

Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin
on the death of

Professor Fred B. Trenk

Fred B. Trenk was born in Dubuque, Iowa, September 16, 1900, and died in Watertown, Wisconsin, November 19, 1969. He is survived by his wife, Julia, and their five children, two sons Bruce and Hugh, three daughters, Mildred (Mrs. Harold Hougan), Lois (Mrs. John Clark) and Carol (Mrs. Stanley Hobson).

In 1923 he received his B.S. degree in Forestry from Iowa State College and two years later received his M.S. degree in Botany from the same institution. From 1924 to 1930 he served on the extension staff at the University of Maryland.

When Fred Trenk was named extension forester at the University of Wisconsin in 1931 he came to a state whose forest lands were still nearly prostrate from the indiscriminating ax and the devastating fires of an earlier era.

His 30-year crusade for improved forests has paid off in many ways, and today the state is moving steadily and strongly in the direction he led.

Fred Trenk's career is the story of the manifold development of forest lands. Above all he was concerned with planting of trees and wise use of our forest resources.

In 1942 Fred Trenk recognized that if reforestation was to continue in Wisconsin, tree planting would have to be mechanized. As a result of his sincere urging, expediting and promotion, mechanical tree-planters were designed, constructed and put into use to continue without interruption the reforestation program. In the Wisconsin reforestation program 16,000,000 to 18,000,000 trees are annually being mechanically planted and the machine, in essentially its original form, is in world wide use.

Fred Trenk also supported school, community, and county forests; urged proper use of farm woodlands; set up harvest demonstrations-- all toward the goal of improved forests and their wise use.

He saw many opportunities for benefits from our woodland resources. For example, he urged expansion in maple syrup production and Wisconsin is now among the leaders in production of this product. Wisconsin is now gaining in maple syrup production at a time when other maple producing states are on the decline.

Through the years Fred Trenk pointed out that managed farm woodlands could bring their owners income at about the same rate per hour as they could get from regular farm operations.

He was a regular supporter of improved cattle pastures in Wisconsin, probably largely so dairy farmers wouldn't allow their cows in the woods, harming both cows and trees.

He was highly critical of widespread planting of Scotch and Austrian pine trees in Wisconsin. He pointed out that the trees have only one value -- the Christmas market. Unsold here they become a breeding ground for a serious combination of insects and diseases. Other types of pines have value for Christmas trees, for pulp, and for saw logs.

He was active in the Christmas tree industry in a number of ways. He assisted in organizing the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association in 1954 and served as its secretary for six years. He devised methods and set up demonstrations to show how trees can be pruned for better quality. He urged a market reporting service so Christmas tree growers could have price information. He advised families on buying and preserving Christmas trees in their homes. He worked closely with other agencies in the tree planting movement across Wisconsin.

Fred Trenk worked with a unique shelterbelt demonstration at the Hancock Branch Experiment Station since it was started in 1934 at the height of the dust storm era. This project and extension meetings resulted in the establishment of some 3,000 miles of farm shelterbelts and living snow fences in central Wisconsin.

In 1949 he received a Superior Service Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for "exceptional ability and ingenuity in conducting effective educational programs in connection with farm forestry and related land use problems".

He was a member of a number of societies including Alpha Zeta, Phi Kappa Phi, Society of American Foresters, and the Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Science, and Letters.

He authored a number of publications on forest windbreaks, mechanical tree planters, timber harvest tracts, farm woodland forestry, and forest tax laws.

Although Fred Trenk retired in 1961 he retained his active interest in forestry. His retirement home in its beautiful tree farm setting near Arena, Wisconsin, was a most fitting climax for a career devoted to the betterment of Wisconsin forestry.