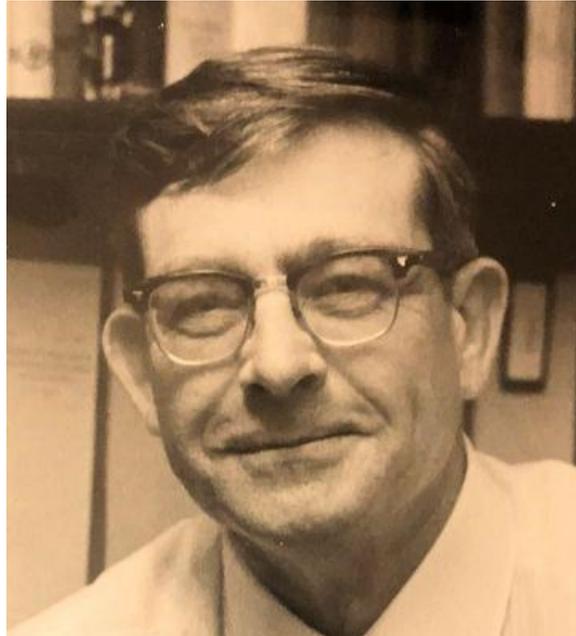


# Warren Stiles, Ph.D.



Warren Stiles was born on his maternal grandfather's farm in Green Creek, NJ on June 16, 1933 and farming continued to be part of Warren's life until his death on July 28, 2019. He grew up on a farm, studied agriculture in college, became a nationally-known expert on tree fruits, and continued to farm in retirement. Warren always enjoyed being in the field as opposed to an office. He spent much of his time visiting growers across the state and collecting data in the field. For 20 years after his retirement, Warren grew all sorts of fruit, berries and vegetables at his family's farm in Dias Creek, NJ. He was one of only a few growers of beach plums, a native plum found along the East Coast. Dr. Stiles was a teacher, advisor, extension educator, researcher and church organist. He was devoted to his family, his students, and to the growers with whom he worked.

Warren earned a BS degree in Farm Crops from Rutgers University in 1954 and an MS degree in Horticulture in 1955. He received his PhD degree in 1958 from Penn State University with a thesis entitled, "Effects of Growth Regulating Chemicals on Apparent Photosynthesis of Apple Leaves." Warren's professional career consisted of the teaching positions at Rutgers University as Assistant Professor of Pomology from 1958-1963; University of Maine as Extension Fruit Specialist and Associate Professor of Pomology 1963-1969 and Professor of Pomology 1969-1980; Cornell University as Associate Professor of Pomology 1980-1985 and Professor of Pomology 1985-1999. He served as Department Extension Leader for many years and taught a course on Orchard Management.

Warren was known throughout the country for his expertise on tree fruit nutrition. He made serving the tree fruit industry his priority, often dropping everything to drive to a farm to help a grower who was having problems. Warren introduced the tree fruit industry to techniques for

assessing the nutrient status of trees to optimize production. He pioneered techniques to deliver nutrients to trees in precise amounts. He taught growers the importance of considering micronutrients in their fertility programs. Warren conducted research on weed management, cold hardiness, pruning practices and growth regulators. When problems would arise within the tree fruit industry, Warren would conduct experiments to find solutions then deliver that information to growers – often in person. In 1982, for example, records show that Warren spoke at 36 meetings and conferences across the State of New York. Warren was given a “golden tire” upon his retirement – a symbol of the many thousands of miles he accumulated each year while attending meetings, giving tours, and making farm visits. Warren commanded the utmost respect from growers, students, colleagues and administrators because he was not afraid to “tell it like it is.” His honesty, dedication, compassion and hard work endeared him to all who knew him.

A former graduate student writes, “I decided to pursue graduate studies in Pomology when I was 35. The opportunity to work with Warren Stiles for my MS and PhD projects was a primary factor in my choice of Cornell. I wanted a graduate advisor with broad mastery and experience in all the fundamental aspects of fruit production, and a profound understanding of the rural environment and family farms. Dr. Stiles offered a complete mastery of orchard systems based on a lifetime of experience as well as applied science. He was a demanding but supportive mentor, with a tough-guy exterior (accentuated by constant plumes of cigarette smoke) but with a big compassionate heart.”

After retirement in 1999, Warren returned to the farm and continued making contributions to agriculture such as serving on the Cape May County Agriculture Development Board Farmland Preservation Program; County Board of Agriculture, of which he was a member of the Board of Directors; the Beach Plum Association; County Cooperative Extension Advisory Council; County Master Gardeners Program, County Technical School Horticulture Program Advisory Committee; NJ Farm Bureau; and the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station Board of Managers. He was also a member of the American Society for Horticulture Science, American Pomological Society, International Society for Horticultural Science, Northeast Weed Science Society and the NJ State Horticultural Society. Even in retirement Warren was a sought-after speaker at grower meetings.

One orchardist writes, “Scarcely a day passes as I work in my own orchards when I don’t recall something that Warren might have said about a situation or strategy to be resolved. Warren lives on as a mentor in my daily existence!”

Warren lived a full and abundant life, raising a family, contributing to the health of the tree fruit industry, mentoring students, and contributing his time and talents to his church and community.

Warren is survived by his wife, Sally, his four children, three step-children and several grandchildren.