



In Memoriam

July 25, 2023



Bill Rains

Donald William “Bill” Rains

Donald William “Bill” Rains, an ASA and CSSA Fellow and 51st year member, passed away on Dec. 15, 2022. He was 85. Rains was born on Dec. 16, 1937, in Fairfield, IA. Growing up, he helped work on the family farm and later when his family moved to California, he got a job lining irrigation ditches in the San Joaquin Valley.

He went to high school in Culver City, CA where he met his future wife, Gail Ann Fish, whom he married in 1959. Growing up watching farmers struggle made an impression on him, and in his high school yearbook, he stated that, “I plan to work for the

University of California Agricultural Extension Service, assisting farmers with their problems.”

He graduated with a bachelor of science degree in Soil Science from UC Davis in 1961 and a doctoral degree in 1965.

He was awarded a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship to investigate the management of soil and plants in a saline environment, working at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography. During that time, he also lectured on plant nutrition and spent three months on the UC research vessel, the Alpha Helix, studying mineral nutrition of mangrove plants in the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. He then worked at the Kearney Foundation of Soil Science at UC Davis before accepting a faculty position in the Department of Agronomy and Range Science. He spent his entire career at UC Davis where, in addition to carrying out research recognized worldwide, he held a number of important administrative positions.

Rains’ research interests were fundamentally linked to assisting farmers with their problems. One of which he was most proud began when he and his daughter were hiking in the hills near Benicia, CA. There they saw the bodies of several dead horses. He began an investigation and found that the cause was contamination of the soil by lead particles that had been carried on the wind from a transfer port in the San Francisco Bay. His work was instrumental in removing this contamination and eliminating horse mortality.

Rains’ other contributions included studies on the use of azolla as an organic crop nutrient, efficient nitrogen fertilization of cotton and cereal crops, salt tolerance in cereal crops, sodium transport in plants, nitrogen and potassium in cereal crops, and water stress in crop plants. He mentored many graduate students, many of whom went on to distinguished careers.

Rains served as Director of the UC-Davis Plant Growth Laboratory, Chair of the International Agricultural Development Graduate Group, and Chair of the Department of Agronomy and Range Science.

He is survived by his wife, Gail; three children; five grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.



Dale Schlough

Dale Schlough

Dale A. Schlough, a 48-year member of ASA, passed peacefully on Mar. 11, 2023 at the age of 80. He was born on Apr. 13, 1942 in Middleton, WI. He married the love of his life, Patricia (nee Sills), on Apr. 26, 1968. Together they raised five children.

Schlough volunteered with the Peace Corps and served in the U.S. Army, each for two years, after graduating from the University of Wisconsin (UW). Both his bachelor's and master's degrees were earned at the UW-Madison. He had a long and very successful career in agricultural research at UW and abroad. He was a great leader who was held in high esteem by all who worked with him.

He retired as Director of Agricultural Research Stations at the UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in 1999. Later that year, he and his wife, Pat, moved to their lake home in Hazelhurst, WI where he enjoyed gardening, fishing, feeding birds and wildlife, and traveling, having visited all 50 U.S. states and 26 countries in their 54 years together.

Schlough is survived by his wife, five children, 13 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, a sister, a cousin, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother-in-law.

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