



## *Charles White Fox*

**1906-1979**

Charles White Fox was a man of many outstanding accomplishments and services to his fellow man, the presidency of Cascades Plywood Corporation being the one for which he is most well known. A leader in community and civic concerns as well as in industry, he generously gave time and energy to many. The World (then Western) Forestry Center is a most fortunate beneficiary of his generosity – he was one of its founders, president for the first seven years, and served as assistant chairman of the Board of Directors.

Born in 1906 in Indiana, he moved with his family when he was very young to a farm near Muscatine, Iowa. There he learned to fish in the nearby Mississippi River, and fishing became a sport that he enjoyed throughout his life. Later he moved to California and graduated from the San Diego Army and Navy Academy in 1923. During his high school years in San Diego, he became so interested in the forests of the Pacific Northwest that in the fall of 1923, he entered the School of Forestry at Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University). While studying there, he devoted his summer vacations to learning all he could about the

science of forestry. For two summers he was with U.S. Forest Service reconnaissance parties, and another summer he worked for Cobb and Mitchell Lumber Company in Valsetz, Oregon. As a student he became quite good at illustrating trees. Many of his drawings were published in an informative booklet, Oregon's Commercial Forests, by George W. Peavy. He finished at Oregon Agricultural College in 1928 with B.F.S. and M.S.F. degrees in forestry.

After graduating, he began work at the plywood plant of Portland Manufacturing Company in St. Johns, Oregon. Within a few months, he accepted a position in the battery separator plant of Evans Auto Loading Company in Marshfield, Oregon (now Evans Products Company). Fox was always interested in changes in the products demanded from the forest industry. When he was first in the industry, storage battery separators were made only of Port Orford cedar. In fact, their manufacture was essential to the operation of many vehicles such as airplanes, ships, tanks (in war), cars, trains, and other uses where stored and instantly available energy was necessary.

He saw this phase of the forest products industry evolve from its reliance on Port Orford cedar when, in 1956, other means of making storage battery separators were developed. Another major step of growth he saw in the industry was the development of fiberboard cartons for packing vegetables and fruits that replaced wooden crates and "unitized covers" (covers made from wire stitched to Sitka spruce veneer slats). And the most phenomenal of the changes he witnessed in his early years in forest products was the development of Douglas fir plywood and its evolution into the high quality product it is now.

In 1940 when Evans Products built its fir plywood plant at Lebanon, he was made production manager for the company's entire western division. Then in 1944, Max D. Tucker and his associates raised enough money to buy the plywood plant from Evans Products. With this plant they founded Cascades Plywood Corporation and Fox stayed with Tucker as vice-president in charge of production. Tucker served as president of Cascades Plywood for the first six years until his death in 1950. At that time, Fox was named president and led the corporation skillfully for 12 years until it sold out to U.S. Plywood in 1962.

Fox always found time and energy to devote to the progress of the entire science of forestry. He was involved in many organizations: he was a member of the Advisory Committee for the Forest Products Laboratory in Corvallis, two-term member of the State Board of Forestry, director of the Timber Operators Council, member of the West Coast Lumber Commission of War Labor Board during World War II, and member of the

American Forestry Association, to name only a few.

Other societies, clubs, and organizations he was affiliated with included Phi Gamma Delta, Phi Kappa Phi (all-school honorary), Xi Sigma Phi (School of Forestry, honorary), and Alpha Delta Sigma (honorary journalism society). And in Portland he was affiliated with the Arlington Club (of which he was president in 1956), the University Club, Waverley Country Club, and the Lay Advisory Committee for St. Vincent's Hospital. He was president and for many years a trustee of the Oregon State University Foundation, director of the Portland Community Chest, and chairman of the Advance Gift Committee for the Portland Community Chest, again to name only a few.

Award honors he has received include the O.S.U. Alumni Association Centennial Award in 1969 and the O.S.U. Distinguished Service Award in 1976.

His involvement with the Western Forestry Center since its beginning in 1965 was perhaps his deepest community commitment. His position as its first president and as a director challenged him with presenting knowledge and love of forestry to the public. His talent for leadership that he had so skillfully developed in community and civic concerns and in industry throughout his life was a true gift to the Center.

He met his wife, Vivian Orcutt Fox, when he was a student at Oregon Agricultural College and they were married September 3, 1927. They enjoyed a long marriage until Mrs. Fox's death in June, 1975, and had one daughter, Joann Fox Thorn.