening of the Biology Building; and information concerning the Faculty Association.

Restrictions: There are no restrictions on access.

Edited for formatting by Chalyse Lalonde. October, 2020.

- I. Genealogy of Thomas J. Arnason.
- II. Retirement Plan for W. P. Thompson.
Correspondence respecting dinner in honour of W.P. Thompson and a gift from former students.
- III. Biology Building. – 1956 -1958.
Drawings and plans for new W. P. Thompson Building. Correspondence and memos as to funding, space allocations, equipment and facilities. A submission to the committee on Improvement and Desirable expansion on Biology Department. Schedules for moving and opening of new building.
- IV. Formal Opening of W. P. Thompson Building. – September, 1960.
A copy of the program for opening on September 15, 1960, an itinerary for D. S. Rawson. Lists of expenses. A copy of invitation issued for opening. Correspondence to and from graduates. Lists guests for luncheons, platform party, etc.
- V. Faculty Association. – 1948 -1965.
A bulletin issued to all members. A submission to Board of Governors. Agenda and minutes of meetings of the Association.
Copies of two addresses:
 - ‘Who should determine University Policy” by
 - W.C. Fowke.This paper was delivered at the A.V.B.C. Conference held at McGill. September, 1958. Talk given at his retirement dinner at Faculty Club — T. C. Vanterpool.