



Science  
Societies

# In memoriam

March 19, 2021



*In Memoriam*



---

**H.H. Cheng**



Hwei-Hsien (H.H.) Cheng, 88, Fellow of ASA and SSSA and retired Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota (UM), passed away on 24 Jan. 2021 in Vadnais Heights, MN. He was born on 13 Aug. 1932 in Shanghai, China. He left China in 1949, graduated with a B.A. from Berea College, KY, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in 1962. After his Ph.D., he spent a year in Belgium on a Fulbright research award and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Iowa State University.

Cheng started his academic career at Washington State University (WSU) where he advanced to full professor during his 24 years as a faculty member. While at WSU, he served as associate dean of the Graduate School, interim chair of the Department of Agronomy and Soils, and chair of the Interdisciplinary Program in Environmental Science and Regional Planning. He was named head of the Department of Soil Science at UM in 1989. Cheng was instrumental in shaping departmental direction with a broadened vision. Under his leadership, the name of the department was changed to the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate to reflect its increasing scope of expertise. He remained as head until his retirement in 2001.

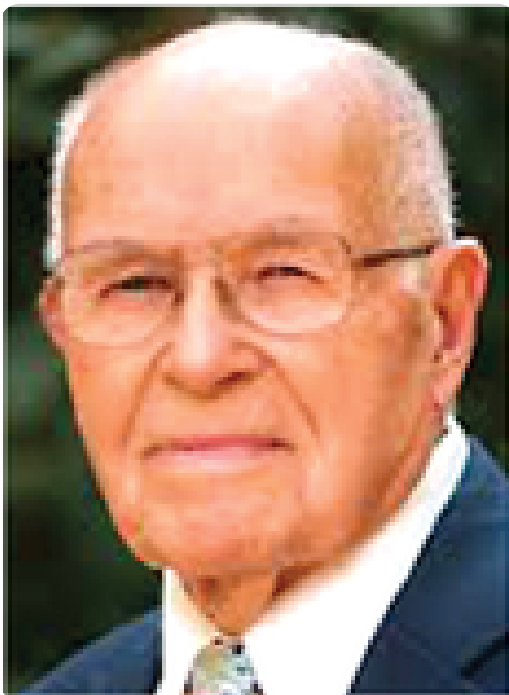
Cheng is widely known for his isotopic tracer research on carbon and nitrogen cycling in soils, study of sorption-desorption and transformation of natural and anthropogenic chemicals in soil, water quality, precision agriculture, and agricultural sustainability. He was president of SSSA in 1996 and ASA in 2000. He was a leader in organizing the

2008–2010 exhibit “Dig It!: The Secrets of Soil,” at the Smithsonian National Museum in Washington, DC. This exhibit was viewed by thousands of people and helped promote a better popular understanding on the importance of soil for production of food and protection of the environment.

Cheng consulted on numerous environmental projects around the world and was particularly involved with projects in China as an adviser on clean water and sustainable agriculture. After his retirement, he served on the National Academies Board on Agricultural and Natural Resources. He was honored by the University of Minnesota with an honorary LLD degree in 2004.

Cheng is survived by his wife Jo of 59 years, two children Edwin and Tony, two brothers François and David, as well as four grandchildren.

### **Maynard Fosberg**



Maynard Fosberg, 101, a member of ASA for 48 years, died on 18 Sept. 2020 of complications related to COVID-19. He grew up on the family cantaloupe farm in Turlock, CA. After serving in the Army during World War II, he married Margaret Williams in 1947. He received his B.S. and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Soil Science from the University of Wisconsin in 1947, 1949, and 1963, respectively.

Dr. Fosberg accepted a teaching–research position at the University of Idaho in 1949 and provided 60+ years of service to the

university (40 years on the faculty + 20 more years of coming to work every day after his retirement).

Fosberg developed the largest soils monolith collection in the U.S. with 232 total soil monoliths and contributed to the World Soil Museum monolith collection in the Netherlands. He published more than 100 research papers on soil projects in various states, mentored more than 40 graduate students, and developed a nationally known soils laboratory that supported pedology research.

Fosberg was known as an asset to his community and Idaho. He was active in FFA soil evaluation competitions and FFA/4H land-judging contests for many years. He served as the Moscow Rotary Club's president during the club's 50th and 100th years (he was 100 years old during his second term as president)! He also played a large role in the development and planting of the University of Idaho's nationally famous arboretum.

The Fosbergs placed the property they owned into a land trusts for viewing a creek, wildlife, and native plants and providing animal habitat.

—Compiled by Robert L. Mahler

[More people articles](#)

[Back to issue](#)

[Back to home](#)

---

*Text © . The authors. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Except where otherwise noted, images are subject to copyright. Any reuse without express permission from the copyright owner is prohibited.*