Science Societies

In Memoriam

November 7, 2024

NOVEMBER 2024

CROP SCIENCE, SOIL SCIENCE, AGRONOMY

csa news

Thirty Years in the DIRT

Tracking the Controls of Soil Organic Matter in Forest Ecosystems

PAGE 4



Bir Bahadur (BB) Singh



BB Singh

Dr. Bir Bahadur (BB) Singh, a visiting professor in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University, passed away on July 29, 2024, in his hometown in India. Singh was born May 1, 1944 and came from a very modest background in a small village in India where, until high school, he studied using kerosene lamps. Earning a merit scholarship, he was admitted to G.B. Pant University and was part of the school's first graduating class, earning his B.S. degree in 1960. Singh received a fellowship to the University of Illinois where he earned his M.S. (1965) and Ph.D. (1967) while working on soybean breeding on the Urbana‑Champaign campus.

In 1968, following a year of postdoctoral research at Cornell University, he returned to India and became a member of the G.B. Pant University faculty as an associate professor and soybean breeder. He taught introductory genetics and introductory plant breeding at the undergraduate level until he became a researcher at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Nigeria in 1978. Singh came to Texas A&M University in 2006 as a visiting professor to work on cowpea and cropping systems. He also taught World Agriculture and International Plant Breeding and was a driving force for students to understand the impact of plant breeding on "feeding the world." He published more than 225 research papers, guided 35 M.S. and Ph.D. students, and developed numerous high‑yielding stress‑resistant legume varieties. In

2023, he retired and returned to his home in India.

Singh was recognized for his work with legumes, including major advances in soybean for India and cowpea for Africa. He is credited with improving the diets, incomes, and lives of farming families across Africa and India. Most of Africa's cowpea breeders were trained by Dr. Singh. The pigeon pea production in India has increased from 1.7 million tons in 1968 to more than 3.3 million tons, and soybean production has increased from a mere 12,000 tons in 1968 to more than 11 million tons, making India the fifth largest soybean-producing country in the world, in large part due to the Singh's work.

Dr. Singh participated in planning and supervised the construction of the IITA Kano Station in Nigeria, which has evolved into a premier Regional Research Station for IITA. Singh also catalyzed the establishment of the Kano State/Leventis Foundation Farmers' training school, Albasu, Kano State, for which he was honored with a Chieftancy Title. This school trains about 60 young farmers each year in improved agricultural practices.

In recognition of the impact of his work, Dr. Singh was awarded and recognized by many people and organizations, including Fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding, ASA, and CSSA. He was also recognized with the Senior Scientist Award by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and received the Silicon Valley Tech Museum Award. The two-time World Food Prize nominee was recognized by the University of Illinois with the College of ACES Outstanding Alumni Award and the International Alumni Achievement Award. In 2023, he also received the inaugural Dr. Tai R. Shin and Mrs. You H. Shin Humanitarian Award by the University of Illinois System in recognition of his exemplary impact on humanity by addressing global food security.

Dr. Singh is survived by his spouse and two sons, numerous extended family, and close friends. A philanthropist at heart, he played a huge role in assisting and developing schools in India and left legacies of endowed gifts at both the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University.

Terry Allen Howell



Terry Allen Howell

Dr. Terry Allen Howell, Sr., 77, passed away peacefully on Sept. 12, 2024 in Cedar Park, TX. Born in Dallas, the son of Levi Lowe (LL) Howell, III and Lila Lee Howell–the family ultimately settled in Edgewood, TX, his hometown. He graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. in 1969, an M.S. in 1970, and a Ph.D. in 1974.

Howell was a past chair of the Microclimatology and Agronomic Modeling Section of ASA and most currently was involved with the ASA Crop Irrigation Strategies and Management and the Evapotranspiration Measurement and Modeling Communities as well as divisions in SSSA and CSSA. He was a Fellow of both ASA and SSSA. Howell was instrumental in bringing awareness of the agronomic science aspects of irrigation practice to the agronomy, crops, and soils communities and in building bridges between the three Societies and the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers where he was also a Fellow.

Howell married Mary Sue Parkerson on Feb. 22, 1969. They enjoyed a loving marriage for more than 55 years and had three children: Terry, Jr. (Kristin), Lisa LaGrone (Terry), and Michael (Katie). He was Poppa T to 13 grandchildren. Howell is also survived by his

brother, two nieces, and many other relatives and friends.

In addition to his steadfast devotion to his faith, family, and the Fightin' Texas Aggies, Howell distinguished himself internationally for his contributions to irrigation water management. He worked for more than 35 years with the USDA–ARS, mostly at Bushland, TX, as a research engineer and then laboratory director, and is in the ARS Hall of Fame. He set out to not only be a good engineer, but to be a difference-making engineer. He dedicated his research to understanding the relationship between crops and water, preserving the water used in irrigation towards maximizing agricultural productivity needed to feed, fuel, and clothe the world. He was known around the globe for his ideas and accomplishments in water resources engineering. He loved to welcome people from all over the world into his home for a steak and "all the fixins," regardless of the language barriers or cultural differences. His work remains vital in helping our world sustainably provide food and fiber for humankind. Recognitions of his achievements by many organizations are too numerous to mention.

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