

**IN DEDICATION TO
DR. ROBERT J. METZGER**

The following tribute was written by Bob's daughter, Debra (Metzger) Lee and her husband Michael. Reflecting on his life, she wrote 'I have reflected on the life's lessons I learned from Dad. The ones that stood out most strongly include always try to do your best, don't be satisfied with seemingly obvious answers, there is dignity in all forms of labor, and share your time, your abilities, and your good fortune with others'. Bob will be missed as a colleague and friend by many.

Robert J. Metzger died on 24 June, 2008, in Albany, Oregon, at age 83. Bob was born on 11 April, 1925, near Cerro Gordo, Illinois. He spent his youth with his parents and five sisters on several farms in this area. He enjoyed a long life with his family, friends, and colleagues around the world. He is survived by his former wife, Barbara, daughter Debbie Lee (Michael), son David (Laura), and four grandsons.



Bob was the first person in his family to attend college and was able to attend through benefit of a Future Farmers of America scholarship. His undergraduate studies were interrupted by service in the Army Air Corp. He earned B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Illinois, in 1946, 1948, and 1952, respectively. After Illinois, Bob worked briefly as a plant breeder at Clemson University in South Carolina, working on forage legume species. In 1954, Bob accepted a USDA wheat geneticist position at Oregon State University, where he worked until his retirement in 1986.



As one of his colleagues described him, Bob was a 'wheatologist' who had broad knowledge of the breeding and biology of wheat, relatives of wheat, wheat pathogens, and wheat researchers. At OSU, his wheat research emphasized genetic investigations of disease resistance and germ plasm enhancement using exotic wheat and wheat relatives. He worked directly with wheat breeders on varietal development (e.g., Stephens), and with basic researchers on more fundamental aspects of taxonomy, the biology of flowering and vernalization, and novel methods of wheat improvement. During his career, Bob consulted extensively with the wheat-breeding program at the International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and was a leader of germ plasm collection trips throughout Turkey and Pakistan.

Bob lived his life with passion and zest. Every day provided a new opportunity to learn. Bob was an enthusiastic traveler. He loved being among plants, either in research plots, in the greenhouse, or on the roadside. His hobbies

and community service activities included public school committees, Boy Scout leadership, reading, and rhododendron breeding.

Bob enjoyed a long and active retirement that allowed him to focus his research energy on triticale. From 1986 through 2008, he collaborated with local and global networks of researchers and friends to learn and to genetically improve triticale. Those efforts produced much camaraderie, some solid basic information, more than a few good ‘Bob’ stories, and some successful varieties. In his final weeks, Bob made a road trip to California. He was joined by colleagues who made it possible for him to view the research plots for one more evaluation. Bob made his last visit to his beloved triticale nursery in Oregon just a few days before he died. He described it as ‘the best nursery in 50 years’.



Based on the attendance at his 80th birthday party, the many kind visits and assistance as his health declined, and communication from students and colleagues from around the world, Bob was obviously loved and respected by his family, friends, and colleagues. His presence and spirit will be missed.