



Dwight Smithson Jeffers

1935-1953

The longest tenured of the college's deans, Dwight S. Jeffers occupied the position from 1935-1953, very formative years in the growth of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences. Additions occurring during Dr. Jeffers' tenure included Summer Camp, the Forest, Wildlife and Range Experiment Station, the Idaho Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, and the beginnings of the fisheries and wildlife programs.

Born in Deland, Illinois, May 21, 1883, Jeffers began his professional career not as a forester but as a high school mathematics teacher. Soon, however, his interest in forestry took him to the Yale School of Forestry, from which he graduated with an M.F. in 1911. He then joined the Forest Service in Colorado, moving up rapidly through the ranks to become Forest Supervisor of the Uncompaghre and Arapaho National Forests.

In 1922, Jeffers left the Forest Service to join the staff of the Department of Forestry in the Iowa State College School of Agriculture. Nine years later, he moved again, this time to the University of Washington School of Forestry, where he soon attained full professorial rank.

In the meantime, he had been working toward his doctorate, and in 1935 received a Ph.D. from Yale. That same year, he was offered and accepted the position of dean of the University of Idaho School of Forestry.

Throughout his tenure as dean, Dwight Jeffers earned affectionate respect for his consistent courtesy, his many kindnesses, and his unabating concern for his "boys," particularly for those of the immediate pre-war years who lived "behind the heating plant" in shacks knocked together from found materials. Jeffers initiated an alumni newsletter, writing it himself, and during the war years, ensuring that his letters reached the "boys" overseas.

Dean Jeffers retired from the university in 1953 at age 70. However, he continued to be active as a consultant and soon returned to teaching as a guest lecturer at the Pennsylvania State University School of Forestry, moving west from there to become professor of forestry at the State University of Oregon. Finally, in 1963, now 83 years old and some 13 years after "retiring" from UI, Dwight Jeffers retired again, closing a very long, very active, and very significant forestry career.

Dr. Dwight S. Jeffers, died April 20, 1980, in Des Moines, Washington. He was 96 years old.