

Wayne Leroy Haag, 68, passed away Monday, July 23, 2012, in Virginia. Wayne was born July 19, 1944, in Sebawaing. He was the third child of Goldie (Kohl) and Edward Haag.

After a successful 37-year career and living on four continents, most people welcome retirement with open arms. Wayne Haag was not most people. Mission-oriented since childhood, the only question was, where will I end up next?

Assigned to CIMMYT (International Center for Maize and Wheat) as a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in 1973, Haag first worked in Mexico alongside Dr. Ernest Sprague and the maize team, and later as a maize specialist representing the Center in Egypt, Turkey, the Middle East and the South American region, where he continued until leaving CIMMYT's employ in 1989. Since that time, and through the end of 2009, he worked with the Sasakawa Global 2000 program, an effort begun by Ryoichi Sasakawa and enlisting the participation and leadership of U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Norman Borlaug, to offer sub-Saharan African farmers technology options for improving their productivity and food security.

During that tenure, in addition to other responsibilities, Haag focused on and promoted quality protein maize (QPM) in 12 project countries in Sub Saharan Africa.

Recently retired from SG 2000, Haag showed no sign of slowing down and was not ready for full retirement. He hoped to continue to be involved in international agriculture development... What form that would take? He wasn't sure quite yet, but was in the process of exploring possibilities.

Wayne's missionary zeal and passionate and dedication about helping the poor farmers in the world were shown since young age as he served in the U.S. Peace Corps' first project in Guatemala during 1963-64, an agricultural extension project, at the decree of President John F. Kennedy. Inspired by that experience, he later pursued studies in agricultural development and science at Michigan State University and Pennsylvania State University.

Throughout his long travels and career, Haag has preserved close linkages with CIMMYT friends and partners and made sure every national maize program he worked with had a very strong partnership with CIMMYT. He used to say, "Even though I may have not been employed by CIMMYT for many years, it is almost as if I have never left."

In June of 2011, Wayne and his wife Maria were in Mexico to touch base with long-time co-worker, friend, and retired CIMMYT Distinguished Scientist, Surinder K. Vasal. Vasal and retired CIMMYT cereal chemist Evangelina Villegas shared the 2000 World Food Prize for their work in the 1970-80s to develop QPM, seen as a breakthrough in maize breeding by Haag and maize scientists around the world. During that visit to El Batán, he said he was certain the Center's work with QPM was not done. It was his sincere hope that CIMMYT would strengthen its activities in quality protein maize by increasing the numbers of maize breeders and concentrating on germplasm maintenance, improvement and development. Wayne believed CIMMYT can produce QPM open-pollinated varieties and hybrids that also contain enhanced levels of methionine, provitamin A, iron and zinc, and that seed would revolutionize global maize production and add tremendous value to the crop both in terms of human and animal nutrition.

Wayne will ever be missed and remembered for his care for the poor, food security and poverty alleviation in the world, especially in Africa, and for his invaluable contribution to Quality Protein Maize research and production.

He is survived by his wife, Maria Noelia, and his younger brothers, Loren (Phyllis) Haag of Manassas, Va. and Lloyd (Dee) Haag of Sebewaing. Also surviving are two sister-in-laws, Shirley Haag and Maryann Haag, along with numerous nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents and his older brothers Richard and Robert.

A memorial visitation will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, at Juengel & Mellendorf Funeral Home in Sebewaing.

A memorial service will take place Friday, Aug. 10, at St. John Lutheran Church in Kilmanagh. Visitation will be at the church at 10 a.m. until the time of service at 11 a.m.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society. Share a memory at www.jmfuneralhome.com.