

Wilson Popenoe Receives Society Award of Honor

Breaking the tradition of presenting the Society's "Award of Honor" only at the annual meetings, the Board of Directors authorized President H. B. Griswold to present Wilson Popenoe with its award at his school in Honduras, Central America.

President Griswold of La Habra, Calif., was accompanied by Carl S. Crawford of Santa Ana, Calif. The two traveled by air to Honduras where they were the guests of Wilson Popenoe at the Escuela Agricola Panamerica (Panamerican School of Agriculture).

Wilson Popenoe's service to the Avocado Industry is of long standing, and he was one of the first to be named for this honor—but contingent upon his coming to California to receive it. The years have rolled by without Wilson Popenoe's appearance in California, and it seemed fitting that the bestowal of the award be no longer delayed. The Board of Directors accepted Mr. Griswold's offer to present it at Honduras.

As a young man, Wilson Popenoe was associated with his father, F. O. Popenoe, in one of the first commercial avocado nurseries in California—the West India Gardens of Altadena. It was this nursery which sent Carl Schmidt to Mexico in 1911 to search for good avocado varieties worthy of introduction into California; and from this trip came the Fuerte, the variety which today represents 70% of the production in California. After this, Wilson Popenoe became an agricultural explorer for the United States Department of Agriculture, and spent ten years searching for good avocado varieties from Mexico to Chile. One of his many introductions, known as Nabal, now occupies second place in production in the California industry. Others still grown commercially are Itzamna, Benik, Mayapan, Panchoy, and Kashlan.

Leaving his position with the government, Wilson Popenoe accepted a position as Research Horticulturist with the United Fruit Co. and later, some four years ago, founded the present school which the United Fruit Co. finances in order to contribute a share of its profits to the development of Agriculture in Central America. All during this period he has kept in touch with the avocado industry through the California Avocado Society of which he is an honorary member, and has contributed many articles published in the Yearbook.

As a result of these outstanding accomplishments Wilson Popenoe was voted the Society's Award of Honor and on October 23rd, 1938 it was presented in Honduras by President Griswold at an impressive ceremony before the entire school in special assembly. On the auditorium platform were the following:

Hon. J. B. Erwin, American Ambassador to Honduras

Hon. J. B. Faust, Secretary of the American Embassy

Sr. Vallarino, Minister of Panama in Honduras

Sr. Jorge Coello, Chief of Protocol of the Honduran Government

Ing. Pompilio Ortega, Director General of Agriculture

Mr. H. B. Griswold, President of the California Avocado Society

Mr. Carl Crawford, of the California Avocado Society

Mr. Henry G. Hogaboom, Master of Ceremonies (Asst. Director Escuela Agricola Panamericana)

Mr. Wilson Popenoe, Director, Escuela Agricola Panamericana.

Mr. Griswold was introduced by Mr. Hogaboom and addressed the gathering outlining the history of the California Avocado Society and reviewing Wilson Popenoe's outstanding services to the Avocado industry of both California and Florida. Mr. Popenoe responded, expressing his thanks. The meeting adjourned to the campus where refreshments were served by the faculty ladies.