

William (Bill) J. Copeland – School 1960
Honorary Life Member 2012

Bill was born in Rosetown, Saskatchewan to George and Kay Copeland, farmers in the Rosetown-Elrose district of West Central Saskatchewan. He attended Windy Plain School, Rosetown Composite High School, and the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan, obtaining his degree in the spring of 1960. After graduation, Bill and his new bride, Alma Kingwell, returned to take up farming near Hughton, SK, where they have farmed ever since. Bill worked for Agriculture Canada for six years and the Department of Agriculture Economics in the College of Agriculture for an additional four years. In 1990 their son, Bob, and his wife, Pam, joined the family business, Copeland Seeds Ltd. Bill and Alma are blessed with three grandchildren, Ben, Jon, and Sara.

Throughout his career Bill has been a leader in adopting new practices, including the elimination of tillage for over 40 years. Bill was also a pioneer in the production of pulse crops, especially lentils. He worked closely with Dr. Al Slinkard and John Buchan in the development of commercial lentil production in Saskatchewan. Bill brought a farmer's practical reality to problem solving.

In 1969 Bill added a seed cleaning plant to his seed production enterprise. The plant was expanded in the 1978 to include the capability of cleaning and processing lentils. Bill was an innovator and communicated directly with growers and processors in Washington State to select appropriate cleaning and sorting machinery for Saskatchewan conditions. From a modest beginning, the plant has grown from one or two part-time employees to over 20 full-time employees. The business has been a finalist for the SABEX awards recognizing its excellent service.

Bill provided land free of charge to the University of Saskatchewan for crop research from the mid 1960's to the 1990's, and established an annual field day at his farm. In recognition of his many contributions to research and outstanding achievements in agricultural development, Bill was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2008 and the malting barley variety, CDC Copeland, was named after him.

Bill has been an active member of his community. He served as a councillor for Div. 5 of the Rural Municipality of Monet No. 257 from 1975 – 1982. He was a member of the local hospital board at a time when a new hospital was being built as part of a new Lodge. He was a member of the recreation board, contributed planning expertise and physically assisted with the building of a new rink. He served as a farmer representative on the senior grain transportation committee for many years. Bill has also been a strong supporter behind the Elrose United Church. Over the years, he has been involved in many organizations, including various commodity groups, the Agriculture Development Fund Board, and the Saskatchewan Agricultural Graduates Association. Bill has had a major impact on his community and western Canada, contributing to Saskatchewan's role as a major producer and exporter of grain and pulse crops.