



“When man freed himself from the savage’s daily need to feed and clothe himself, he opened the way to the development of modern civilization. It is the ability of the few to feed the many that furnishes the time needed to develop the sciences, professions and industries that make up a strong nation and a modern civilization.”

Al Krezdorn

Alfred H. Krezdorn papers donated to the CREC

By Bill Castle

You may not know Al Krezdorn, but I feel confident that after reading about his contributions to Florida horticulture, you’ll understand why he deserves recognition as a special person. It is for the reasons presented in the paragraphs that follow that we are grateful to his widow, Rosemary, and children, Vicki, Carl and Don (deceased) for donating a collection of Krezdorn’s writings, books and consultancy reports to the University of Florida (UF)-IFAS’ Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) library in Lake Alfred.

I have never known anyone to whom the words “committed” and “consummate” can be so easily applied. When Krezdorn wrote those words quoted at the top of the page, he was in the middle of his career as chairman of the University of Florida Fruit Crops Department before it merged to become Horticultural Sciences. The quote is part of a document titled “Agricultural Education at the Crossroads.” He wrote that agricultural education faced several serious problems that required continued curriculum revisions to meet the demands of modern agriculture, recognition of the shortage of agricultural graduates and constant competition for educational dollars.

Krezdorn was a strong believer in education; actually he was a consummate believer. Among his papers is an article he saved titled, “College Teaching: Its Present Status and Its Improvement.” The author wrote, “... qualities which constitute excellence in teaching — patience, sympathetic understanding of young people, enthusiasm for one’s field of learning, the transplanting of that enthusiasm into students, a sense of humor, breadth of background, experience and interests, an almost ecclesiastical zeal to touch and enter and nurture young, impressionable minds ...” Not only is that a universal description of a teacher, but it is an extremely accurate description of Krezdorn and his philosophy. He lived it well,

as all of his many students know, and I am fortunate to have been one of them.

Krezdorn was born in Seguin, Texas on April 10, 1920. He went to Texas A&M University for his bachelor of science degree and then entered the U.S. Navy and served as a small boat officer in WWII. Upon his return, he earned a master of science degree from UF. He then returned to Texas A&M for his Ph.D. degree and afterward settled into a faculty position there. Along the way, he married Rosemary Mueller, who lived nearby in the town of McQueeney on the Guadalupe River. They courted for a while, leading Krezdorn to propose one day, but there were some conditions. Rosemary said no. Krezdorn proceeded to depart, but soon returned and made one of his very best decisions.

The family eventually left Texas for Lake Alfred where Krezdorn assumed a research position in

1957. He was assigned the task of determining the cause of fruit set problems in Orlando tangelo, a pursuit that became largely a life-long activity leading to many publications regarding the use of gibberellic acid, flowering and fruit set. His research at the CREC, and later at Gainesville, became a foundation for understanding fruit setting in mandarins.

The family became fast friends with Herman Reitz, the director of what was then the Citrus Experiment Station, and his family. That friendship between the families lasts to this day among the surviving members. Reitz and Krezdorn were colleagues and good friends. That friendship gave Krezdorn an excellent outlet for his favorite means of learning: debate.

In 1960, the family moved to Gainesville where Krezdorn became the chairman of the Fruit Crops Department and served in that capacity for 15 years before re-

linquishing the chair to teach and continue his research until he retired in February 1979.

Krezdorn was equally committed to teaching, research and Extension. He and Fred Lawrence worked closely together in Extension to see that Krezdorn was informed and connected, and that county agents and others were given every opportunity to come to Gainesville to further their education. He taught at least one course almost every year of his career. One course he organized and taught for many years, "Introduction to Citriculture," is highly representative of the man. The course content was strongly linked to Florida citriculture because he took what he learned from travels throughout Florida and from his contacts within the citrus industry and turned that knowledge into an educational experience for students at the University of Florida.

His research interests were diverse and today would be described

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as classical applied horticulture. He studied figs and published UF and United States Department of Agriculture bulletins on that crop. He traveled to Louisiana to meet with fig breeders at Louisiana State University. He connected with students and colleagues from the Caribbean and published on avocado culture and propagation. He cultivated relationships in the Caribbean and in South and Central America. He wrote extensively about his explorations in those areas and the potential of tropical horticulture. Those connections led him to bump into a red navel orange tree one day in Venezuela. He arranged to have it introduced to Florida, where it has become established as the Cara Cara navel orange.

Krezdorn studied citrus largely through his graduate students whose research ranged from flowering and fruit set, rootstocks, nutrition, and root systems to enhancing the expression of virus symptoms in indicator plants with growth regula-

tors. It was one of his students from Mexico who determined the impact of late grapefruit harvest on fruit size development and subsequent yield. During his career, Krezdorn supervised about 33 students who arrived at Gainesville from places within Florida and from many locations in Central and South America, Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Perhaps more so than any of his activities, his writing speaks the loudest. It illustrates his unselfish commitment to education. He believed strongly in the value of public speaking, visiting with growers and advisory groups, orienting research to emphasize problems of real impact to growers and communicating via trade journals. He published a column nearly every month in *Florida Grower and Rancher* magazine between the years 1965 and 1981, something close to 200 articles. That many articles and the topics represented, at the time, an auto-tutorial introduction to citriculture. Many of the columns are

outdated by advances in research, but many of the articles were ahead of the times and some are still timely — for example, “Biological Control of Citrus Pests” (1966), “Evaluating Field Research” (1967), “Dwarfing Rootstocks for Citrus” (1968), “New Threat from Japanese Satsumas and Canker” (1973), “Production Problems and Actions Needed” (1975), “The Problems of Interpreting and Applying Information” (1980) and “Tree Growth and Space Requirements Important” (1980). He also wrote a bimonthly column for *American Fruit Grower* and articles for *Citrus Industry* magazine.

