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**DR. VIRGIL A. JOHNSON**

Dr. Virgil Allen Johnson, emeritus professor, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, age 80, died Sunday, 22 July, 2001, at his home in Lincoln. He was born in Newman Grove, NE, on 28 June, 1921, to Oscar J. and Fairy Bell (Johnson) Johnson. Virgil married Betty Ann Tisthammer of Albion, NE, on 29 July, 1943, at Williams Field, Chandler, AZ. He graduated from Albion High School in 1939 and entered the Army in December of 1940. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. As a pilot in the 416th Night Fighter Squadron (12th Air Force), he flew in the European Theater, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with two Oak Clusters. Returning to Nebraska after the war, he earned his B.S. (1948) and Ph.D. (1952) from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Dr. Johnson was employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of the Agricultural Research Service. He was with the University of Nebraska Department of Agronomy from 1952–1986 as a professor of agronomy and coördinator of the USDA–ARS Hard Red Winter Wheat Research Program. With longtime colleague Dr. John Schmidt, Johnson was co-leader of the internationally recognized Nebraska Wheat Research Team. In more than 30 years of active service, this team developed and released 28 new varieties of hard red winter wheat. At the time of Johnson and Schmidt’s retirement, varieties released by the UNL wheat-research team accounted for 97 % of the Nebraska winter wheat acreage, 20 % of the US acreage, and were planted in 35 other countries. Notable varieties released during their tenure included Scout, Centurk, and Brule. For more than 10 years, the variety Scout, released in 1963, was grown on more than 8 million acres, making it the most extensively grown cultivar in the nation at the time.

The team also carried out pioneering research on the enhancement of nutritional value of wheat, selection for yield stability, and on the development of hybrid wheat. Johnson instigated and coördinated the International Winter Wheat Performance Nursery in over 50 countries. He was the principal organizer of five international wheat conferences, sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development. In 1976, Dr. Johnson was chairman and team leader of a U.S. Wheat Studies Delegation to the People’s Republic of China, sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences. It is notable that this was the first nonpolitical delegation invited by the PRC, after the Cultural Revolution.

Dr. Johnson was author or coauthor of 200 technical publications. In 1972, he was a member of a National Academy of Sciences committee that prepared a report titled ‘Genetic Vulnerability of Major Crops.’ The report is considered a landmark work in exploring the challenges to science and the nation that are posed by genetic vulnerability of its major crops.

Dr. Johnson was a member and past president of the Crop Science Society of America and a Fellow in the American Society of Agronomy and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Johnson and Schmidt jointly received the CSSA Crop Science Award in 1975. He received the Agricultural Achievement Award from Ak-Sar-Ben in 1970, the Distinguished Service Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1981, the American Society of Agronomy International Agronomy Award in 1984, and the Dekalb-Pfizer Crop Science Distinguished Career Award in 1985. He was inducted into the USDA–ARS Science Hall of Fame in 1990, and the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement in 1991. In 1999, on the 125th anniversary of the University of Nebraska Alumni Association, Dr. Johnson was selected as one of the 125 most significant alumni ‘who’ve made a difference’ in the state, nation, and world.

Dr. Johnson is survived by his wife Betty Ann of Lincoln, daughter Karen and husband Chuck Harris of York, and sons Dr. Reed and wife Kathleen Johnson of Faribault, MN, and Dr. Scott and wife Linda Johnson of Ames, IA. Letters of condolence may be sent to Mrs. Betty Ann Johnson, 128 N. 13th St, Lincoln, NE 68508-1501.

**DR. SVITLANA V. RABINOVYCH**

The year 2002 marks the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Dr. Svitlana V. Rabinovych, world-renown scientist and specialist in plant breeding and genetic resources. The greater part of her creative activity has been dedicated to wheat. Dr. Rabinovych is the first author of many thorough publications in the *Annual Wheat Newsletter* in which are presented the genealogy of wheat cultivars from different world regions.

Dr. Rabinovych was born on 1 October, 1932. Her father, Dr. Vitaly M. Rabinovych, was well-known agronomist and breeder of fodder crops, in particular alfalfa. Her mother was of the Vasilevsky family, her cousin was the outstanding philosopher and archpriest Alexander Men.

