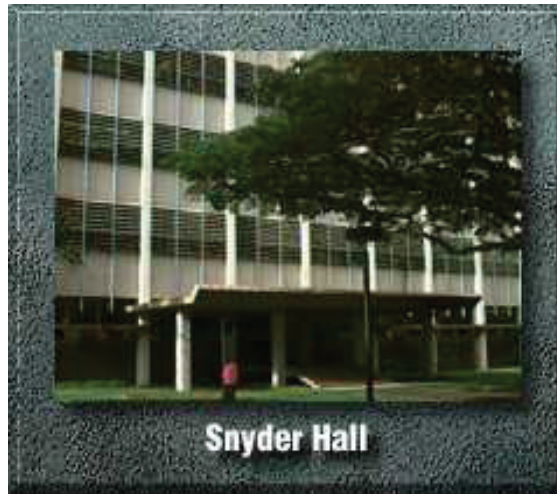


Snyder Hall



University photo by Masao Miyamoto

LAURENCE HASBROUCK SNYDER (1901-1986) was president of the University of Hawai'i from 1958-1963. Snyder was an internationally recognized geneticist. Over the years he published three books, over 150 articles, and delivered over 1,000 lectures at home and abroad. His pioneering work spans the development of medical genetic science from its infancy to present-day DNA technology, and he has been called the "father of human genetics."

The son of medical missionaries to Africa, Snyder was born in Kingston, New York. After graduation from Rutgers University, he earned a doctorate in science at Harvard. Before coming to Hawai'i, Snyder held positions in three institutions: Professor of biology at North Carolina State College, professor of genetics and professor of medicine at Ohio State University, chair of the Department of Zoology and Entomology, and then graduate dean and professor of medicine at the University of Oklahoma.

Snyder's tenure as UH president coincided with an economic building boom. A Democratic state legislature gave priority to educational opportunity and passed the tax increases to pay for them. UH student enrollment doubled. Thirty-seven new buildings went up on campus (including the building named for Snyder), and many new academic programs were instituted. Snyder singled out as one of his proudest accomplishment the beautiful, monkeypod-shaded mall stretching from Varney Circle to East West Center Road.

Believing that the emphasis on intercollegiate football was at odds with the academic mission of the university, Snyder made the controversial decision to ban football, and in 1961 there was no season. An influential alumni group rose up in protest and the program was resumed.

After retirement, he returned to teaching. He updated his body of knowledge so as to encompass new developments in DNA chemistry, protein chemistry, and metabolic pathways and thereafter taught well-attended

classes for medical students and local physicians.

This multi-dimensional man was a boogie-woogie piano virtuoso, a birder, and a jewelry hobbyist. In a Bio-Science article (July 1977) he shared with a mainland scientific community his enthusiasm for jewelry made from the rich Hawaiian stores of ornamental palms, legumes, spurge, and blue marble seeds. He loved Hawai'i and made his home in the islands until his death in 1986.

* Green, Earl L. "Laurence Hasbrouck Snyder: pioneer in human genetics." American Journal of Human Genetics (August 1987): 276-285.

* Kamins, Robert M., and Robert E. Potter. Malamalama; A History of the University of Hawai'i. (University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

* Opitz, John M. "Biographical note - Laurence H. Snyder." American Journal of Medical Genetics (1981): 447-448. (Accompanied by "On the role of Laurence H. Snyder in the development of human and medical genetics in the United States: an oral history tape interview"), p. 449-468 of the same journal.