

## University of California: In Memoriam, 1940

### Charles Stewart Bisson, Chemistry: Davis

1891-1940

Professor

With the death on March 13, 1940, of Charles Stewart Bisson, the students of the College of Agriculture at Davis lost a valued friend and counselor.

Dr. Bisson was born March 15, 1891, at San Jose, California, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John O. Bisson, the father a native of Guernsey Island and the mother a native of Prince Edward Island. He was a loyal Californian and practically his whole life was lived within the shadow of the University. He was a graduate of the Berkeley High School and the College of Chemistry of the University of California in 1915, receiving his master's degree in chemistry in 1916, and the degree of Ph.D. in 1919.

During his graduate years, he was an assistant in chemistry at which time he showed his great interest in teaching and in the undergraduate student. He also served during 1917-19 as research chemist for the National Council for Defense in connection with their researches at Berkeley.

Following his graduation he was appointed Professor of Chemistry and head of the Department of Chemistry at the South Dakota State School of Mines and the following year he was assigned the additional duties of the Director of the South Dakota State Mining Experiment Station.

When the University inaugurated the new plan of providing an alternate program for the first two years of the College of Agriculture curriculum at Davis, Dr. Bisson was appointed Professor of Chemistry and head of the newly formed Division of Chemistry of the College of Agriculture at Davis where he was eminently successful in teaching and surrounded himself with a capable staff.

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Dr. Bisson's chief research interest was in the field of aqueous electrolytes, he having developed the technique for the determination of partial mol heat content and partial mol heats of dilution. It is noteworthy that he was able to maintain an interest in research in pure chemistry in the midst of an extremely active group of researchers at Davis who, of necessity, were interested more in the practical applications of chemistry to agriculture.

Bisson's advice in matters of analytical procedure and in the theoretical interpretation of chemical phenomena was freely sought by his colleagues and he did much to further the high standard of scientific research being maintained at Davis.

His advice upon personal as well as educational matters was frequently sought by the students. He gave freely and gladly of his time. Although he was burdened with a heavy program of teaching, direction and consultation, he still found time to contribute to chemical literature.

Music was Dr. Bisson's chief avocation. Throughout his life he was affiliated with some sort of a musical group. He was leader of a Sunday school orchestra, school orchestra, and teacher of a Sunday school orchestra in the Community Church at Davis, and latterly was a member of the Sacramento Symphony Orchestra.

He was married in 1918 to Alta Josephine Soulé, a graduate in 1918 of the Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon, later a student in chemistry at the University of California in Berkeley.

The Bissons were devoted to their two children. Mrs. Bisson was herself an accomplished organist and together the Bissons did much to increase an appreciation of good music among the people of Davis.

Mrs. Bisson's death was a tragic blow to Professor Bisson. This probably contributed to his serious illness in the autumn of 1938, which finally culminated in his death.

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Academic Senate-Berkeley Division, University of California, 320 Stephens Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720-5842

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