Science Societies

In memoriam

October 27, 2020



Gordon V. Johnson



ASA and SSSA Fellow, Gordon V. Johnson, Emeritus Professor at Oklahoma State University (OSU), passed away on 21 June 2020. Dr. Johnson was born on 9 Jan. 1940 in Harvey, ND and grew up on the family farm. He met the love of his life, Dorothy Schwarz, in high school, and they were married on 21 July 1962 in Fessenden, ND.

Johnson completed his bachelor's degree in Agriculture at North Dakota State University in 1963. Soon thereafter, he completed his master's degree at the University of Nevada in 1966 and his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska in 1969, working directly with Professor R. A. Olson. His first faculty position was at the University of Arizona from 1969 to 1974. He then accepted a position at OSU where he was employed for the next 26 years before retiring.

His tenure at OSU included many productive years in research, teaching, and extension. This included having been the director of the OSU Agronomic Services Laboratory (more commonly known as the Soil Testing Lab) and achieving the rank of Regents Professor. In 1998, he was part of an OSU team that travelled to Sanliurfa, Turkey where he successfully resolved a water salinity issue that had arisen with neighboring Syria.

Dr. Johnson was the major adviser for numerous M.S. and Ph.D. students and was recognized as being one of the founding fathers of the Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) Program. For several years, he taught the soil nutrient management class for undergraduates that was incredibly popular with students because of his unique and

highly effective teaching skills. Today he is still recognized for his “Dip Stick Theory” that helped farmers gauge the need for phosphorus fertilizer and the use of a sufficiency concept for immobile nutrients. This fundamental theory continues to be taught in classrooms at agricultural universities all over the world.

Johnson was a team player and will always be remembered as being cordial and kind to everyone regardless of their station in life. He will be sorely missed.

Jerry Maranville



ASA Fellow Dr. Jerry W. Maranville passed away in Colorado on 7 July 2020. He was born on a farm in Reno County, Kansas on 21 Sept. 1940 and moved to a dryland farm near Matheson, CO in 1945. Maranville received his elementary and secondary education in rural schools near his home. He obtained his B.S. in 1962 in Soil Conservation and M.S. in 1964 in Crop Science from Colorado State University. He was then offered an assistantship in Agronomy at Kansas State University, where he studied under Dr. Gary Paulsen.

After earning his Ph.D. in 1967, Maranville and his new bride Donna (Perrill) joined the University of Nebraska (UNL) Agronomy Department where he studied nitrogen use efficiency of sorghum and proso millet. He joined the International Programs area at UNL and became part of a team on the International Sorghum and Millet Cooperative Research Support Program (INTSORMIL). His first overseas assignment was to the Sudan in 1980. He spent a sabbatical leave in the Philippines in 1982 with his wife

Donna and their three sons. He continued his basic and applied research in nitrogen use efficiency until his retirement in 2000. His INTSORMIL assignments led him to travel extensively in Africa and India. He also consulted in China and Somalia and served as Associate Director of the MIAC/MORROCO project in the Lincoln office.

He published extensively in his area of expertise and mentored many M.S. and Ph.D. students. He was active in Kiwanis where he served several offices and was a devout Christian who served his church faithfully. He and his wife returned to his family farm in Colorado after retirement where they resided until his passing.

Berlie Schmidt



ASA and SSSA Fellow Berlie Louis Schmidt of Dublin, OH, passed away on 3 Aug. 2020. He was the former Chairman of the Department of Agronomy at the Ohio State University (OSU) in Columbus, and “Go Bucks!” was his frequent exclamation. He joined the OSU faculty in 1962 at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster where he developed and led world-renowned research programs in soil erosion and fertility.

Dr. Schmidt was born in Council Bluffs, IA on 2 Oct. 1932. He earned his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in Agronomy and Soil Management at Iowa State University. He researched the unique loess soil near his home. In the midst of his educational pursuits, Schmidt married his high school sweetheart, Joanne Bruning, in 1954. They were married for 28 years, and prior to her passing, had five children together. The

same year they were married, Schmidt was drafted into the U.S. Army, serving as a Chemical Corps instructor in Hawaii.

After retiring from OSU, Schmidt moved to Washington, DC as a National Program Director for the USDA for global research, allowing him to travel the world. During this time, he was married to Bonni Mehlhop of Worthington, OH. Following his second retirement from USDA, he returned to Ohio, and as a Deacon at Dublin Presbyterian Church, Schmidt met Rhoda McIntyre. They were married and spent several happy years together. One of his greatest joys was spending time with his family. Schmidt leaves behind a legacy of love, respect, and friendship to all who knew him.

Parviz N. Soltanpour



ASA Fellow Dr. Parviz N. Soltanpour, Professor Emeritus, 83, passed away on 31 Mar. 2020. He was born 21 Mar. 1937 in Tehran, Iran. He earned his B.S. in Agricultural Sciences in 1961 from the American University of Beirut in Lebanon where he met his wife, Nassrin Alavi. He earned his M.S. degree in Soil Science from the same university and his Ph.D. degree in Soil Chemistry and Plant Nutrition in 1965 at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Soon after, he began his 36-year career (1966-2002) as a Professor at Colorado State University (CSU).

He was first appointed as Assistant Professor of Horticulture at CSU in 1966 and was located at the San Luis Research Center (SLRC) near Center, CO where his research focused on soil fertility problems for potatoes. Soltanpour became Associate Professor

of Horticulture in 1972. In 1974, he received a new appointment as an Associate Professor of Agronomy and was relocated to the CSU Campus in Fort Collins to become Director of the CSU Soil Testing Laboratory, a position he held for 10 years. He was promoted to the rank of Professor of Agronomy in 1977.

During his tenure at CSU, Soltanpour took an active role in international development, advising numerous international students. From 1985 to 1988, he was a soil fertility specialist with the MIAC Consortium and was stationed in Settat, Morocco.

Soltanpour was also an inventor and held a patent, titled the Soil Amendment with Rubber Particles, in which solid rubber particles are mixed with soil to improve porosity and reduce compaction. This invention has been adopted and used worldwide and is found in many playgrounds, athletic fields, pathways, and the like.

Soltanpour co-authored 125+ research and extension publications, many of which are highly cited. He and his students developed the universal soil test (ammonium bicarbonate-DTPA) that simultaneously extracts macro- and micronutrients. He pioneered the idea of using inductively coupled plasma (ICP) to analyze the universal extractant. At present, many laboratories in the U.S. and the world use this test separately or in conjunction with ICP.

Soltanpour is survived by his wife of 60 years, Nancy, their four children: Dr. David Soltanpour, Susan, Robert, and Dr. Kristine Soltanpour along with grandson Marc Robert.

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