

## Homenaje póstumo



In memory of:

**Richard L. Sawyer**

**1921 - 2015**

Dr. Richard L. Sawyer, a former resident of the Baiting Hollow area of Riverhead, died on March 9, 2015, in Raleigh, N.C.

Richard Sawyer was born March 17, 1921, the second of six children of Helen York and Burt Sawyer. He grew up on the family farm, which produced milk, vegetables, and timber. He entered the U.S. Army in 1942, and earned the rank of staff sergeant. He served his country bravely in World War II, and was wounded and captured during the Battle of the Bulge. He was held in Stalag 11B, and liberated while on a death march towards Lubeck, on the North Sea.

After the war, Richard graduated with distinction from the University of Maine, and earned a Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1953. He was a Cornell University Professor of vegetable crops, stationed at the Long Island Vegetable Research Farm in Baiting Hollow, from 1953 to 1966. During this time he was active in the Baiting Hollow Congregational Church and many other local organizations, and served on the Riverhead School Board.

From 1966 through 1972, Richard was professor of horticulture at North Carolina State University. In 1972 he founded the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru, and continued his work with potatoes at research stations located in 25 different countries, helping to feed people all over the world.

He contributed to over 150 scientific publications, served as a consultant in agricultural production around the world, and received numerous awards and honors for his work. Of his many accomplishments, he was particularly proud of the decades-long collection of potato genetic material now safely housed in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. This collection preserves thousands of species of potatoes (including one named for Richard)

with different traits and resistances to be of use to future generations in case of food crisis.

In his later years, Richard enjoyed working in his garden, feeding and watching birds, singing hymns from his childhood, nightly card games with his wife, and visits from his family.

Richard is survived by his wife, Norma; and son Richard Jan; along with his first wife, Jeanne; and daughters Polly Brown, Nancy Sawyer, and Sara Smith. He will also be remembered by nine grandchildren, Sarah Stoller, Colby Brown, Lee Ann Amado, Amy Smithgall, Christine Leonard, and Christopher, Gregory, Melanie and Caroline Smith, as well as four great-grandchildren, Abe and Julia Stoller, Will Amado, and Zen Brown. He was predeceased by one brother Albert, and leaves two brothers, Arthur and Malcolm; two sisters, Angie Bolotin and Blanche Robinson; and many nieces and nephews.

Richard truly left this a better world and will be remembered and missed for his compassion, charisma and commitment to feeding the poor. His ashes will be interred at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery. A celebration of his life will take place with family in New Sharon, Maine this summer.

#### Sawyer Family

El Dr. Richard L. Sawyer ciertamente dejó su huella en los paperos de América Latina.

Julio Gabriel  
Editor Principal