In 1954, she received a degree at Kharkiv Agricultural Institute n.a. V.V. Dokuchayev and was appointed as an agronomist, plant breeder, and seed producer. Dr. Rabinovych

worked in the Myrgorod State Variety Test Station (1954), the Forage Production Department of Research Institute for Livestock-Farming of Forest-Steppe of the Ukraine (1955–1957); and for more than 45 years, from February 1957 till the present, at the Institute of Plant Production n.a. V.J. Yurjev of the Ukrainian Academy of Agrarian Sciences (UAAS). Beginning as a main laboratory assistant, Dr. Rabinovych was promoted to junior research worker, senior research worker, manager of the Sector for Plant Resources, and main research worker of the National Centre for Plant Genetic Resources of the Ukraine.

In 1965, in Kharkiv (Ukraine), she defended a thesis for a degree of Candidate in Agricultural Sciences on the subject 'Agroecological study of winter wheat accessions of different geographical origin in East Forest-Steppe of Ukrainian SSR'. In 1975, in Chisheneu, Moldova, she completed the degree of Doctor in Agricultural Sciences with the monograph 'Modern wheat varieties and their pedigrees.'

The principal directions of Dr. Rabinovych's science activity are the collection, study, conservation, and introduction into breeding process of plant genetic resources, in particular of the cereals wheat, rye, and triticale. This work was begun under the leadership of Prof. L.M. Delone in 1956 and became the basis for the creation of the National Collection (Genebank) of these crops in the 1990s. She, together with her coworkers, have studied the complex economic and valuable traits of more than 20,000 cultivars and forms grown in the conditions of northeast Ukraine.

Dr. Rabinovych collected and published or prepared for publication information about the pedigrees of more than 3,000 varieties and lines of wheat from all countries of the five continents where wheat is grown. She has analyzed the specificity, direction, and initial material for wheat breeding of all wheat-growing countries of the world. In the last several years, she has generalized and systematized information about world wheat breeding and the presence of identified genes that control resistance to diseases and pests, grain quality, and its elements, including composition of gliadins and glutenins according to electrophoretic analysis data, in the world genepool. She has carried out an historical analysis on the use of Ukrainian cultivars and their descendants



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and of rye genetic material in the state of chromosomal translocation, substitution, and addition lines in wheat lines of the world.

The strategy for selecting initial material for wheat breeding is different for different regions of the world is the basis of genepool study and pedigree analysis. Dr. Rabinovych substantiated the concept of the 'cultivar-creating ability of the germ plasm accession'. She conducted substantial research in the field of the history of biological and agricultural science development in the Ukraine. The results of her work are published in more than 180 papers including

Rabinovych SV. 1972. Modern wheat varieties and their pedigrees. Urozhay, Kyiv. 328 pp. (in Russian);

Rabinovych SV. 1998. Importance of wheat-rye translocation for breeding modern cultivars of *Triticum aestivum* L. Euphytica **100**:323-340;

Rabinovych SV. 1976. Initial forms for breeding of new varieties of triticale. Triticale: problems and perspectives. Part I. Genetics and breeding of triticale. Collected science articles. Kamennaya Step', **13**(1):101-105 (in Russian); and

Manzyuk VT, Rabinovych SV, Wolf VG, Rusakovskiy SJa, Lykhar' DF, and Malusha KB. 1985. Development of breeding researches. Achievements in agricultural crops breeding. Development of biology in the Ukraine. V.II. Development of botanical researches, physiology and biochemistry, introduction and acclimatization, plant genetics and breeding, microbiology during the years of Soviet power. Kyiv, Naukova Dumka pp. 307-356 (in Russian).

Dr. Rabinovych actively participates in many conferences at the regional and global levels on the topics of wheat, rye, and triticale breeding and genetic resources. During 1981–85, she was member of the Coordination Board on Winter Wheat Breeding of All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences n.a. V.I. Lenin (former USSR). She is member of the Specialized Academic Council on defense of Doctor and Candidate Theses of the Institute of Plant Production n.a. V.J. Yurjev of UAAS.

We wish Dr. Svitlana Rabinovych much happiness, robust health, and every creative success. We hope to read much more of her interesting and useful contributions in this newsletter.