



Jan. 26, 2009

Passings: Cal Poly Soil Science Professor Thomas Ruehr

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly Soil Science Professor Thomas A. Ruehr, 65, died on Jan. 7, 2009, at his home in Los Osos, California.

He was born in Ravenna, Ohio, in 1943. He earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy at The Ohio State University in 1966, his master's degree in agronomy and soil science at Iowa State University in 1970, and his Ph.D. in agronomy and soil science at Colorado State University in 1976. He began teaching at Cal Poly in the Soil Science Department in 1974. He was the recipient of the university's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1980, and a founding member of Cal Poly's Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium.



Professor Ruehr taught a variety of courses, mostly related to plant nutrition, soil chemistry, soil microbiology, and bioremediation. He also team-taught courses in global food systems, human values and ethics in agriculture, world food politics, and the global environment. He conducted research in agriculture, food systems, and bioremediation, was awarded many grants and authored many publications and presentations. He also reviewed many articles and books for his profession, and worked in curriculum development.

Professor Ruehr conducted educational and training sessions for fertilizer companies, and frequently served as a consultant. He routinely donated his consulting fees to an annual scholarship fund for junior soil science students at Cal Poly.

In addition to teaching, Professor Ruehr was very active in his community, serving as a technical advisor for the proposed wastewater treatment facility in Los Osos. He was also very active in the First Presbyterian Church in San Luis Obispo.

He received many recognitions, including the Petoseed Agriculture Faculty Award in 1996, a Teaching Award of Merit from the NACTA in 1994, and Cal Poly's Distinguished Teacher Award in 1980.

Professor Ruehr is survived by his wife, Evelyn Burky Ruehr, two children, Denise Kaub and Brent Ruehr, and two granddaughters, Sierra and Paige.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Thomas Ruehr Honorary Scholarship Fund, c/o: Lisa Wallravin, Earth & Soil Sciences Dept., Cal Poly State University, CA 93407.

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