

## **Grant D. Wood 1979 College 2022 Honorary Life Member**

Grant recently retired after 36 years as a faculty member at the University of Saskatchewan. He graduated from the College of Agriculture with a major in Agronomy and Horticulture, and a minor in Extension. His '96 MSc in Agricultural Extension set the foundation for a career dedicated to extending knowledge beyond the university, and helping students grow and develop as future leaders in the agricultural industry. He began his career at the U of S in what was then the Dept. of Horticulture Sc., then spent several years in the Extension Division and later moved back to the Dept. of Plant Sciences.

Grant has taught certificate, diploma, degree and graduate students, both in the classroom and via distance. He developed extension programs in all areas of agriculture for groups in Saskatchewan, across Canada, and around the world. Grant has received several teaching & extension excellence awards, and has been recognized by his professional organization, SIA, the U of S and other affiliations across Canada. Grant substantially changed or developed several courses in horticulture, agronomy and experiential learning. All his courses included an applied component, where students went beyond rote memorization and were provided with opportunities to apply their academic knowledge in meaningful ways.

Grant's Agric 445 (Experiential Learning in the Workplace) course drew the attention of the Royal Bank of Canada Future Launch initiative and led to a partnership with the university. The course became the foundation of the "Learn to Work, Work to Learn" program, which helps students develop transferable skills necessary for the workplace.

One of Grant's favourite courses was Urban Agriculture, which drew over 100 students per year from across the university. Urban Agriculture is a component of the much larger Urban Greening movement, which is the growing, preservation and maintenance of trees and other plants in the urban environment. Urban Greening fosters beauty, locally produced food, improved mental health of urban residents, and improved air quality. His Urban Agriculture course showed students how to grow food within city limits, explored local food security challenges, and examined the social, mental health, and physical benefits of gardening.

Grant coordinated the AgBio Rooftop Garden, a demonstration and research project where vegetables were grown in containers on the roof of the AgBio building on campus. The vegetables were grown in repurposed containers and nourished with compost produced on campus. Culinary Services and Louis incorporated all of the food grown on the rooftop into meals which were consumed by students and staff on campus. The project was known for producing food in "food feet" rather than "food miles", as compost to production to consumption and back to compost was less than a mile. The AgBio Rooftop Garden won a provincial sustainability award and was recognized nationally.

Another of Grant's initiatives was growing ceremonial tobacco for use in Indigenous ceremonies on campus. With the guidance of elders, the tobacco was grown, harvested and presented to Dr.

Jacqueline Ottmann, Vice-provost of Indigenous Engagement, for distribution on campus. With Grant's retirement, the growing of ceremonial tobacco was assumed by Dr. Stryker Calvez, Manager of Indigenous Education initiatives.

In retirement, Grant remains very involved in the Urban Greening movement, and the local urban food movement and can often be found promoting local food production to a wide variety of audiences. Grant continues to share his passion for urban greening, urban agriculture and food security through his volunteer work with inner city and immigrant families, helping them experience all the benefits of gardening and growing plants in the city.