

Global Community Mourns Loss of Nobel Peace Laureate Norman E. Borlaug

College Station, Sept. 12, 2009 - Norman E. Borlaug, who received the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for developing high-yielding, disease-resistant wheat used to prevent famine in developing countries throughout the world, died shortly before 11 p.m. from complications of cancer in Dallas.

Borlaug, whose career was dedicated to using science to combat world hunger, was Distinguished Professor of International Agriculture in Texas A&M University's department of soil and crop sciences. He was 95.

The memorial service, which will be held at Texas A&M in College Station, is pending.

In 2007, Borlaug received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor of the United States. This capped a string of major awards and honors throughout his scientific and humanitarian career.

"We all eat at least three times a day in privileged nations, and yet we take food for granted," Borlaug said in a recent interview. "There has been great progress, and food is more equitably distributed. But hunger is commonplace, and famine appears all too often."

Until recently, Borlaug still traveled internationally working tirelessly for improvements in agricultural science and food policy. He regularly could be found in his office on campus in College Station advising students and providing counsel to fellow faculty members on research and scholarship.

His childhood days were spent on an Iowa farm, influenced by his Norwegian grandfather's lessons on common sense. At the University of Minnesota, where he began his college education during the Depression of the 1930s, he was told his high school education had not prepared him properly in science and math. He failed an entrance exam and was placed in the General College.

But that experience made Borlaug work hard on his studies. He earned meals as a restaurant waiter and paid for tuition and books by saving money from summer jobs. Borlaug also received his master's and doctorate degrees in plant pathology from University of Minnesota.

During World War II, Borlaug was in charge of industrial and agricultural chemical research for a DuPont laboratory. In 1944, after his release from the War Manpower Commission, he became a scientist for the Cooperative Wheat Research and Production Program - a joint venture between the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mexican government which began his life-long passion for international agriculture.

This project became the institution known as CIMMYT, Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo (The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center) near Mexico City. In this program, he introduced scientific techniques for preventing famine in Mexico and began bringing into the program promising young scientists, later named "Borlaug Interns."

He used the lessons learned in Mexico later to disprove 1960s doomsday predictions of mass famine throughout South and East Asia.

By this time, "Borlaug Interns" were coming from many countries, and these interns were instrumental in implementing what was later named the "Green Revolution" in wheat production. Today, India and Pakistan are self-sufficient in food production due to Borlaug's interventions. In 1970, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for this work recognizing that agricultural productivity has a pivotal role in creating stability and preventing conflict.

In 1986, he created the World Food Prize to give recognition to the work of scientists and humanitarians who have contributed to advancing international agriculture and fighting world hunger. Borlaug's most recent international work was cooperative efforts with CIMMYT, in Mexico and the Sasakawa Africa Association program. One of his favorite parts of the World Food Prize celebration each October was the success of the Youth Institute.

In 1984, Borlaug came to Texas A&M as Distinguished Professor of International Agriculture, dividing his time between College Station each fall to teach and at CIMMYT in Mexico each spring where he continued research and participation in global efforts to reduce world hunger.

Borlaug's passions extended beyond agriculture. He loved sports and started Little League Baseball in Mexico City so that his then-young son, William Gibson Borlaug, could play while the family was living there. Borlaug was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 1992. He was also passionate about training, mentoring and challenging young scientists, instilling in them the desire to teach and adopt science-based practices that increase the world's food supply and thus serve mankind by leading to a more peaceful world.

At Texas A&M in 2006, the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture was named in his honor. The institute strives to continue Borlaug's legacy by promoting science-based solutions for the world's agriculture and food challenges. The Borlaug Institute is currently working in some of the world's most challenging agricultural development environments such as Afghanistan, Guatemala, Ethiopia and Iraq.

Borlaug was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret. He is survived by daughter Jeanie Borlaug Laube and her husband Rex, and son William Gibson Borlaug and his wife Barbie. He also is survived by grandson William Richard Rhoda and wife Stephanie, and four granddaughters: Tiffany Borlaug Rubi and husband John, Julie Borlaug Larson and husband Dave, Jennifer Rhoda Marsh and husband Dan, and Natalie Howe Borlaug; and great-grandchildren Kyle Rhoda, Matthew Rhoda, Nicholas Rhoda, Anne Borlaug Rubi and Peter Dierks Rubi, and Luke Borlaug Larson.

"It is the hope of the Borlaug family that his life be an example to all. We would like his life be a model for making a difference in the lives of others and to bring about efforts to end human misery for all mankind," his children stated. "One of his favorite quotes was 'reach for the stars. Although you will never touch them, if you reach hard enough, you will find that you get a little 'star dust' on you in the process!'"

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, memorials to the Borlaug International Scholars Fund. Checks should be made payable to "Texas A&M Foundation" and may be mailed to the Texas A&M Foundation, 401 George Bush Drive, College Station, TX 77840-2811. Please indicate in the Memo line "Borlaug International Scholars Fund". This fund will allow students from developing countries to pursue graduate studies or short-term experiential learning activities at Texas A&M University or other land grant universities of the United States.

Condolences may be addressed to The Borlaug Family, 13352 Peyton, Dallas, Tx 75240.

For information on the memorial service and Borlaug's complete vitae, please visit <<http://borlaug.tamu.edu/>>.

Editors Note: The following is a list of Norman E. Borlaug's major awards and honors:

- Nobel Peace Prize, 1970.
- Election to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, 1970 and nine Foreign Academies
- Aztec Eagle, Government of Mexico, 1970.
- Outstanding Agricultural Achievement Award, World Farm Foundation (USA), 1971.
- Presidential Medal of Freedom (USA), 1977.
- Jefferson Award, American Institute for Public Service, 1980.
- Distinguished Achievement Award in Food and Agricultural Sciences, Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (USA), 1982.
- The Presidential World without Hunger Award: Educator/Scientist category (USA), 1985.
- The 1988 Americas Award, The Americas Foundation (USA).
- Jefferson Lifetime Achievement Award (USA), 1997.
- Altruistic Green Revolution Award, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, 1998.
- Recognition Award for Contributions to World Wheat and Maize Research and Production, Republic of El Salvador, 1999.
- Dedication of Norman E. Borlaug Center for Southern Crop Improvement, Texas A&M University, 1999.
- Vannevar Bush Award, National Science Foundation (USA), 2000.
- Memorial Centennial Medal of the N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry (Russia), 2000.
- Public Welfare Medal, National Academy of Sciences (USA), 2002.
- The 2002 Rotary International Award for World Understanding and Peace, Barcelona, Spain.
- The Philip Hauge Abelson Prize, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2002.
- Award for Distinguished Achievements to Science and Medicine, American Council of Science and Health, 2003.
- National Medal of Science (USA), 2004.
- Padma Vibhushan in Science and Engineering, awarded by the Government of India, 2006.
- Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture created as part of the Texas A&M University System, 2006.

- Congressional Gold Medal, 2006.
- Texas A&M University honorary doctor of letters degree, 2007 (Borlaug received more than 50 honorary degrees in his career).

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