

During the 2015 Annual Meeting of the NAPB/PBCC which was held in Pullman WA on the WSU campus from July 28th to 30th, NAPB presented awards for Lifetime Achievement, Plant Breeding Impact, and Early Career Scientist.

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes distinguished long term service to the plant breeding discipline through research, teaching, extension outreach, and leadership. This year's recipient of this award was **Dr. Stephen Baenziger**, Professor and Nebraska Wheat Growers Presidential Chair at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Dr. Baenziger joined the University of Nebraska faculty in 1986 as a small grains breeder, following positions at USDA and Monsanto Company. His wheat breeding program has focused on improving grain yield, quality for bread and noodles, disease resistance, and drought tolerance. Dr. Baenziger used every tool available, including genomics-based technologies and cytogenetics, to develop varieties to meet the world food demands in a sustainable way. He has developed and released 35 wheat varieties which are currently grown on >60% of the Nebraska wheat acreage and credited with boosting income of Nebraska farmers by \$71 million. In 2013, his winter wheat varieties were recognized by the Wheat Quality Council as "Best of Show" for exhibiting the highest quality. In addition to wheat, Dr. Baenziger has released 6 barley and 4 triticale cultivars. Truly, Dr. Baenziger sets the standard for this generation of public and private plant breeders. Furthermore, Dr. Baenziger has trained more than 50 students who have gone on to achieve greatness and wield influence across the globe. He is an inspiring leader and a generous public servant, having served in numerous leadership positions including President of CSSA in 2003 and Board of Trustee Member of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) from 2010 to 2015; Dr. Baenziger was the first Chair of the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee (PBCC), parent organization of the NAPB, when this organization formed in 2007. In short, Dr. Baenziger is a positive, solution-oriented, savvy professional and leader in crop improvement who has worked tirelessly to advance science of the plant breeding.

The Plant Breeding Impact Award recognizes significant advancements in the field of plant breeding, specifically in the area of varietal or technology development. It is open to public or private plant breeders whose improved germplasm or technological contributions have had a measurable impact on crop production. The 2015 recipient of the NAPB Plant Breeding Impact Award is **Dr. Rex Bernardo**, Professor and Endowed Chair in Corn Breeding and Genetics at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Bernardo joined the faculty at the Univ. of Minnesota in 2000 after holding positions at LimaGrain Genetics and Purdue University. Recognizing that virtually all corn hybrids in the USA are developed by the seed industry, Dr. Bernardo chose to focus on contributions to breeding methods and development of best practices for application of genomics-based technologies. He pioneered work on BLUP (Best Linear Unbiased Prediction) in plants, testing strategies to employ early generation testing, and breeding strategies for use with doubled haploidy and genomic selection. Dr. Bernardo has authored >90 referred publications, a number of which are seminal articles on 'hot' topics in plant breeding applications. He literally 'wrote the book' on breeding for quantitative traits in plants releasing two textbooks which are widely utilized in plant breeding education. Dr. Bernardo is a visionary leader in modern quantitative genetics. He has been a catalyst for change, influencing the

application of new technologies in a powerful way. The impact of his work has been cross-cutting, cross-crop, and felt worldwide.

The Early Career Scientist Award recognizes a private or public sector scientist in early stages of their career active in the field of plant breeding, who exhibits the ability to establish strong research foundations, to interact with multi-disciplinary teams, and to participate in professional societies relevant to their discipline. The 2015 recipient of the Early Career Scientist Award is **Dr. Jennifer Yates**, Global Soybean Breeding Agronomic Traits Lead for Monsanto Company. After earning her PhD in 2006, Dr. Yates went to work for Monsanto as a soybean breeder at Galena, MD. Dr. Yates is credited with developing or co-developing 86 soybean varieties in Maturity Groups 3 to 5 during the transition to the RoundupReady2Yield platform, facilitating net sales of \$1 billion. She established a protocol for marker-assisted selection and implemented changes to proprietary marker-tracking software. Her work in marker development and trait mapping led to 5 marker-related patents. Dr. Yates earned several internal company awards for accomplishments that include development of a pollen preservation technique and elucidating the role of the rhg1 paralog in conferring soybean cyst nematode resistance. In 2011, Dr. Yates stepped into her current role which involves responsibility for soybean disease and abiotic stress pipeline screening and discovery in the USA, Argentina, and Brazil. Her team is engaged in the prescriptive agricultural space, facilitating early selection for resistance to new pathogens, to enable growers to produce soybeans in a more sustainable manner. In addition, Dr. Yates coordinates Monsanto's internship educational program for post graduates and mentors other female scientists in crop improvement. With such an impressive list of achievements already in her young career, Dr. Yates is on course to make many more contributions to the plant breeding profession in the years ahead.

