



## Dr. Loren John Hoffbeck

August 26, 1932 - April 15, 2022

Dr. Loren John Hoffbeck, most recently of Alpharetta, GA, passed away peacefully on April 15th, 2022, at the age of 89. John was born in Ortonville, MN, on August 26th, 1932, to Roy and Myrtle (Chaussee) Hoffbeck. Over his last few weeks, he was surrounded by a rotating cast of family members who held his hand, exchanged stories, and read poems to him.

The fourth of seven children, John grew up on a farm in Big Stone City, SD. It was here that he developed an early interest in plants and agriculture. During his high school years along with his brother Bill, John secured a loan from his grandfather to buy a tractor. John and Bill used the tractor to farm some of their grandfather's land and used the earnings to pay their college tuition.

John graduated from South Dakota State University, where he was a member of ROTC. After graduation, he joined the Army and trained to be a helicopter pilot. He served in the skies of Korea for over a year.

After the war, John attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, studying agronomy and plant breeding. It was here that he nurtured his lifelong passion for plant genetics, as well as where he met his future wife, Helen. They married in 1960.

After graduating with his PhD, John and Helen moved to Greeneville, TN,

where John began his plant breeding career with the USDA and the newlyweds started their family. Three kids and four years later, John joined Pioneer Hi-Bred and the family moved to Tipton, IN, where they would settle for the next five decades and add two more children to the family. It was here that John's childhood interest in crops and plants blossomed into an impressive career as a plant breeder, developing new corn inbreds and hybrids.

John spent the next 37 years rising through the ranks at DuPont Pioneer, from a Corn Breeder to a Research Fellow. In this time, he amassed over 50 patents for hybrid and inbred corn. Recognized as one of the most successful corn breeders in Pioneer's history, an award was named in his honor: the John Hoffbeck Million Unit Club Award. John "retired" in 2003, though he never stopped experimenting. He was still working on his mung bean experiments in 2020 when Helen and John moved to Alpharetta, GA. His accomplishments in corn breeding earned him the prestigious Lavoisier Medal for Lifetime Technical Achievement in 2003, DuPont's highest science award.

In his fifty-plus years living in Tipton, John became involved in the community. He was an active member of the Tipton chapter of the Kiwanis Club, helping to plant and nurture dozens of trees in Tipton City Park. He could be seen biking all over Tipton County, a passion he continued until he was 84 years old. He was a member of St. John the Baptist Church in Tipton, where five of his children and grandchildren were baptized, four of his children were married, and Helen played the organ at mass. He played bridge competitively in Kokomo and enjoyed endless Sudoku puzzles in his rocking chair.

John had a quick wit unmatched by most others. You could tell when he was joking when he flashed you a conspiratorial smile that would light up the whole room. Even throughout his last few weeks, John was cracking jokes to make family and hospital staff laugh.

John will be deeply missed by his surviving family members including his wife, Helen (Shea) Hoffbeck; his children, Joan (Tom) Dubnicka of Arlington Heights, IL, Mark (Sharon) Hoffbeck of Macomb, IL, Joe (Larina) Hoffbeck of Portland, OR, Amy (Brad) Reynolds of Roswell, GA, and Susan (Joe) Takacs of Naples, FL; his thirteen grandchildren, Emily Dubnicka, Michael (Ashley) Hoffbeck, Laura Dubnicka, Maureen (Cale) Heitmeier, Annie Dubnicka, Carmen Hoffbeck, Nathan Hoffbeck, Katie Reynolds, Mallory Hoffbeck, George Takacs, Megan Reynolds, Charlie Reynolds, and Henry Takacs; siblings, Bill Hoffbeck of Palatine, IL, Bob Hoffbeck of Minot, ND, and Barbara Hoffbeck Scoblic of New York City, NY; three step-great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews; and numerous friends. He is preceded in passing by his parents, Roy and Myrtle (Chaussee) Hoffbeck of Big Stone City, SD; and sisters, Dorothy Philomene Hoffbeck of Big Stone City, SD, Patricia Ann Johnson of Naples, FL, and Helen Lucille Allen of South Haven, MN.

A funeral mass will be celebrated at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Alpharetta, Georgia on Monday, July 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. followed by a private interment at Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, Georgia. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in John's name to the Alzheimer's Association or to the building fund at St. John the Baptist Church in Tipton, IN.

