



From the
Secretariat

> In memoriam

Chad E. Finn (1962-2019)



Dr. Chad Elliott Finn, USDA-ARS research geneticist, Corvallis, Oregon, USA, died on December 17, 2019, from injuries suffered in a tragic accident while on vacation in Hawaii. He is survived by his wife Barb Fick, their sons Elliott and Ian Finn, his brothers Dan, Mark, and Bart Finn, his sister Beth Madden, extended family, and many friends.

Chad was an extremely accomplished scientist, had valued colleagues throughout the world, and believed in serving industry and professional organizations including the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS) and the ISHS. He was known for living life to its fullest, his boisterous, joyful personality, booming, infectious laugh, and enveloping, strong hugs. Chad had a clear passion for horticulture sharing this with students, industry, colleagues, and friends worldwide. All who knew him respected him and considered him a friend. Dr. Finn was born in Indiana and grew up in Maryland. He attained his Bachelor's degree in Horticulture Production from Purdue University (1983) and his M.S. and Ph.D. (1989) in Horticulture with a Minor in Plant Breeding from the University of Minnesota, with Dr. James Luby. He then accepted a position as an extension fruit horticulturist at the University of Missouri, Columbia. In 1993, he joined the USDA-

ARS Horticultural Crops Research Unit, as a Research Geneticist in berry crops. Chad was a perfect match for this unique position, part of the only government-university cooperative breeding program in the world. He served as the USDA-ARS breeder and I, as the OSU horticulturist partner, co-releasing cultivars. We had a very close working relationship in a cooperative breeding program that is over 100 years old. In his 26-year career, Chad developed what many consider the most diverse berry crop breeding program in the world with significant germplasm and cultivar development in blackberry, black and red raspberry, strawberry, and blueberry. He was part of multiple plant collecting trips in the USA, Canada, Ecuador, and China, searching for *Rubus* and *Vaccinium* germplasm that could provide useful traits. He released or co-released 51 new cultivars (21 blackberry, 11 red raspberry, 12 strawberry, and 7 blueberry). His first genetically thornless trailing blackberries, 'Black Diamond' and 'Columbia Star', are major cultivars in Oregon. 'Columbia Star' is also grown in Europe. His early-season 'Obsidian' blackberry is grown for fresh market in Oregon and Europe. Chad recently released 'Galaxy', 'Eclipse', and 'Twilight', the first to combine eastern traits and western trailing ones, for late-season fresh market. In strawberry, 'Tillamook', with high yield, large berry size, and high picking efficiency, dominates the area planted in Oregon. 'Vintage' and 'Kokanee' primocane-fruiting raspberry are grown throughout North America. His most recent commercial blueberry 'Mini Blues' is unique in producing very small, exceptionally-flavored fruit for a machine-harvested processed niche market. The impact of his cultivars to nurseries and growers in the northwestern region of the USA was over US\$450 million for the last 10 years. He worked with colleagues of diverse disciplines (e.g. molecular biologists, flavor chemists, plant pathologists, virologists, horticulturists, breeders) to evaluate a wide range of traits and worked actively to develop molecular markers for traits of interest. He shared

knowledge with peers through a prolific record of journal articles and presentations at conferences. Chad also loved sharing his expertise with industry and students. He was active in undergraduate and graduate student education and was lauded as an exceptional mentor for students and junior scientists.

Dr. Finn was a leading authority on berry crop cultivars and breeding, receiving over 50 international speaking invitations. He also hosted visiting scientists from 27 countries and 30 USA States. Chad was active in ISHS serving on the Scientific Committees for *Rubus* and *Ribes*, *Vaccinium*, and Strawberry symposia since 2001. He co-convened (with me) the IX International *Vaccinium* Symposium (2008) in Corvallis, Oregon and the II International Berry Fruit Symposium (2014) in Brisbane, Australia. He was an active member of the American Pomological Society, serving on advisory committees and the Executive Board. He co-edited the blackberry and hybridberry (1999-2013) and strawberry (1999-2009) Fruit and Nut Cultivar Lists. He was active in the N.A. Raspberry and Blackberry Growers' Association (NARBA) and the N.A. Strawberry Growers' Association, serving on the research committee and board of the latter.

In recognition of his innovativeness and the impact of his research, Dr. Finn received a USDA-ARS Technology Transfer award, was elected a Fellow of ASHS in 2010, received the American Pomological Society's Wilder Medal and a Federal Laboratory Consortium Far West Regional Award, and was honored as a Distinguished Alumnus by Purdue University's Department of Horticulture. In March 2020, NARBA will honor Chad posthumously with the Distinguished Service Award.

The world has lost an outstanding berry crop breeder and an amazing colleague and friend of many. Chad will be long remembered for his accomplishments, generosity, big heart, and bright personality. He will be greatly missed.

*Bernadine C. Strik,
Oregon State University, USA*