

## **MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

### **JOHN OTTERBEIN SNYDER (1867 – 1943)**

On August nineteenth, 1943, death removed John Otterbein Snyder, a man who had served the University faithfully and often brilliantly, for a half century, from the ranks of Stanford's emeritus professors. He was born in Butler, Indiana, on August fourteenth, 1867, and was led into a lasting interest in nature by his father, a minister in the United Brethren Church.

Young Snyder was a born collector, and while still a schoolboy made large collections of birds and bird eggs, from which he sold duplicates while in high school for enough to purchase a microscope. After graduating from high school, he taught for two years at Cedar Lake, Indiana; but he was not satisfied with only a high school education, so spent the academic year of 1890-91 as a student in the University of Indiana. There his contact with Dr. David Starr Jordan terminated a period during which he had been undecided between continuing teaching in the grade or high schools and going on through college, and definitely committed him to a career as a zoologist. During the school year of 1892-93 Mr. Snyder was a student at Stanford. The next year, in order to earn money to remain in college, he was superintendent of schools at Pullman, Washington. He returned to Stanford, graduated in 1897, and received the degree of Master of Arts in 1899. He was appointed Instructor in Zoology the same year and continued to serve on the faculty until his retirement in 1952.

The years from 1897 onward were marked by strenuous field work, meticulous laboratory and museum research., and the publication of numerous papers dealing with the fishes, birds, and mammals of western North America and the Pacific area. He accompanied Dr. Jordan on long field trips to Mexico, Japan, and Hawaii, and served as Naturalist on the United States Fish Commission research vessel "Albatross" on several occasions between 1902 and 1906. He served also, at various times, with important federal and state agencies dealing with fisheries problems. In 1914 Professor Snyder was called to the United States National Museum, where he spent a year putting the vast ichthyological collections in order. He was offered a permanent position there, but he was prompted by his staunch loyalty to Stanford University to decline the offer. His relations with the men in the United States Fish Commission remained cordial, however, and he was a field assistant to that body much of the time between 1897 and 1950. In 1925 he was director of the Bureau of Fisheries Marine Laboratory at Woods Hole Massachusetts, but when the year was completed he again turned joyfully toward Stanford.

From 1919 to 1931 Professor Snyder was a consultant and advisory fisheries expert for the California State Fish and Game Commission, and in 1931 was appointed chief of its Bureau of Fish Conservation. He held this position for five years and placed the work of the state fish hatcheries and the reclamation work of the bureau on a sound scientific basis. Under his administration this bureau became one of the leading agencies in the United States for the propagation and distribution of game fish.

Professor Snyder early became an active member of the California Academy of Sciences, was a member of its council for six years, and served as corresponding secretary for the Academy from 19w0 to 1926.

Professor Snyder's understanding, devotion, and helpful interest in the younger men and women who came under his influence were conspicuous traits of his character. Typical of his interests he regularly organized extended field expeditions on which he frequently took several younger men. His methods in the field were systematic, thorough, and ingenious, and his field notes were models of accurate observation and careful recording. The training he gave on those trips, chiefly by example, was incomparable. And training apart, the delightful comradeship and the refreshing days in the open with "J. O." have remained highlights in the lives of many of the students who were privileged to experience them. His bird classes attracted many general students, who were accorded the same patient, understanding attention he gave to candidates for advanced degrees in zoology.

Be it resolved, therefore, that this tribute to Professor Snyder's service-filled life be spread upon the minutes of the Academic Council, and that a copy be sent to his wife, to his daughter, Miss Evelyn H. Snyder, and to his son, Corporal Cedric O. Snyder.