

In Memoriam

September 30, 2023



Rodney Fink

Rodney Fink

Rodney James Fink, a 62nd year ASA member and a CPAg since 1979, passed away at the age of 88 on Feb. 3, 2023. He was born on Apr. 10, 1934. After high school, he enlisted in the Navy. He met his wife, Bertha, while stationed in Norfolk, VA. They married July 13, 1958 in Osage, City, KS and later made Macomb, IL their home.

Fink obtained his bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Missouri. He was an Area Agronomist in Iowa, Instructor at the University of Missouri, and Associate Professor at Murray State University and Western Illinois University

where he was promoted to Professor and then Chairman of the Department of Agriculture in 1972. In 1974, he was appointed Dean of the College of Applied Sciences.

Fink's career continued to evolve as he took on global roles consulting for various projects involving underdeveloped countries. He worked with USAID and other programs primarily focused in areas of agriculture, education, and business development. His travel took him to more than 52 countries. Fink published more than 90 articles and has been recognized for numerous achievements, including the most recent proclamation by Mayor Inman of Macomb, IL, declaring February 3, "Rodney and Bertha Fink Day."

Fink's demonstrated passion for mission work continued through the end of his life. He was service-driven and committed to praying, ministering, and supporting people in need at home and across many countries such as Cuba, Haiti, and Mexico. His faith was his pillar. He was a member of Wesley United Methodist Church in Macomb, IL as well as Wesley United Methodist Church in Harlingen, TX.

Fink is survived by his wife, Bertha; four children, Ross (Lisa), Lori, Brenda, and Lisa (Tim); eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Byron Fink (Dana).

Robert Stevens



Robert Stevens

Dr. Robert G. (Bob) Stevens, a 57½-year member of SSSA and ASA, passed away on July 4, 2023.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Cathy Stevens, as well as his children, grandchildren, and brother. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, colleague, and friend.

Born on Sept. 18, 1944, Stevens grew up in Tieton, WA with his parents, Ralph and Velma, and his brother, Bill. Growing up on a ranch embedded in him a love of farming, ranching, and hard work.

After earning his B.S. degree at Washington State University (WSU), Stevens' passion for the soil and agriculture led him to further his education. He pursued an M.S. degree in soil science and then earned his Ph.D. at Colorado State University. His first job was at Texas Tech University where he was a soil scientist and taught classes to undergraduates. His second job took him to Centralia, WA where he worked for Weyerhaeuser as a research scientist. In 1985, Stevens moved to Prosser, WA where he worked as a soil research scientist at the WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center (IAREC) and then served as Center Director for five years before retiring in 2008.

Fondly referred to as the "dirt dude" and "dirt doctor," Stevens' knowledge and expertise in soils became widely recognized and respected. He applied his understanding of soil science to benefit agricultural communities across the United States, offering valuable insights and practical solutions to many farmers and scientists.

Stevens was very involved in his church, Covenant Presbyterian in Prosser. He served as an elder for several terms and was on the personnel committee.

To say that Stevens was a generous person is an understatement. He was fondly nicknamed "Booster Bob" and would help anyone and everyone who needed it, no questions asked. His nonjudgmental acceptance and sturdiness allowed people to relax in his presence, and he will be missed and remembered by everyone who knew him.

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