

# Oak News & Notes

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OAK SOCIETY, VOLUME 13, NO. 1, WINTER 2009

## IN MEMORIAM

### John Maurice Tucker

*By Ellen A. Dean, Curator, UC Davis Center for Plant Diversity, and Guy Sternberg*

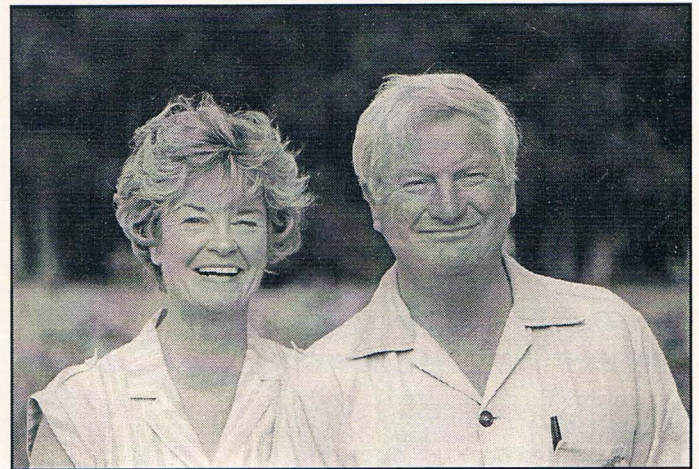
Marking the end of an era for botany at the University of California at Davis, Professor Emeritus John Tucker passed away on July 5, 2008 due to complications from a stroke. He was the last of the great group of mid-Twentieth Century American oak experts including his friends and collaborators Walter Cottam, Frank Santamour Jr., and Cornelius Muller.

John wrote the key and descriptions for the oak family treatment for the 1991 **Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California**, and at the age of 92, he finished a new version of that treatment for the upcoming Jepson Manual revision. During his numerous field expeditions John described oak populations from an ecological, geological, historical, and taxonomic viewpoint. He collected flowers to look at chromosome counts, acorns to analyze their chemistry and viability, and seemingly endless population samples to look at leaf surfaces and architecture. He collected pollen and crossed oaks and then collected acorns to study subsequent progeny.

While still a graduate student at UC Berkeley, he was hired as Director of what was then the UC Davis Botany Department Herbarium. At that time the herbarium housed 9,400 specimens in six wooden cases. Under his leadership, the collection expanded dramatically and in 1961 it moved to a new home in Robbins Hall, a space that John designed. Upon his retirement in 1986, the Botany Department Herbarium was officially named the J. M. Tucker Herbarium to honor his 39 years as director.

John also became Director of the UC Davis Arboretum, with which he had been involved since the early 1950s. In 1962, he helped establish an oak grove near the western end of the Arboretum, contributing acorns from research projects in the southwestern U.S. and Mexico. Today the Arboretum is home to 574 oak trees from

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### Bridget and Duncan Cameron

*By Roderick Cameron*

This past September the International Oak Society lost two members who represented the heart and soul of our organization, as Bridget and Duncan Cameron were tragically killed in their native Argentina. They had been members of the Oak Society since attending the California conference in 1997 and took part in many activities including conferences and field trips. They were devoted Quercophiles as evidenced by their tribute to Elizabeth II on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee. At that time they sent a letter advising Her Majesty that a specimen of *Quercus robur* "Concordia" (commonly known as "Golden Oak") had been planted in her honour in a remote corner of the Argentine pampas, some 7,139 miles from Buckingham Palace. The letter was signed by Bridget and Duncan Cameron, of Grigadale, Pieres, Province of Buenos Aires, and it serves as an effective introduction to this couple, for it highlights some key elements of their life stories: their love of nature, their dedication to the cultivation of the earth, their commitment to the land of their birth and their strong ties to the land of their heritage.

In 1991 Duncan and Bridget set about creating a new homestead on Grigadale, their property in Argentina, converting, over the last 17 years of their lives, an empty

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# New Tours Committee Guidelines Established

One of the great things about being part of the International Oak Society is the opportunity to meet with fellow oak enthusiasts at diverse locations throughout the oak regions of the world. Unfortunately, there have not always been many times when scheduled, formal gatherings are planned during the non-conference years. In some parts of Europe they have Oak Open Days but these events are only a shadow of what we could be doing.