The 2015 awardees demonstrate exceptional problem-solving abilities and leadership abilities and model persistent dedication. These outstanding professionals inspire plant breeders everywhere.

Dr. Baenziger is the Nebraska Wheat Growers Presidential Chair and Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture at the University of Nebraska. He earned degrees from Harvard University (B.A.) in biochemical sciences and from Purdue University (M.S., Ph.D.) in plant breeding and genetics. Before joining the faculty at the University of Nebraska, he worked eight years on wheat and barley germplasm enhancement for the USDA-ARS at Beltsville, MD, and three years with Monsanto Corporation on wheat plant growth regulators and biotechnology. His research focuses on improving the agronomic performance and winterhardiness of winter wheat, barley, and triticale, and on developing new breeding methods. He has coreleased 46 cultivars and 36 germplasm lines or populations. His teaching and service activities emphasize graduate education and outreach in plant breeding and genetics. Dr. Baenziger is active in Crop Science Society of America and has been a Division Chair and President, as well as an Associate Editor, Editor, and Editor-in-Chief of Crop Science (their flagship journal). He is also active in the American Association for the Advancement of Science where he was elected Chair of Section O (Agriculture, Food, and Renewable Resources). He is the past Chair of the National Wheat Genomics Committee, and the past Chair of the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee. He is currently on the Board of Trustees for the International Rice Research Institute, on the Scientific Advisory Boards of BREADWHEAT, and is the Chair of the Hard Winter Wheat Improvement Committee and a member of the National Wheat Improvement Committee. He is an honorary professor of the Ningxia Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences and a Fellow of American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 2013, he received the Genetics and Plant Breeding Award from the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders. He has coreleased 46 cultivars and 36 germplasm lines or populations. He has over 250 publications and has received millions of dollars in grants to support his research.



Dr. Bernardo is Professor and Endowed Chair in Corn Breeding and Genetics at the University of Minnesota, where he conducts research on new ways of breeding maize and breeding maize for new uses. Most of his current work focuses on marker-assisted breeding. Dr. Bernardo obtained his B.S. degree in agriculture in the Philippines in 1984 and Ph.D. degree in plant breeding at the University of Illinois in 1988. He was formerly a research scientist with Limagrain Genetics and a professor at Purdue University. At Minnesota, Dr. Bernardo teaches graduate courses and short courses in plant breeding and in scientific writing. He has written two textbooks, entitled *Breeding for Quantitative Traits in Plants* and *Essentials of Plant Breeding*.



Dr. Yates was interested in the field of genetics at an early age, and pursued that interest to a B.S. degree in genetics at the University of Georgia, and, while there, refined that interest to the field of plant genetics. She attended the University of California-Davis for her M.S., originally intending to continue the crop genetic transformation research she had done at Georgia, but decided to switch to the field of plant breeding after taking a plant breeding course. Jennifer returned to the University of Georgia to obtain her PhD in Agronomy, specifically focusing on soybean breeding. Upon completing her degree, she joined Monsanto in 2006 as a soybean breeder in Galena, MD. She was a soybean breeder during Monsanto's transition from RR1 to RR2Y, and became an inventor and co-inventor on the many varieties that helped enable this full portfolio of RR2Y products. In late 2011, Jennifer accepted the position of Agronomic traits lead and relocated to St. Louis. In this role, Jennifer's team supports soybean breeders in North and South America, providing disease and abiotic stress characterization, as well as such discovery projects as yield loss assessments from disease and enabling rapid pathogen identification methods in the field. Jennifer was a recipient of a National Science Foundation pre-doctoral fellowship and a participant in a 10-week study abroad session in S. Korea funded by NSF. Since joining Monsanto, Jennifer has been inducted in the Monsanto Fellows program, is an inventor on several marker and variety patents, has received a Global Breeding excellence award, and has pursued outreach activities such as volunteering to teach science experiments in classrooms and starting a mentoring program for women in plant breeding.

