

2018 American Oat Workers Conference
Award for Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement



Frederic L. Kolb

Dr. Frederic L. Kolb, currently Cavanah Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics in the Department of Crop Science, University of Illinois, has been selected as a recipient of the Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement Award based on his career of extensive research in oat breeding and genetics and significant leadership contributions to the oat research community.

Dr. Kolb began his career in oats as a USDA-ARS geneticist in 1977 following receipt of his B.S. degree in Biology at Pennsylvania State University. He worked under the direction of Dr. Harold Marshall, USDA-ARS oat leader located at Penn State. There he undertook graduate work in Dr. Marshall's program in oat physiology and breeding, attaining his M.S. in 1983 and Ph.D. in 1987. With Dr. Marshall he co-authored several articles on oat involving traits of semi-dwarfness, hulllessness, quality, and winter-hardiness. This work resulted in numerous germplasm releases.

After obtaining his Ph.D. Fred moved on to the University of Illinois at Urbana, taking over the highly productive small grains program of Dr. Charles (Charlie) Brown. He aided in the registration of several cultivars originating from Dr. Brown's program followed by the release of nine highly successful cultivars over the years resulting from his own efforts, including the latest, Reins, registered in 2017. Under Dr. Kolb's leadership, the oat program at Illinois continued an emphasis on barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV) resistance in oats, along with other agronomic and quality traits. This BYDV work, in cooperation with

USDA-ARS pathologists Drs. Anne Hewings and Les Domier, resulted in release of multiple germplasm lines and cultivars with strong BYDV resistance. As part of the emphasis on BYDV resistance, his program through the years has generously provided BYDV testing for many other oat programs in the U.S. and Canada.

In addition to oat work, Dr. Kolb's small grains program at Illinois has involved major studies and release of numerous soft red winter wheat cultivars and germplasm lines emphasizing BYDV and Fusarium head blight resistance along with other desirable agronomic traits. These lines have had a significant impact in soft red winter wheat production.

At the University of Illinois, Dr. Kolb is a renowned teacher and student advisor, serving as Crop Teaching Coordinator since 2000 and receiving numerous awards for excellence in teaching and research. He presently holds the title of Jack A. and Marjorie S. Cavanah Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics. Dr. Kolb is a Fellow of both the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) and the Crop Science Society of America (CSSA).

Dr. Kolb has been a leader in the oat community and advocate for support of oat research over the years including serving as Secretary (1988 – 1990) and President (1990-1992) of NCR-15 (Oat Improvement), Chair of the AOWC (1998 – 2002), and Chair of CSSA Crop Registration Subcommittee on Registration of Oat (1993 – 2001).