

## D. STANLEY TARBELL (1913-1999)

### A Memorial Tribute

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Dean Stanley Tarbell, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at Vanderbilt University, authority on organic chemistry and the history of chemistry, and longtime HIST supporter, died on May 26, 1999 in Bolingbrook, Illinois. His wife Ann had predeceased him on August 6, 1998. Stan was born on October 19, 1913 in Hancock, New Hampshire and raised on a farm. In 1930 he entered Harvard College. He considered his first-year European history course the best course that he took there, but he majored in chemistry because he thought it "more promising as a profession." He received his A.B. (1934), M.A. (1945), and Ph.D. (1937) degrees, becoming Paul D. Bartlett's first Harvard doctoral student. While a teaching assistant under Louis F. Fieser in 1936-37 at Radcliffe College, he met senior chemistry major, Ann Hoar Tracy.

Stan spent the academic year 1937-38 as a postdoctoral fellow with Roger Adams at the University of Illinois. In Fall 1938 he became an instructor at the University of Rochester, where he developed a prolific research group and rose through the ranks, becoming professor (1948-62), Charles Frederick Houghton professor (1960-67), and department chair (1964-66).

On August 15, 1942 Stan and Ann Tracy were married in Concord, Massachusetts. During World War II he worked on the detection of mustard gas and the synthesis of antimalarial drugs. He spent sabbatical years at Oxford (1946-47) and Stanford Universities (1961-62). In 1967 he accepted an offer of a distinguished professorship at Vanderbilt University because his physicians recommended a warmer climate for his osteoarthritis and because he felt that "a prime need in the south was the emergence of some major universities." Stan retired from Vanderbilt in 1981 but remained active in organic chemical research and in his second career in the history of chemistry, which he had begun in the 1970s, a time when many members in HIST became acquainted with him. He served as HIST chairman (1980-81).

Because there had not been a comprehensive account of the history of organic chemistry in the United States for many years, the Tarbells began work on this ambitious project. After they had prepared rough drafts of many chapters, they decided to undertake a biography of Roger Adams, complementary to, but separate from, their history. In 1986 the Tarbells' book on the history of American organic chemistry appeared, and like the Adams biography, it received favorable reviews. In recognition of these two books and his 22 historical articles (16 of which were coauthored with Ann) Stan received the 1989 Dexter Award. His third book was an autobiography that contained as much about his mentors, students, and colleagues as it did about himself. Stan authored more than 200 articles on organic chemistry and was in demand as a consultant. A member of the US National Academy of Sciences and recipient of the Charles Holmes Herty Medal, he was a member of various scientific advisory boards and governmental agencies. By personality, training, and affection Stan and Ann formed an ideal research and writing team and spent many years of collaborative effort in various archives and libraries. They will both be sorely missed.

#### D. Stanley Tarbell's Books on the History of Chemistry:

1. *Roger Adams: Scientist and Statesman*, American Chemical Society, Washington, DC, 1981, viii + 240 pp. (with Ann Tracy Tarbell).
2. *Essays on the History of Organic Chemistry in the United States, 1875-1955*, Folio Publishers, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 1986, x + 433 pp. (with Ann Tracy Tarbell).
3. *Autobiography by Dean Stanley Tarbell*, privately published, 1996.