Early Career Members

Standing on the Shoulders of (Industry) Giants: Part 2

by Christopher Boomsma

“If I have seen a little further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”
—Sir Isaac Newton, 1676

This month’s Early Career Members article is a continuation of the Standing on the Shoulders of (Industry) Giants interview series first published in the April 2013 edition of CSA News. In the inaugural interview, I spoke with Dr. Marc Albertsen of DuPont Pioneer. If you did not get a chance to read a transcript of this dialogue along with the introductory comments I made for the interview series, please take a few minutes to do so. In addition to gaining insights from Dr. Albertsen’s remarks, a quick perusal of my month’s Early Career Members article is a continuation of the Standing on the Shoulders of (Industry) Giants interview series first published in the April 2013 edition of CSA News. In the inaugural interview, I spoke with Dr. Marc Albertsen of DuPont Pioneer. If you did not get a chance to read a transcript of this dialogue along with the introductory comments I made for the interview series, please take a few minutes to do so. In addition to gaining insights from Dr. Albertsen’s remarks, a quick perusal of the interview will provide context for the remaining interviews of industry “giants”.

For this second article, I am interviewing Dr. Paul Fixen, Senior Vice President at the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI). Dr. Fixen’s career path is certainly different from that of Dr. Albertsen. While Dr. Albertsen has spent nearly his entire career in the private sector, Dr. Fixen has had stints at both public- and private-sector institutions. Nevertheless, both individuals show key similarities including experience with public-private research collaborations, an affinity for philanthropic activities (whether personal or professional), and a strong record of professional success. Nevertheless, both individuals show key similarities including experience with public-private research collaborations, an affinity for philanthropic activities (whether personal or professional), and a strong record of professional success. Nevertheless, both individuals show key similarities including experience with public-private research collaborations, an affinity for philanthropic activities (whether personal or professional), and a strong record of professional success.

Fixen: Upon completion of my Ph.D. degree, I joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an Assistant Professor in the Soil Science Department with extension and research responsibilities in row crop soil fertility. Late in 1981, I returned to South Dakota State University (SDSU) to serve as an Assistant Professor of Plant Science with research and teaching responsibilities in soil fertility and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1986. In 1989, I was selected as Northcentral Director of the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) and in 1996 promoted to Senior Vice President with responsibilities as

Interview with Paul Fixen, Ph.D., International Plant Nutrition Institute; PFixen@ipni.net

Boomsma: To introduce readers to you and your accomplishments, can you please describe your education, work experience, and current employer and position?

Paul Fixen

At SDSU, I developed and undertook research on soil fertility and annual crops, developed videos, fact sheets on nutrient management topics, and gained research experience with a research team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A highlight of my research experiences was leading the role and requirements of chlorpropham in crop production in the central and northern Great Plains. Speaking engagements and responsibilities have included Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Germany, Mexico, Morocco, Qatar, Russia, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, and Venezuela.

I am a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America, and the Potash and Phosphate Institute. I served as Chair of the International Fertilizer Institute Board of Directors and have served on the Soil Science Society of America Science Policy Committee. I served as Chair of the ASA Crops and Chemicals Association Most Valuable Member Award, the SDSU Plant Science Graduate Faculty Leadership Award, the Great Plains Industry Award, the ASA Agronomic Society of America Journal, and the Soil Science Society of America Science Policy Committee. I served as Chair of the ASA Agronomic Society of America Jour-