

Dr. Constance Ida MacFarlane

Born: 1904

Died: 2000

Field: Botany, specializing in seaweeds

Constance Ida MacFarlane was one of a few women scientists working in Nova Scotia in the early 1900's. Her work on the ecology of seaweeds influenced the commercial harvesting in the region and elsewhere. She served as Director of the Seaweeds Division, Nova Scotia Research Foundation from 1949-1970. Her contributions through publication of books and articles researched an international audience and her legacy in science continues through awards in her honour at Dalhousie, Acadia and UPEI.

Biography

Dr. Constance Ida MacFarlane was born in Charlottetown, PEI in 1904. She graduated from Prince of Wales College in 1924 and Dalhousie University (BA, 1929, M.Sc. 1931) and then pursued post-graduate studies on marine algae at the University of Liverpool, England. From 1949-1970, Miss MacFarlane was Director of the Seaweeds Division of the Nova Scotia Research Foundation from 1949-1970

Career

Constance MacFarlane was Director of the Seaweed Division of the Nova Scotia Research Foundation. She also taught a course in marine algae at Acadia University for twenty years during the time she was at the research foundation. Throughout her career, Constance MacFarlane considered herself primarily a teacher, whether her students were in university, fishermen, harvesters, government officials, lawyers or industrialists. She wrote, "...as in the way with teaching, I also learned much from my students particularly the fishermen who, of necessity, are resourceful people." She established awards at several universities, two of which are dedicated to the memory of her father, Henry Havelock MacFarlane. These include *The Constance MacFarlane Scholarship* at Dalhousie University. This endowment fund provides a scholarship to a deserving student in the second or subsequent year of the Honours programme in either biology or marine biology. The *Dr. Constance Ida MacFarlane Prize* at the University of Prince Edward Island is a prize for a Biology student, preferably graduating, with particular botanical interests. The *Dr. Constance Ida MacFarlane Scholarship* at the same university is an award for a Biology major or honours student and preference is given to

students with marine botanical or botanical interests. Finally, the *Constance I. MacFarlane Book Prize in Marine Biology* at Acadia University is awarded each spring on the recommendation of the Head of the Biology Department to a student with special interest and promise in the field of marine algae.

Collections

Constance was internationally recognized for her research into the ecology and distribution of seaweeds, which was fundamental to the industrial development of seaweed in the Atlantic Provinces. Her hobby was collecting seaweed from around the world. She bequeathed her huge collection of dried specimens to the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History in Halifax and her papers to the Nova Scotia Archives.

Publications: 7 articles and 6 books including:

MacFarlane, Constance. 1952. A survey of certain seaweeds of commercial importance in southwest Nova Scotia *Canadian Journal of Botany* 30(1):78-97.

MacFarlane, Constance and Hugh P. Bell. 1933. Observations of the seasonal changes in the marine algae in the vicinity of Halifax, with particular reference to winter conditions. *Proceedings of the Nova Scotia Institute of Science.* 18:134-176

Young, E. Gordon and C. MacFarlane. 1962. Seaweed Symposium. *Science* 20: 267-274. The above article is an edited version of that entitled SCHOOL STREET HOUSE, BIRTHPLACE OF WORLD RENOWNED MARINE BIOLOGIST to be found at www.schoolhoustreet.com.