

Memorial to Russell C. Hussey 1888-1970

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Russell C. (for Claudius) Hussey, Professor Emeritus of Geology at the University of Michigan, died in an Ann Arbor hospital (where he had been taken the night before) of a massive heart attack on the first of March, 1970, at the age of 81. In accordance with his wish, a Russell C. Hussey Memorial Fund for Needy Students in Geology has been established by the Gift Receiving Office of the University of Michigan.

Professor Hussey was born in Mendon, Ohio, in 1888. He was the son of Elroy Edward and Mary Griffin Hussey. He attended grade school in Canon City, Colorado. For his college training he chose the University of Michigan where his father's cousin, William Joseph Hussey (1862-1926), was Professor of Astronomy. Russell received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1911. Ten years later he returned to Ann Arbor and entered graduate school, receiving the Ph.D. in 1924. Russ (as he was known to his countless friends) and music student Minnie Simmons, who was raised in the copper country near Houghton, Michigan, were married in 1922; she is his sole survivor. For 48 years the Husseys enjoyed Ann Arbor, and Ann Arbor enjoyed the Husseys.

Russell was a born teacher. He had an affability and a sense of humor that endeared him to thousands of students. His voice had both tone and resonance. He was an accomplished singer as well as an excellent speaker. Russ's colleagues frankly envied his effortless volume; where some of us had to use the public address system, Russ made himself heard in every corner of the auditorium without benefit or need of a microphone. In fact, a professor in a neighboring department claimed that he took and enjoyed Russell's Organic Evolution course one semester merely by leaving his office door open! A familiar sight in the hallway outside a Hussey lecture was passers-by, including students, faculty, and building visitors, pausing for a few moments to listen.

In addition to organic evolution, Russell Hussey was most interested in historical geology and vertebrate paleontology. He was also an authority on the Ordovician rocks and invertebrate fossils of the Northern Peninsula of Michigan. Russell both taught and did research in these fields (see Bibliography). His scientific affiliations included, in addition to Fellowship in The Geological Society of America, memberships in the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, Paleontological Society of America, Michigan Geological Society (which he served as President),

American Association for the Advancement of Science, Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, Sigma Xi, Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Gamma Alpha, Phi Sigma, and Pi Kappa Alpha.

Russell also was active outside the classroom and field. He was the first Academic Counselor in the Literary College, served as a member of the Student Affairs Committee, and for many years was on the Board in Control of Inter-Collegiate Athletics. Off-campus, Russ was a long time member of the Ann Arbor Rotary Club (including a term as President) and was one-fourth of every impromptu barber shop quartet.

I was happy to write Russell Hussey upon the occasion of his retirement in 1958 as follows: "This is a note of personal appreciation for your accomplishments in this department. Through your classes on campus, and your many, many years of highly successful extension teaching in Detroit, you have reached thousands of people, giving them a taste of geology they might not otherwise have obtained. To these many thousands you are Mr. Geology at the University of Michigan."

Russell continued to speak before school, civic, and club groups after his retirement. During this time he became almost totally blind, but the talks continued. He settled on one subject, "Life in the Stone Age," which was illustrated by standard glass slides hand colored by him during earlier years. Various friends chauffeured him to these speaking engagements and operated the projector. I once took him to a service club meeting in a nearby community, and it was an amazing performance. He knew the order of his slides, and when a new slide came on he would tell the audience what they were seeing in various parts of the picture, as well as what it all meant.

The life of this remarkable man has come to an end. To have known him has been both a privilege and a pleasure.

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