

Tom Mack was born in 1942, and was raised on the family farm south of Kranzburg, SD.

Tom started high school in 1956 where he was mentored by his family friend and Ag/FFA instructor Keith Keltgen. Keith helped to cultivate a special interest in agriculture for Tom. He especially enjoyed welding and fabricating, and judging livestock on the FFA teams. In 1960 Tom graduated from Waverly HS.

Tom entered the Army National Guard at Ft Leonard Wood in June 1960 where he learned some good lessons about hard work and responsibility to others.

Tom moved to Olivia in January of 1961, following Keith Keltgen to begin a career in agronomy at Trojan Seed Company. Concurrently, Tom also attended South Dakota State University and the University of Minnesota, where he earned a degree in Agronomy.

In 1977, Tom left Trojan Seed with Keith Keltgen and others to form Keltgen Seed Company. As Vice President of Research, Tom directed the development of proprietary inbred lines and hybrid varieties sold by Keltgen Seed. Tom was not only a successful scientist though. He was also a successful salesman. He sold the strengths of the hybrids he'd developed and selected, to a devoted and energetic team of dealers. In their first year of business they posted over 1 million dollars in sales.

In the 52 years Tom spent as a corn breeder, he achieved great success in the corn industry by holding firm to the values he'd developed over the years. He valued the responsibility he had, to find the best hybrids available, and communicate how to best place them on customers' farms. He knew that the success of Keltgen Seed, for his part, rested solely on his ability to put strong high yielding hybrids on farms. Hard work and long hours never dissuaded him from fulfilling that goal.



In August 2013, Tom retired from Dow Agrosience. Although he held numerous other titles throughout his career; Vice President, Director of Research, Northern Corn Research Coordinator, Senior Research Scientist... he ended his career the way it began, as a corn breeder. While some breeders work hard just to develop one commercial inbred line in their career, Tom developed over twenty.

Tom's success was not due only to his sense of responsibility to his business partners and customers, but also to a deep devotion to his family. He had learned what it meant to be a part of a close and happy family while growing up in South Dakota. And so in 1966, he married Anne Morgan, who remains the love of his life. He and Anne raised 4 children. A strong and close-knit family life is how Tom maintained balance in a career that can command so much time and energy from a person. Like so many truly happy people, Tom knew that time spent with family inspired him to take care of business, and likewise taking care of business helped him to best enjoy his family.

He developed and inspired agronomists and corn breeders locally and throughout the corn-belt, including his son Chris. His insight, dedication, and positive attitude was contagious for those who worked with him, and so there remains a little bit of Tom hustling down corn rows in nurseries and test plots, in seed labs and offices burning the midnight oil to analyze plot data. So even though Tom has hung up his nursery apron, there's a little part of him still out there, marching on to develop great corn hybrids.