

Gary Petersen (2007)



Dec 10, 2008: Ridge and Valley Soils

Dec 12, 2012: A Look at a Penn State World Campus Class on the Web

Sept 9, 2015: Soils Around Your House: Factors for Siting & Managing Your House

Nov 13, 2019: Soils: Why are They Important to You. Your Community, and the World

I was reared on a dairy farm near Luck, Wisconsin. Luck was a famous town at that time because it was the Yo-yo Capital of the World. It was the home of Duncan yo-yos. I did publish a book about growing up on the farm and it is titled *The Best of Luck*. During the summers I worked at the Stokley Canning Factory to accumulate some funds for my college expenses. I attended the University of Wisconsin where I obtained B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Soil Science. It is also where I met my wife Mary at a fraternity beer supper. We got married in 1964 and came to Penn State in 1965. We settled into State College and had a daughter and twin sons.

Upon graduation, I joined Penn State as an Assistant Professor. In 1970 I was appointed Co-Director of the Office for Remote Sensing of Earth Resources. I taught courses in Soils and Land Use Planning. My research interests were primarily in the areas of soil interpretation, land use planning, geographic information systems, and remote sensing. Most of my research was funded by NASA, USDA, EPA, DOE and NSF. I was the lead scientist for a research group that developed the elevated sand mound system, which is the most common system in Pennsylvania for the disposal of septic tank waste.

I was selected to be a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and Soil Science Society of America. I was fortunate to be a recipient of several outstanding teaching and research awards. One of the significant awards was the President's Award for Excellence in Academic Integration.

Mary and I spent a sabbatical leave at the University of Wisconsin in Madison Wisconsin and at the Australian National University in Canberra Australia. During my academic career we were able to travel to six different continents.

I served as President of the Soil Science Society of America and as the Vice-President of the International Union of Soil Sciences. I retired from Penn State as a Distinguished Professor of Soil and Land Resources. Mary and I recently moved from a house that we had built and lived in for 45 years. We left the house and moved into Foxdale.

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