

## ICON OR NOT – LEAVE YOUR MARK

**Late last year a world-renowned agronomist – an icon – departed this world.**

It always saddens me to hear about the loss of such an eminent scientist. Even though I did not know him well, I knew his work, and it was significant. His contributions to soil science were many. In reflecting on his passing, my first thought was that our profession wouldn't be able to replace him.

**How do you take up the slack when a great one passes away?** After pondering this question for a while, it occurred to me that a large part of progress is to adapt to loss. Icons emerge, contribute, then move on, to be replaced by others. The profession of agronomy will move on as well. That's how society functions, and agronomy is a microcosm of society.

**Not all of us achieve greatness.** However, we can do our best to make our talents count, no matter what our social position might be or where we rank in our chosen profession. We owe it to ourselves and those around us to be willing to go that extra mile. Those who stretch their talents to the fullest might not wind up being an agronomic icon, but they will be respected, and they will leave their mark...and each of us should leave a mark. Otherwise, how will those who follow know we passed this way?

**Leaving a mark means that your work is worth something to your profession.**

It could be teaching or research, maybe writing...or selling fertilizer. Whatever it is, if it is worthy, others will take it and use it to make things better than they were before.

**Icons leave behind significant marks.** They aren't difficult to find because they will be referenced in the scientific literature, will appear in the popular agricultural magazines, and will be quoted by those who teach.

**It is my guess that most of you who read this magazine are familiar with the work of Dr. Stanley Barber.** Some of you knew him personally. All of you have been impacted by the contributions he made to our science. He was truly an icon, one who made his mark. We all know he passed our way.



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