George Allen came to Humboldt State College in 1956 as an Assistant Professor of Fisheries. One of the most pressing needs was for someone to teach ichthyology. A self-trained ichthyologist, Dr. Allen worked hard to learn the subject matter and he developed an outstanding course. As an adjunct to this course, he was instrumental in developing and building the university’s Fish Collection. The HSU Fish Collection is the fourth largest such collection in California and plays an integral role in training students in fish taxonomy, systematics, and anatomy. In 1964, Dr. Allen chaired the thesis research of the first student, James Joseph, to graduate with an MS degree in Natural Resources (Fisheries option) from HSU.

Dr. Allen worked closely with the City of Arcata, and HSU colleagues Bob Gearhart and Stan Harris, in the City’s development of an internationally recognized artificial marsh wastewater treatment system and the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. One of the Sanctuary marshes was named in his honor. Dr. Allen’s visionary interest in wastewater systems and wastewater aquaculture also led the City of Arcata to develop the Arcata Wastewater Aquaculture Project which demonstrated the feasibility (see photo) of raising salmon in a mixture of municipal wastewater and bay water.

In 1985, shortly after Dr. Allen retired, President Alistair McCrone awarded him the Humboldt Medal for his outstanding service to HSU and the City of Arcata.