

In Memoriam

March 1, 2023



John Matocha

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Dr. John Edward Matocha, a 47-year member of ASA and SSSA, passed away on 18 Nov. 2022, in Corpus Christi, TX. He was born 8 Aug. 1939 in Beeville, TX and was raised on a small farm where he helped his parents with daily chores of milking cows, baking bread, and chopping firewood for the wood-burning stove. Matocha was a first-generation college student, earning a B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering from Texas A&I in 1961 followed by a M.S. degree in 1964 from Texas A&M University. He received a Ph.D. degree in Soil Chemistry from Texas A&M University in 1968.

He joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor in Soil Chemistry and Plant Nutrition in 1968 at the Texas A&M Agricultural Experiment Station at Overton, TX where he investigated nutrient response on warm- and cool-season forages and nutrient runoff from pastures. He moved to the Texas A&M Agricultural Experiment Station at Corpus Christi, TX in 1975 and focused on nitrogen, phosphorus, and zinc availability to row crops in South Texas. Other research areas included the establishment of long-term no-tillage plots in South Texas, practices to manage cotton root rot, and strategies to mitigate iron deficiency chlorosis in grain sorghum. He retired in 2011 as Professor Emeritus.

He married the love of his life, Margaret Alice Weaver, in Austin on 29 Jan. 1966. He was a faithful and active parishioner of St. Peter's Catholic Church and St Joseph Catholic Church where he attended Mass regularly. He enjoyed spending time with his family, watching Texas A&M football games, feeding cows, and talking about the weather.

Matocha was preceded in death by his parents, Amelia and Paul Matocha, Sr.; and a brother, Paul Matocha, Jr. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Margaret (Weaver) Matocha of Beeville; two brothers; five children; and 14 grandchildren.



J. Neal Pratt

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Joseph Neal Pratt, a longtime member of the Societies (ASA, 47 years; SSSA, 35; CSSA, 23), passed away on Friday, 30 Dec. 2022. He was born 14 Apr. 1932 in Dallas, TX.

After graduating with his bachelor's and master's in Agriculture from Southwest Texas State College, Pratt taught school for a year prior to serving two years in the Army at Ft. Knox, KY. After, he earned his Ph.D. in Soil Fertility at Michigan State University where he met and married his wife, Marjorie. In 1964, they moved to College Station, TX.

As the State Forage Specialist associated with the Ag Extension Service/AgriLife and Texas A&M University, Pratt taught others about growing better pastures and crops as he traveled the 254 counties in Texas setting up field research and educating farmers, ranchers, and industry associates. He was full of ideas for improving life, thinking outside the box, and challenging others to look for the good and focus on the positive.

Pratt retired as Professor Emeritus in 1992. Following retirement, he continued assisting in developing products for improved soil fertility and consulted throughout the U.S. and Mexico. Neal was a member of and held leadership positions in numerous professional organizations and received many awards over the years.

Pratt loved Jesus, his family, and his country, and made the world a better place by giving of his time and talents to serve God and others. He served as a deacon and Sunday school leader throughout the years at First Baptist Church in Bryan, TX, and was also a faithful husband and dad.

Pratt is preceded in death by his parents, Rogers Truett Pratt and Mary Lou (Boren) Pratt, and his brothers and sisters (in-law): Dr. L.T. Pratt, Sr. (Erin), Dr. Gordon A. Pratt, Sr. (Margaret), and Dr. David R. Pratt as well as a niece and two nephews. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Marjorie; two daughters; two sisters-in-law and a brother-in-law; numerous nieces and nephews; and dozens of “adopted” young people, including one extra-special adopted daughter, husband, and granddaughter.

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