

A Tribute to Dr. Benjamin Leighton Legendre 1943 - 2017



Dr. Benjamin Leighton Legendre, Ben for short, an internationally renowned sugar technologist passed away on 8 July 2017. Dr. Legendre received his B.S. in Agronomy and M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Breeding degrees from Louisiana State University in 1965, 1967, and 1970, respectively. He served in the U.S. Army, as an Oil Seeds and Feed Grains Advisor, Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS), Can Tho, Republic of Vietnam during which time he received the U.S. Army, Bronze Star, Republic of Vietnam, 1971.

Dr. Legendre joined ARS in 1972 as a Research Agronomist. In 1990 he was appointed Research Leader of the USDA Houma station, where he worked until his retirement from ARS in 2000. Dr. Legendre, however, did not retire professionally accepting appointments with the LSU AgCenter including Professor and Sugarcane Extension Specialist (2000-2009) and Professor and Head of the Audubon Sugar Institute from 2008 until his death.

Dr. Legendre's research had significant impact in many areas of sugarcane production and processing including the genetic improvement of sugar cane germplasm, the selection of improved sugarcane cultivars, agronomic and factory practices that affect sugar cane production and cane and juice quality. He authored or coauthored over 250 publications and 150 published abstracts, and made over 100 presentations before professional societies. Recognized as one of the leading sugar cane experts in the world in the areas of breeding and selection and cane and juice quality, he was often sought out internationally, nationally, and locally for technical advisory activities and committee assignments within his disciplines. He accepted invitations to visit and consult with colleagues in more than 20 foreign countries on variety improvement, germplasm enhancement, cane and juice quality, cane deterioration, freeze management and processing.

Dr. Legendre was a life-long member of the American Society of Sugar Cane Technologists. He served as Chair of the Agricultural Section in 1979, Second Vice President in 1980, Vice-President in 1981, President in 1982, and Chairman at Large from 1985 until 2017. He was often awarded "Best Presentation" at the ASSCT annual meetings. Dr. Legendre was the ASSCT-Denver T. Loupe

Sugar Heritage Professorship in the Louisiana State University
Agricultural Center.

Dr. Legendre represented ASSCT on the Council of ISSCT at the 1992 Congress when he was elected to the ISSCT Executive Committee. He served for four terms on the Committee until 2005 when he was awarded the Honorary Life Membership of the Society at the XXV Congress in Guatemala. He participated regularly in congresses and workshops since the 1980s and has published papers in most congresses since then, the last time at the XXVIII Congress in Sao Paulo in 2013.

Expressions of sympathy were received from many members of ISSCT soon after the news that Dr. Legendre had passed away became known. These expressions have been communicated to his family. ISSCT members spoke of Dr. Legendre as a larger than life figure who possessed a unique combination of scientific expertise and kind spirit. They spoke about his good humour and his willingness to share his great knowledge. He was recognized as a great mentor to numerous students. His great generosity was also emphasized.

The Chair and Members of ISSCT Executive Committee and Council would like on behalf of all the members to convey their heartfelt condolences to Dr. Legendre's family. Dr. Legendre will be missed by

the sugar cane community nationally and internationally and his absence in future ISSCT congresses will be felt.

Adapted from Tribute to Dr. Benjamin Leighton Legendre

June 2017 Issue of Sugar Journal