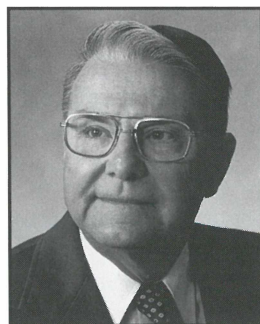


The Man from Manlius— Werner L. Nelson: 1914-1992

Dr. Werner L. Nelson, retired Senior Vice President of The Potash & Phosphate Institute, died November 27, 1992, in West Lafayette, Indiana. He was born October 17, 1914, near Manlius, Illinois. Survivors include his wife Jeanette, son John, daughter Jean, and three grandchildren.



Dr. W.L. Nelson

WHEN Werner Lind Nelson departed for heaven the day after Thanksgiving last year, America lost a special breed of scientist—an agronomist who never allowed his higher learning to cripple his capacity to communicate like the farm boy he was.

Every Nelson word I ever read or heard moved simply and directly. Crystal clear. And not only clear, but interesting and always as accurate as the human mind could make it.

In the late 1960s, the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) elected Werner Nelson president, the first scientist from industry ever elected to that post. It brought much honor to the entire plant food industry.

At the time, those of us who had worked several years with him in the Institute knew not only what kind of scientist the ASA had elected but, more importantly, what kind of man! Personally, I found him to be quiet and unpretentious, but firm of word and action. Very firm.

Dr. Nelson was no wimp. He was no pouter. If he lost a debate, he would always work full steam ahead for the plan he didn't favor initially. He was the quintessential team man whose example rubbed off on younger scientists.

Intensely scientific, probing, wondering, he punctured complacency with a capacity for work that was staggering.

Colleagues noticed how he seemed happiest in the field, drifting from the crowd, inspecting some dead tissue in the root crown of corn plants, and returning to ask the grower what hybrid he used, what fertilizer and planting rates. In my opinion, this insatiable curiosity and the insights it

generated influenced everything Dr. Nelson ever did in his professional life:

- Serving as Senior Vice President of the Institute for over two decades.
- Receiving the coveted Bronze Tablet for leading the scholarship ranks of the huge University of Illinois in his student days of the 1930s.
- Rising to Professor in charge of North Carolina's soil fertility research and Director of the state's Soil Testing Division in the 1940s and early 1950s.
- Co-authoring the noted textbook, *Soil Fertility and Fertilizers*, now in its fifth edition.
- Leading a five-member study team of the United Nations' FAO, to look at the role of fertilizer in meeting the food needs of developing countries.
- Becoming a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy, American Association for Advancement of Science, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America.
- Receiving Ohio State University's Centennial Award for building bridges of cooperation among universities, growers and industry.
- Serving as adjunct professor at Purdue University and guest professor or lecturer at nine other universities.
- And, most important of all, initiating countless grower and dealer meetings designed to bring the latest helpful research findings to the field.

The list could go on and on . . .

Werner Nelson was basically, and above all, a humble man. What a powerful credential to take to heaven. ■

These comments were prepared by Sanford Wingate Martin, retired Editor of the Potash & Phosphate Institute, who worked with Dr. Nelson for many years.