Science Societies

In memoriam

April 22, 2020



Phil Bregitzer



ASA and CSSA member Phil Bregitzer was taken from this earth in a tragic skiing accident on 15 Mar. 2020 at Pebble Creek Ski Area near Inkom, ID doing something he thoroughly enjoyed.

He was born in St. Louis, MO, 23 Sept. 1960 to Virginia Ann Bregitzer and Paul William Bregitzer. He completed undergraduate work at Iowa State University in 1983 and his master's degree and Ph.D. in 1985 and 1989, respectively, both in plant breeding at the University of Minnesota, St Paul.

Upon completion of his studies in Minnesota, Dr. Bregitzer moved to Idaho to work at the Aberdeen USDA Small Grains and Research Unit for the past 30 years. He helped to incorporate enhanced resistance to stripe rust, Fusarium head blight, and Russian wheat aphid into barley lines. He created genetic tools widely used by scientists working to increase understanding of barley genetics. He had a great passion for his work, which has been remarked upon by his many colleagues. He was currently serving as a technical/associate editor for several professional journals, including *Crop Science*.

Bregitzer married the love of his life, Edith Ann Dvorak (Edee) on 17 June 2006. They created many great memories during their time together; bicycling, motorcycle riding, rafting, camping, gardening, skiing, and sharing good times with many friends. Bregitzer's lusty laugh was a signature of the creative life he led. Outside of his professional life, he found joy in restoring old cars, woodworking, remodeling, and cooking meals from the produce he and his wife grew in their garden. He was

passionate about new technology, such as solar energy and electric cars and doing things right.

Survivors include his wife, Edee Bregitzer; father, Paul Bregitzer (Alice Richter); sister, Ann Brinckwirth (Rick), his niece, Carolyn and nephews, Joe and Tim; his mother in-law, Judith Dvorak and brother in-law, Dan Dvorak. He is also survived by many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Louis Dekker



Dr. Louis Dekker died after a short illness on 20 Nov. 2019, at the age of 80. Dekker worked in Wageningen, the Netherlands with Stiboka, the DLO Winand Staring Centrum, and then Alterra for a total of 47.5 years. Following his retirement in 2004, he remained with Alterra as a guest staff member and then, in 2012, transferred to the Soil Physics and Land Management chair group at Wageningen University and Research. He was active in the scientific field right through to the end of his life—a total of 63 years.

His many years' experience in soil-mapping activities during the period between 1956 and the mid-1970s made Dekker a walking encyclopedia of Dutch soil science and a source of knowledge for many of his colleagues who had specific questions. He was extremely enthusiastic about soil mapping and had an eye for strange patterns in the landscape and in the soil: he was fascinated by them and wanted to understand how

they were formed.

Dekker demonstrated that he was also an enthusiastic scientist and a born problem solver who based his research on a wealth of field observations, measurements, and analyses. Many colleagues remember him for his cartloads of soil samples at the end of long days in the field, totally unknown in those days and something no one understood. However, these tremendous quantities of samples—often collected from a single field or small plot—yielded many new insights into soil science, such as water currents in shrinking and swelling clay soils and the behavior of water-repellent soils, an area in soil science in which Dekker acquired world fame.

Dekker was also an extremely gifted writer: he wrote more than 250 articles and reports, striving to make his knowledge accessible to as broad a public as possible. He also held hundreds of presentations for farmers, horticulturists, nature organizations, golf course managers, students, scientists, and policymakers.

Dekker was a unique man, an enthusiastic and successful scientist, and an inspiring and humorous colleague. We will miss his knowledge.

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