

In Memoriam

June 29, 2023



Steve Eberhart

Steve Eberhart

Former CSSA President Steve A. Eberhart, 91, of Cary, NC passed away on Mar. 1, 2023. He was a Fellow of CSSA and ASA and a member for 61 and 57 years, respectively. He was born on Nov. 11, 1931 in Keya Paha, SD and grew up on a farm west of Bassett, NE. He received a B.S. in General Agriculture, 1952, University of Nebraska; M.S. in Plant Breeding, 1958, University of Nebraska; and a Ph.D. in Genetics/Statistics, 1961, North Carolina State University. He also received an Honorary Doctor of Science, University of Nebraska, 1988.

Eberhart married Laurel Hammond on July 19, 1953. He served four years as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force and worked for 15 years with USDA-ARS as a Research Geneticist in Raleigh, NC; Ames, IA; and Kitale, Kenya. While in Kenya, he and co-workers developed a comprehensive breeding system, published in 1967, to develop improved maize breeding populations and parental lines. He developed corn hybrids for Eastern Africa that were used extensively for more than 20 years to reduce hunger.

He served as Vice President for Research with Funk Seeds, a CIBA-GEIGY company, from 1975 to 1987. He directed and coordinated corn, sorghum, soybean, and sunflower breeding programs in the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, France, Italy, Spain, and Thailand. In 1987, he was named Director, National Seed Storage Laboratory, USDA-ARS, Fort Collins, CO, retiring in 2000.

During his career, he published 82 scientific manuscripts and served on editorial boards, including as an Associate Editor for Crop Science. He received numerous awards for his work.

He is survived by daughter, Lyndl Schuster (Paul Holzman) of Northbrook, IL; son, Paul (Lisa) Eberhart of Cary, NC; daughters, Sally (Roger Barth) of Dunnellon, FL; and Sue (Jeff) May of Yankton, SD; sister, Beryl Bair of Ft. Collins CO; 11 grandchildren; and 14 great grandchildren.

Edward Runge



Edward Runge

Former SSSA and ASA President Dr. Edward C. A. Runge passed away Apr. 10, 2023. He was a Fellow of both Societies and a member for 68 years. Runge was born Aug. 4, 1933 in St. Peter, IL. He received his bachelor's of science degree and master's degree at the University of Illinois in Urbana. He received a Ph.D. from Iowa State University (ISU) in Ames.

While in school at ISU, Runge worked as a Research Associate and Assistant Professor from 1959–1963 before joining the University of Illinois an Extension and Researcher/Teacher in the Agronomy Department from 1963– 1973. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1967 and Professor in 1973. His work alongside Neil Smeck on

organic matter and phosphorus movement was cutting edge. From 1970–1971, he took on a Fellowship from Lincoln College on the South Island of New Zealand.

Runge worked for the University of Missouri in Columbia from 1973–1980. He took the position of Chair of the Agronomy Department while continuing to mentor and advise M.S. and Ph.D. students. He also worked diligently on grant funding for numerous projects dealing with corn yields from moisture and weather data. This led to an appointment for more than three months in 1976 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

From 1980–1999 he moved to Texas A&M University where he became the head of the Soil and Crop Sciences Department. He brought Norman Borlaug to the University as a Nobel Laureate to teach about the responsibilities of plant pathology. After the World Food Prize was established by Dr. Borlaug, Runge served on the board and selection committee for years. He stepped down as department head in 1999 but continued working with the students.

Runge was a constant and committed husband, father, grandpa, and teacher. His genuine affection and passion were usually followed by his classic outburst “oh bull roar,” and you knew you had his utmost attention.

Runge is survived by his wife of 66 years, Pat; daughter Kimberly Overton; son Jeff (Michelle); five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

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