# Cemetery Details

## Cremation - Northside Chapel Crematory

12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA

# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

JUL 11. 9:00 AM (ET)

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church  
535 Rucker Road  
Alpharetta, GA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Loren John Hoffbeck*

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM



“ *I had the pleasure of knowing and working with John during my 15 years as a Pioneer corn breeder. Inspiring, witty, talented beyond belief are some of the adjectives that come to mind when I think of John. He had a unique way with words - he could deliver an insight with a challenge that not only told you that you needed to rethink something, but made you laugh out loud. Most of all, he was one of the kindest, most thoughtful people I've ever had the privilege to know. Rest in peace, John.*  
*Candy Gardner*

**Candy Gardner** - April 29, 2022 at 02:32 PM



“ *Ningxia Du's family purchased the Loved One Vertical Blanket for the family of Dr. Loren John Hoffbeck.*



**Ningxia Du's family** - April 21, 2022 at 05:06 PM

CH

“ John is quite arguably the most successful Pioneer corn breeder of all time. The company would not be where it is and what it is today without the great work of John and his son Mark. Here is a picture of my brother Chad Hoffbeck a Pioneer Sales Rep and me with John during a visit with him back in 2013. Thought and prayers go out to all of John’s family, extended family, and friends. -Curt Hoffbeck, Pioneer District Sales Lead - SW Minnesota



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Curt Hoffbeck - April 20, 2022 at 11:38 PM

RB

“ I had the privilege to meet John in Italy in 2006. He was visiting us to improve our knowledges with his great breeding experience. I personally enjoyed to meet him and to share some thoughts.

I keep a good memory: one man who dedicated his life to the family and to work with high ethic values. A great example for everybody. My prayer and thought for his family in this sad moment .

With appreciation,

Rosemarie Balestreri

Research Scientist/ Ops Leader Italy Research Center



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Rosemarie Balestreri - April 20, 2022 at 05:52 AM

JD

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Joan Dubnicka** - April 19, 2022 at 11:45 PM

TM

“ My thoughts and prayers are with Mark and his family regarding the passing of his father John. I had the pleasure of knowing and being a colleague of John for a few years before his retirement. It was always a treat to visit with John and particularly during those long car rides. He was always eager to engage in corn breeding conversations, but I especially enjoyed his personal side. John loved the planting season especially back in the day when plots were hand planted. He once told me that to get his wrists in shape to hand plant, he would go in his garage at home and repeatedly lift a heavy hammer alternating between hands to strengthen his wrists. He said it was especially humorous to his kids when they observed him in the act. I will always remember him telling me that story!! John was such a great role model and mentor to so many, and his influence was far reaching throughout Pioneer. What a great legacy along with the precious memories. RIP John.

*Tom Morgan  
Former Colleague*

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**Thomas Morgan** - April 19, 2022 at 04:40 PM

HS

“ John was a truly outstanding individual to share time with, especially in the field. He was always will to share his knowledge and experience. He was always looking for new ideas and how to be more productive. His contributions in terms of the germplasm he developed are enormous, only exceeded by the inspiration and example he set as an individual.



*Howie Smith*

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**Howie Smith** - April 19, 2022 at 01:13 PM

DB

“ I had the privilege of working with John during the last five years of his highly accomplished 37 years at Pioneer. I was a corn breeder based in Iowa, but enjoyed countless opportunities to work with John in the "mid-maize corn breeding group." Even more notable than John's highly accomplished contributions to Pioneer's hybrid corn products, he was a man of humility, unquestionable ethics, and unmatched wit.

*My thoughts and prayers are with John's family during this transition for all of them.*

*Today we took the opportunity to recognize John across the Corteva Seeds R&D community with the following message:*

*A career-long Pioneer Hi-Bred corn breeder, L. John Hoffbeck passed away on April 15, 2022. John started as a corn breeder for Pioneer in 1966, and after 37 years, retired as a DuPont Pioneer Research Fellow. He was undoubtedly one of the most successful corn breeders in the entire history of Pioneer. John continues to hold the record for the largest number of commercial units sold across many different hybrids and multiple continents tracing to a single inbred. John was known by his colleagues as a humble, highly professional, and relentless conversationalist about corn breeding research. He was incredibly engaging with his colleagues and endlessly creative about advancing corn breeding methods. John achieved Research Fellow title in the late 1980s, after convincing leadership that he really wanted to continue breeding corn, rather than becoming a research director, a position he already held for several years while continuing to be a corn breeder. John also received one of DuPont's most prestigious awards, the Lavoisier Medal of Achievement in 2003 for his pioneering corn breeding accomplishments. For those of us who worked closely with John, we have missed him from our working life since his retirement, and now will miss his presence from this world. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wonderful family during this difficult time of transition.*

*Dave Bubeck  
Research Director  
Corteva Agriscience*

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**David M. Bubeck** - April 19, 2022 at 12:00 PM

BI

“ *What a wonderful tribute to a man worthy of being so honored. I had the privilege of not only knowing John, but also of having an office next to his in the late 1980's in Tipton when I was still working in the Dept. of Cereal Seed Breeding. John's passion for plant breeding was ever present, and yet the humility and grace with which he carried himself in spite of his many accomplishments were also cause for so much admiration. My prayers and sympathies are with the family at this time of their loss. John will truly be missed by all who knew him!*

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**Bob Iwig** - April 19, 2022 at 11:23 AM

RS

“ *Rose-Lyne Schottler lit a candle in memory of Dr. Loren John Hoffbeck*



**Rose-Lyne Schottler** - April 19, 2022 at 11:12 AM