

DR FRANK ELLISON

It is with sadness that we note the recent death of Frank Ellison on 12 September, 2002.

Frank had a long association with the University of Sydney Plant Breeding Institute, especially the Narrabri site. He received his BScAgr in 1967, gaining honors, and began postgraduate research in association with N.F. Derera at Narrabri, being awarded his MScAgr in 1971, and PhD in 1977. Frank was appointed Assistant Wheat Breeder in 1975. He undertook postdoctoral research in wheat breeding at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, in 1976 and 1977, before appointment as Plant Breeder in 1978. He was promoted to Senior Wheat Breeder in 1988. Frank was Acting Director of PBI Narrabri from March 2001, and was a leading member of the SunPrime wheat breeding business, as Principal Wheat Breeder.

Frank's breeding efforts were particularly directed at the release of Prime Hard wheats for northern New South Wales and Queensland, with more recent expansion into other market classes and areas. Frank was initially an important, and then leading, member of the wheat breeding team that included N.F. Derera, G.M. Bhatt, R. Trethowan, D.R. Marshall, L. O'Brien, S. Moore, and recently, M.Q. Lu. He had

strong interactions with the PBI cereal rust program at Castle Hill and later, Cobbitty, with R.A. McIntosh, J. Gyarfas, T.T. The, H. Bariana and G. Brown. Frank also had strong research collaborations with L. Burgess on cereal *Fusarium* crown rot and yellow spot problems, and with D. Mares on breeding for preharvest sprouting tolerance. Most of these collaborators are named with Frank in the joint release of wheat cultivars. Frank's wheat cultivars are: Sunkota, Shortim, Suneca, Sunstar, Sundor, Sunbird, Sunelg, Sunco, Sunfield, Miskle, Sunbri, Sunmist, Sunstate, Sunland, Sunvale, Sunbrook, Sunlin, Sunsoft 98, Braewood, and Marombi. These cultivars continue to occupy a significant proportion of the target growing area, and represent a major component of the Prime Hard production of Australia. They also have a significant role in the export marketing of Australian wheat, especially to the higher return premium markets, for bread production, and for yellow alkaline noodles for Asia. Frank also assisted the efforts of N. Darvey and R. Jessop (University of New England, Armidale, N.S.W) in the development of triticale cultivars, Ningadhu, Samson, Bejon, Madonna and Maiden. In the interactions of the program with the wheat research community Frank collaborated closely with the staff of the Bread Research Institute of Australia, and the CSIRO Grain Quality Research Laboratory.

Frank will be remembered for his service to the farming community and for his outgoing personality and devilish sense of humor.

Frank was married to Annie and they had two sons, Michael and Shaun.

DR. KENNETH B. PORTER

Kenneth Boyd Porter was born in 1918 in Stafford, Kansas. Following his graduation in 1940 from Kansas State University, he joined the armed forces and served in the European Theatre through 1945.

In 1947, Porter received a Master of Science degree from Iowa State University. He joined the Soil and Crop Sciences Department faculty at Texas A&M University and Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in 1947. Porter began his life's work in wheat breeding at the Station's agronomy laboratories near Bushland where he served in various capacities, including resident director. He earned a doctorate degree from A&M in 1957.

Shortly after his retirement in 1988, the Texas A&M System Board of Regents granted the title of emeritus professor in recognition of Porter's distinguished career and service in wheat breeding.

Porter was the recipient of numerous awards in recognition of his lifetime achievements in wheat varietal development and agronomy. In 1970, he received the Agronomic Research Award from the American Society of Agronomy. He was made a Fellow of the Society in 1982 and a Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America in 1985.

In 1980, he was recognized by the Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M for excellence in wheat research. This award was

followed in 1981 by the A&M Deputy Chancellor's Award in Excellence for Research. The Wheat Quality Council cited his many contributions to the milling and baking industries and bestowed their Full Kernel Award in 1984.

A national award for superior service was presented to Porter in 1987 by the United States Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the centennial year commemoration of the Hatch Act.

Throughout his career, Porter was a valuable member of many organizations including the National Wheat Improvement Committee, the Texas Seed Trade Association, the Wheat Quality Council, the Hard Winter Wheat Regional Improvement Committee and the Peterof Association of Applied Wheat Breeders.

Porter's numerous awards were made primarily in recognition of his direct development of over 16 improved varieties of hard red winter wheat and his leadership of statewide and regional efforts in wheat improvement. Landmark varieties like Sturdy, the first semidwarf hard red winter wheat released in the United States, TAMW-101, the first widely adapted dual-purpose wheat in the Great Plains and TAM-107, the first greenbug resistant wheat in the United States are testaments to his hard work and dedication.

However, Porter's colleagues remember him as an unassuming giant in the field of plant breeding. Dr. Norman Borlaug, Nobel Laureate, recalled, "Dr. Porter and the late Dr. Orville Vogel were the only two wheat breeders who saw the need for and pioneered the use of dwarfing genes in the winter wheat regions of the U.S. All the other breeders were



skeptical and believed that semidwarf wheats would never be suitable in the Great Plains because of frequent shortage of moisture, severe drought and winter kill. Porter's variety, Sturdy, disproved this ill-founded fear."

When asked to what Porter attributed his success, he often replied that it was due to reliance on a strong team of dedicated regional colleagues, lots of hard work and a bunch of luck.

Just "Kenny" to his many friends, Porter represented all that was good with land grant university research. His sense of service was paramount. He mentored young plant breeders, advised graduate students, and trained young professionals.

Porter served as administrator for regional agricultural research programs and provided counsel to national and international policy makers. The ultimate gentleman, Kenny was as comfortable with national leaders as he was with Great Plains wheat producers.

Kenny Porter's legacy will continue as farmers continue to grow his wheats, as breeders continue to utilize the valuable germ plasm he created through 50 years of research and as students are assisted in their studies through his personally endowed scholarship fund.