Journal of the American Pomological Society 74(1): 59-60 2020

Dr. Esmaeil "Essie" Fallahi – 2019 Wilder Medal Recipient

Dr. Essie Fallahi, Professor at the University of Idaho and Research Director of the Pomology Program, based at the Parma Research and Extension Center, was awarded the 2019 Wilder Medal by the American Pomological Society for meritorious achievements in his illustrious career, which not only made "Contributions to Apple Physiology and Culture", but also more broadly for "Responses of Tree Fruits and Vines to Physiological and Genotype Variables and Contributions to the Science of Pomology".

Dr. "Essie" Fallahi was born in Taleghan, Iran in 1951 to a farming family, which had been growing fruits for many generations. He received his BS degree in Horticulture from Joundishapour University, Iran, where he ranked top among all graduates. As a young pomologist, Essie wrote two books in Persian "Farsi" in 1975, which are still considered the most comprehensive documents in Persian/Iranian on apple and pear germplasm. To write these books, he travelled to numerous mountainous and remote regions, villages and forests in Iran, and collected detailed information on hundreds of native apple and pear germplasm between 1970 and 1974.

Prof. Fallahi moved to the United States in the mid-1970's and read for his MS degree in pomology at Washington State University, USA, and obtained his MS in 1979. Following on from that he completed a Ph.D. at Oregon State University, USA in 1983. After working for 1½ years at OSU, as a faculty member focused on pomology, Prof Fallahi joined the University of Arizona, USA as an Assistant Professor and research leader of pomology, where he conducted and published several research projects on citrus rootstocks, fruit quality, mineral nutrition, and photosynthesis. He pioneered the introduction of low chill peaches to the desert climate of Arizona. In 1990, Prof. Fallahi joined the University of Idaho as an Assistant Professor and was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of Pomology and Viticulture in 1993. In 1997, Prof. Fallahi was promoted to Full Professor and Director of the Pomology and Viticulture Program at the University of Idaho. Over the last 37 years, Professor Fallahi has been a member of the American Society for Horticultural Sciences (ASHS) and the International Society for Horticultural Sciences (ISHS), as well as a leader of these organizations, by serving on numerous committees, and organizing symposia and workshops. He also served as an Associate Editor of ASHS for two consecutive terms (6 years). Prof. Fallahi served as President of the American Pomological Society in 2003 and 2004 and as Vice-President for the ASHS for 6 years. Prof. Fallahi became a Fellow of ASHS in 2006. He has also been on the editorial and advisory boards of several other national and international professional journals. Prof. Fallahi has published more than 250 articles, most of them as refereed Journal articles and book chapters. He has also published over 110 peer reviewed articles as proceedings, abstracts, and pamphlets. As an invited speaker, he has presented over 210 lectures nationally and internationally.

Prof. Fallahi has made numerous contributions to the fields of fruit germplasm, fruit nutrition, rootstock physiology, bioregulators, and blossom thinners. The use of pre-harvest mineral nutrients to predict apple fruit quality, and hydrogen cyanamide, Tergitol, Thinex, Amonnium thiosulfate (ATS), and lime sulfur for blossom thinning are among his research impacts. He was among the pioneers who researched the "retaining" effects of AVG, particle films, Apogee in apples. Professor Fallahi is the founder of Pomology and Viticulture Program in Idaho where he conducted long-term research on numerous rootstocks and or scions of apples, peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, pluots, wine grapes and table grapes as well as other alternative fruits. Among them, many are

now planted on a commercial scale. Thanks to Prof. Fallahi's research, the Idaho table grape is becoming one of the fastest growing agricultural industries in the Pacific Northwest and the Intermountain west region.

Among his many skills, Prof. Fallahi is also a teacher. He has advised several Ph.D. and MS students who are now leaders of horticulture in different parts of the world. Although Prof. Fallahi has always been a full-time researcher, he also presents Extension based talks and has given numerous lectures at field days to fruit growers throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond and has presented results of his experiments. Prof. Fallahi also teaches rootstock physiology, fruit production, pruning, and grafting to fruit growers in the Pacific Northwest and over 250 Master Gardeners every winter. The Annual Pomology Field Day that Prof. Fallahi sponsors every September attracts at least 900 people from the Northwest every year and is an extremely popular event.

Another honor that has been bestowed on Prof. Fallahi, was the Declaration of Dr. Fallahi's birthday (Sept. 13) as "Dr. Esmaeil Fallahi Day" by the Governor of Idaho, to show appreciation of Prof. Fallahi's lifetime contributions to the science of agriculture.

In summary, Prof. Essie Fallahi's professional career is one that exemplifies distinction and he remains committed to the tree fruit industries of the Pacific Northwest and worldwide through sustained dedication. He has demonstrated impact, through superlative scholarship that has advanced the discipline of Horticultural Science across multiple fruit cropping systems the world over, all the while remaining relevant to his local stakeholders. Furthermore, Prof. Fallahi is unequaled as both a scholar and a gentleman and is recognized by his peers both nationally and internationally as a world leader in pomology. Despite his numerous accolades and awards, he remains one of the humblest people you could hope to meet and he is a true ambassador for Pomology and Horticultural Sciences.

The Wilder Medal Award was presented to Prof Fallahi by Dr. John Clark at the American Pomological Society Annual Business Meeting in Las Vegas, NV on July 24, 2019. This article was prepared by Dr. Clive Kaiser of Oregon State University.