

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ridgetown Campus Loses Dedicated Scientist, Leader and Friend

RIDGETOWN, ON – It is with great sadness that the University of Guelph’s Ridgetown Campus announces the passing of Dr. Ron Pitblado, former Associate Director Academics, Research Scientist and global agricultural extensionist. He lost his battle with cancer on November 11, 2009.

“Ron’s distinguished 34- year career is unparalleled. His unstoppable passion to investigate new possibilities for agriculture, particularly for Ontario’s fruit and vegetable industry, defined his extensive teaching, research, and extension career,” stated Dr. Art Schaafsma, Campus Director at Ridgetown.

Dr. Clay Switzer, former dean of the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) recommended Ron for a position at Ridgetown Campus and he began work as a vegetable pest management lecturer and researcher. His tremendous excitement for the development of insect and disease strategies for horticultural crops eventually lead him to teach thousands of students and to travel the globe investigating opportunities and sharing his knowledge.

Ron considered his greatest achievement to be the opportunity to provide agricultural producers and agriculture diploma students with meaningful straight answers to their farming questions. He found it very rewarding to first meet students in the classroom, and later work with them as Ontario producers. Ron never used a prepared note in the classroom but shared his experience teaching countless diploma courses, always hoping that students would share his interest in seeking new ideas.

Ron’s research achievements include the development of TOM-CAST, a weather timed pesticide spray program used throughout the world in processing tomato production. The writing and delivery of countless scientific papers and publications was only seen as successful to him if it was useful for growers. Ron helped to develop the Ontario Weather Network (OWN), a project to assist growers with the timely application of irrigation and pest management products in several crops. During his celebrated research career he skillfully tested hundreds of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides for their pest management potential.

Sharing his understanding of mushroom production, Ridgetown Campus boasted the only mushroom education facility in Canada and when he wasn’t teaching students at Ridgetown, Ron taught mushroom production to countless farmers around the globe.

Also gifted with management and administration talent, Ron welcomed several leadership positions including Horticulture Section Head, Associate Director Academics, and Acting Campus Director during his time at Ridgetown. He worked tirelessly to help colleagues with their teaching methods and addressed opportunities for enhancing learning.

No matter what the task, Ron worked diligently, with passion and with an endless joyful song in his heart while he strived to make a difference in everything he did. When once asked what was the greatest gift he ever received, he quickly replied, "That's easy ...the gift of wonder!"

Ontario agriculture, OAC and Ridgetown Campus have lost a true friend.

Ron retired from Ridgetown Campus in summer 2007. He is a native of St. Catharines, ON and is survived by his loving wife Diane and two grown sons, David and Doug, and their families.

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Additional Information:

VISITATION INFORMATION:

The Pitblado Family will be hosting visitation at the following times and location:

Sunday, November 15, 2009 from 1:00 – 4:00 PM and 7:00 – 9:00 PM
McKinlay Funeral Homes Ltd., 459 St. Clair St. Chatham, ON N7L 3K6 (519) 351-2040
www.mckinlayfuneralhome.com

The Pitblado family will be holding a private family service on Monday, November 16, 2009.

MEMORIAL GIFT INFORMATION:

In lieu of flowers, the Pitblado family welcomes memorial gifts to either of the following two charities.

- **Ridgetown Campus Agri-Food Foundation**
Contact: Liz Meidlinger, Communications and Advancement, Ridgetown Campus
Phone: 519-674-1587 E-mail: lmeidlin@ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca
www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/alumni/giving_index.cfm

OR

- **Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada**
Contact: www.leukemia-lymphoma.org

RIDGETOWN CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION:

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