

REMEMBERING WILLIAM S. GAZAWAY (1939-2012)

William Sherrill Gazaway passed away on March 20, 2012. Bill as we all knew him enjoyed a very productive and exciting life in which he became an international advocate of nematology both in Latin America and in the United States. His charisma, concern and care for his colleagues, producers, and students surely will be missed. His pleasant and jovial personality along with his ability to speak English and Spanish made him an international consultant for a variety of crop production systems. He achieved favorable notoriety and scientific recognition in ONTA and SON as well as in the Soybean and Cotton conferences. Bill and his wife Pam traveled the world and had colleagues and friends in virtually all continents. He will always be remembered for his enthusiasms which enable him to make friends all over the world. There was no greater pleasure for Bill than to help a producer overcome a nematode crop production problem or help a university student discover the great pleasures of working with nematodes.



Source: Auburn University

Dr. William Sherrill Gazaway, Emeritus Professor of Plant Pathology and Extension Plant Pathologist, passed away on March 20, 2012 at the age of 72. Dr. Gazaway was born on April 19, 1939 in Greenwood, Mississippi and spent his primary years around the

Clarksdale, Mississippi area where his father worked as a farm manager. Later, his father moved the family to Honduras where he learned to speak Spanish. William S. Gazaway graduated from Helena Central High School in Arkansas and joined the U. S. Navy for 4 years. He attended Holmes Junior College, transferred to Mississippi State University and graduated with a bachelor's of science degree in Plant Pathology. He began his graduate work at the University of Wisconsin and met his wife Pam. William S. Gazaway completed his doctorate in Plant Pathology at Texas A&M in 1971 working with Dr. Bob Halliwell as his major professor. He then began his illustrious career as a Plant Pathologist working with Dole (Standard Fruit Company) in Costa Rica and Nicaragua on banana diseases. While working for Dole, Dr. Gazaway completed further Nematology training which was taught in Spanish in Venezuela. In October of 1976, William S. Gazaway began his career at Auburn University as the sole extension plant pathologist responsible for all crops and all diseases. He had a profound influence on agriculture in Alabama for over 36 years. In the late 1980's, Dr. Gazaway identified the reniform nematode in cotton in the southern region of the state and he began to focus his efforts in this area. Current nematode management strategies are based on research conducted by Dr. Gazaway

Dr. Gazaway's proudest achievements were diffusing the highly political situation involving Karnal bunt, a fungal disease of wheat. Quarantines threatened to put the Southeastern US wheat growers out of production. He served as the science advisor to the Alabama Congressional delegation and stood his ground basing his judgment on the science even when it was an unpopular stand at the time. Spores of Karnal bunt were found in grain shipments in Mobile, AL; but the actual disease was never seen in a wheat field in Alabama. He urged APHIS to require the presence of the disease before instigating quarantine. Thus without disease, wheat production continued in the southeast United States.

Dr. William Gazaway was well known and respected by his colleagues in the Society of Nematology, Organization of Nematologists of Tropical America, American Phytopathological Society, Beltwide Cotton Commission, and Southern Soybean Disease Workers Associations to name a few. He traveled worldwide discussing and presenting research on nematodes and other important diseases in Alabama. Although he retired from Auburn University March 31, 1999, he

continued his research on a part time basis for the next 10 years until age 70, when he was forced to retire again to fight a developing lung disease.

In Alabama, Dr. Gazaway is well known for his passion for Auburn University football. He enjoyed traveling, singing and playing the guitar with his friends, and speaking Spanish with any Spanish speaking person he encountered. The family appreciates your remembrance

of William Sherrill Gazaway. Bill and Pam Gazaway shared life together and were married for 42 years. He is also survived by his sister-in-law, Betty Tucker, his nephews, Shane and Neely Tucker, and his cousin Jean Reeves. He leaves behind many good friends who will cherish his memory.

Submitted by KATHY LAWRENCE