

“DOC” DANIEL: A FORESTRY PIONEER

By Darren McAvoy, Forestry Extension Associate
From the Summer 2004 *Utah Forest News*, Updated 9/27/04



A memorial was held in Logan on August 4 to honor the life of T. W. “Doc” Daniel, who had recently passed away. It seems like everybody that knew him had at least one “Doc-story.” USU Silviculture professor Jim Long pointed out that Daniel was among the first people in the country to have a Ph.D. that focused on natural resources, and that he was nearly as old as American forestry itself, as the Society of American Foresters was formed just seven years before his 1907 birth.

Daniel’s son, Bill, related how his father had grown up working hard to help his family make ends meet and that he escaped to the nearby woods every Sunday. As a young man, he pursued a career as a merchant marine. Upon discovering that his eyesight would not allow him to advance in that field, he went to the North Woods and worked as a logger for a time. He soon realized that his passion for the forest

would never leave him and he moved back to his home state of California to pursue a forestry education degree at Berkeley.

Daniel moved to Logan in 1944 to teach forestry at Utah State University, and he never left. He is a legend in the field, especially among those students who he relentlessly tested with long essay-style exams recorded in infamous “Blue Books,” according to the College of Natural Resources dean Fee Busby.

He also is a legend abroad, especially in Austria, where he recruited a generation of young foresters to come to Utah State University for advanced degrees and to bring those skills back home and apply them for the rest of their careers. His widely known and well respected text, *The Principles of Silviculture*, is printed in three languages.



He was known to many in Logan who saw him regularly at fundraisers for social causes, especially those that benefited women. Val Grant was the auctioneer for one of the fundraisers

for many years, and he said that when there was an early pause in the bidding Doc would subtly raise a finger to meet the next bid level; more money would be raised with few people in the room knowing who had raised the bid.

Former student Alan Dymerski told the story of standing outside the Logger's Ball, some 20 years ago, lamenting the lack of dancing partners available, and Daniel's response was "Well, it wouldn't be the first time a logger danced with a logger!"

Although Daniel's gruff approach occasionally offended women accustomed to modern professional demeanor, people close to him concluded that he was a true feminist; partly based on his extraordinary generosity towards women's issues. At his memorial people told stories of his generosity, leadership, wisdom, sharing, and above all, the tremendous work ethic that he instilled in the people around him.

Perhaps it was Marlin Hoth, who introduced himself as a long time Cache Valley local, who provided the most flattering memorial. He told a story of how, when he was a young boy, every year Daniel chose a handful of local boys to make a few bucks moving rocks for 35 cents an hour. I got the impression that the work of moving rocks from one place to the other was not necessarily done for a great cause, but the important thing was to give some local kids a chance to work hard and make a few needed bucks for the summer. Daniel taught the boys the value and importance of hard work, a lesson he left with many of the people he influenced in his lifetime.