It is no wonder that Krezdorn’s impact culminated in his election to the Florida Citrus Hall of Fame. Unfortunately, that recognition occurred posthumously. He passed away March 23, 1989. These are the words of his good friend and colleague, Herman Reitz, spoken at the memorial service: “Al had high professional standards, which he was quite willing to insist upon, whether that meant reasoning with a student about cleaning up the greenhouse benches, or voicing his opinion at department chairmen’s meetings or arguing his principles with the university’s Graduate Council. Al had many characteristics that I found highly desirable. One was his openness, frankness and directness in his approach to people and problems. There was no shred of deviousness in his character. He liked honest, straight-forward exchanges. Another endearing characteristic was his generosity. Countless numbers of people benefitted from his willingness to go the extra mile and step forward when help was needed.”

For all the reasons given above, the gift of Krezdorn’s papers to the CREC library is most welcomed. Of special interest among those papers are the many reports of his consultancies to places in the world as diverse as Saudia Arabia, Australia, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, Sudan,

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Venezuela and Yemen. They are interesting still and remain entertaining, too.

Is there a personal legacy for me? Most certainly. To have had Krezdorn as my academic mentor was quite an experience, an experience that exceeded my expectations. There were many clues that it was to be that way. On the surface he was a bit gruff and demanding, but generous. Even though he was the department chairman, he had time to listen while I practiced a presentation and then offer advice. He was relentless in his view that speakers must always think first about the audience they will address while preparing their presentation. I spent many Sunday afternoons at his home on the back porch learning how to write as he corrected my theses. I learned that one rarely had a discussion with Krezdorn; usually it was a debate. However, his most important gifts were to model a person in love with his work and horticulture, and the fundamental concept that knowledge was not something to be possessed, but something to be shared.

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Browning is CRDF COO

The Citrus Research and Development Foundation on May 24 selected Harold Browning as its new chief operating officer.

Browning resigned approximately two years ago as director of the University of Florida's Citrus Research and Education Center. He recently served as a contractor for the foundation, seeking funding from other foundations and industry vendors. Browning will succeed Dan Gunter, who resigned as chief operating officer in April.



FDOC School Program Grows Future Customers



By Ken Keck

After spending time with local elementary students, I am optimistic about the future consumer base for Florida citrus. FDOC's pilot school marketing program, "The Adventures of Captain Citrus," was positively received by students, teachers and parents in a three-county area this school year.

The foundation of the school program was a series of educational materials distributed to elementary schools in Polk, Highlands and Hardee counties. The lesson plans highlighted the health and wellness benefits of citrus and the important role of the Florida citrus industry in our state.

FDOC brought the program to life through school visits where citrus growers spoke with students about their personal experiences. During my visit as a local grower to a Highlands County school, I was impressed by the number of students who had consumed orange juice that morning and the caliber of their questions about the citrus industry. The arrival of Captain Citrus was the highlight of the visit and students eagerly sampled orange and grapefruit juices and fresh oranges, tangerines and grapefruit.



Captain Citrus and local growers visited elementary schools to educate students about the importance of Florida citrus.

We would like to extend a special thanks to

all of the local growers who volunteered their time to educate our future generation: Larry Black, Sheila Hart, Tom Davidson, Ron Oakley, Steve Johnson, Jim Snively, Ellis Hunt, John Arnold, Sam Jones and Vic Story Jr.

Overall, 97 schools participated in the 5-month program reaching more than 50,000 students. FDOC conducted in-school grower visits with more than 1,500 students. Although the pilot program targeted three counties, FDOC expanded outreach to all interested parties by posting materials on a dedicated Web site, www.CaptainCitrus.com.

We successfully engaged students through the Creative Juices Challenge — a contest for kids to express how they personally celebrate Florida orange juice — for the opportunity for both students and teachers to win American Express gift cards.

Carrie Sue Taylor from Wauchula Elementary in Hardee County won the \$500 grand prize by creating a photo montage illustrating the path of Florida oranges from the grove into her own glass of freshly squeezed Florida orange juice.

Carrie Sue and her teacher, Janeen Gibson, along with the top three finalists, Briana Medrano, Gabriella Fogue and Joanna Fria, presented their winning entries on Daytime, a syndicated TV program reaching 74 markets nationwide. The TV segment is posted on FloridaJuice.com for you to view.

Based on this year's success, the marketing team will expand "The Adventures of Captain Citrus" statewide to all second-grade teachers and students during the 2011-2012 school year, budget permitting. Educating today's students who will become tomorrow's customers is a priceless investment that will serve our industry well.

The mission of the Florida Department of Citrus is to grow the market for the Florida citrus industry to enhance the economic well-being of the Florida citrus grower, citrus industry and the state of Florida. Ken Keck, Executive Director, can be reached at 863-537-3999. For more information, visit www.FDOCgrower.com



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