

Dr. Wayne Hanna Inducted into ARS Hall of Fame

In Wayne Hanna's 35 years of research in forage and turfgrass breeding and genetics, he has improved the very surface of the earth we walk on.

So begins the recent citation awarding Dr. Wayne Hanna the highest honor of the federal agency he served for 32 years. On the evening of September 13, in a ceremony at the US National Arboretum in Washington DC, Dr. Hanna joined "the best of the best" when he was inducted into the Agricultural Research Service's Science Hall of Fame. The ARS is the research arm of the US Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Hanna retired from the ARS in 2003 and currently is Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at the University of Georgia. He remains active in the field of turf and ornamental grass breeding.

The citation that accompanied the ARS award recognized the scope and depth of Dr. Hanna's achievements, continuing:

His bermudagrass varieties have more vigor and resistance to pests and heat and need less fertilizer, pesticides and water. His bermudagrasses are widely used for forage and on golf courses, ball fields and lawns. He developed new pearl millets for forage that cost farmers less to grow while producing higher yields of high-quality pasture. Hanna's seminal research on apomixis (plant cloning) is directed towards producing true-breeding cultivars that retain superior characteristics and hybrid vigor in crops for which traditional hybridization is not economically feasible and in which apomixis does not occur naturally. He has also done vital work on gene transfer in millet. Hanna was based at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, Ga.

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