During the 2006 conference in Dallas, Texas, the board of directors approached me and a few others and asked if we would serve on a new Tours Committee. The goal of the committee was to develop a program that would encourage Oak Society members to organize and host tours where they live, thus increasing member participation in enjoying our wonderful world of oaks. Committee members devoted much time and effort into creating guidelines to help tour organizers host successful

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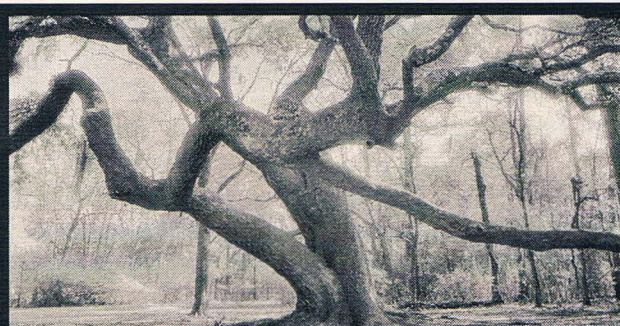
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## Tours Committee Guidelines Established

tours. We trust that the Oak Society membership will be encouraged that a basic outline of how to set up a tour is now available and that many tours will soon be offered. With an organization that is so large geographically, members can feel isolated and detached if not able to meet with other oak enthusiasts on a consistent basis. Please consider how you can host or co-host a tour in your region. You will make new and lasting friendships while celebrating oaks and having a really good time.

James Hitz, Chairman, Barry Denyer Green, Jo Earle (deceased), Shaun Haddock, Anke Mattern, Alan Taylor



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## Starhill Forest Arboretum Donated to Illinois College

In a formal signing ceremony on Sunday, October 26, involving representatives from Illinois College and Starhill Forest Arboretum, Guy and Edie Sternberg, founding proprietors of the Starhill Forest Arboretum located in Petersburg, Illinois, formalized their partnership with Illinois College. The Sternberg's gift will provide the college with an attractive setting for biological and environmental research, photography, student internships and other educational programming.

Axel Steuer, Illinois College President, said, "We will carry forward the Sternberg's educational vision for the Arboretum in perpetuity by creating an off-campus teaching and learning environment consistent with Illinois College educational mission of preparing young men and women for fulfilling lives of leadership and service". He continued, "We look forward to providing a beautiful venue for educating young people and the general public on trees and other plantings, wildlife and environmental issues."

Established in 1976 by Guy and Edie Sternberg, Starhill Forest Arboretum consists of 48 acres in southern Menard County, Illinois. The name Starhill is derived from the German Sternberg, which can be translated into Star Mountain. The Arboretum is centered on a hill overlooking the valley of Rock Creek, two miles upstream from the confluence with the Sangamon River. Starhill is a forest arboretum with many naturalized plantings. The Arboretum's primary scientific collection is its oak (*Quercus*) collection, which is one of the

most comprehensive collections of this genus in the US, including many rare species, varieties, cultivars, nothospecies, and hybrids throughout the property and more than 100 tropical oak taxa wintered in greenhouses. A few oak trees on the property exceed 150 years of age, and several trees rank as State or County Champions.

In addition to the oak collection, approximately 150 other genera of woody plants are available for study, as well as herb and perennial landscapes, a native prairie garden, several provenance tests and a conifer plantation. Sixty species of woody plants grow spontaneously throughout the arboretum, and more than 600 additional taxa have been planted.

Guy and Edie Sternberg also have adjunct faculty positions at the college. Elizabeth Tobin, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, said. "The Sternbergs will provide both classroom teaching and off-campus teaching and learning experiences consistent with our intent to provide a balanced liberal arts curriculum with a broad range of quality experiential learning opportunities." She continued by saying, "Such programs will cross a broad range of academic departments at the college to include art, biology, literature and environmental studies."



*send your photos  
& illustrations  
to the editor!*



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## John Maurice Tucker

around the world, including many of the Cottam-Tucker hybrids and a number of native California oak species.

During his career, John received numerous honors and awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1955. He was selected as a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the California Academy of Sciences. He also was a member of the American Institute of Biological Sciences, American Society of Plant Taxonomists, Botanical Society of America, California Botanical Society, International Association for Plant Taxonomy, Sigma Xi honor society and Society for the Study of Evolution.

Many Oak Society members benefited from John's expertise and sent him oak samples to identify. He was generous with his time and always glad to look at any oak from anywhere, because John loved oaks!




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## BRIDGET AND DUNCAN CAMERON

field into a welcoming home, garden and park. Duncan began to collect oak trees and planted an arboretum that has become one of the most comprehensive oak collections in the country.

Bridget and Duncan died as the result of a car accident on September 11. They leave behind them, aside from the images and moments that populate the memories of their friends, relations, four sons and their families, a record of lives well lived, a homestead that promises to endure through future generations, and a nascent arboretum with its Golden Oak and a hundred others besides.






OCTOBER 20 - 22<sup>th</sup>, 2009 PUEBLA, MEXICO

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## Sixth International Oak Society Conference 20-22 October 2009

Preparations for the next conference to be held in Puebla, Mexico are now well advanced. Details of registration, abstract submission, costs, tours and hotels will be accessible on the IOS website from the middle of January. Also, above is a Conference Poster that can be downloaded and printed to distribute to potential attendees. Please help us advertise far and wide!

I would like to thank all those that have already registered for the conference. If you have not yet registered but wish to attend, please visit the website and complete the pre-registration form.

We are waiting to hear from you.

Maricela R. Coombes  
Conference Chair



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