

## IN MEMORY OF LATE PROF. FRANK J. STEVENSON

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Prof. Frank J. Stevenson passed away, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in Mesa Arizona, at the age of 93. Frank was borne on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1922 at Logan Utah. For a detailed CV see NL 31 and [http://www.humicsubstances.org/documents/Biographies/life\\_history\\_Stevenson.pdf](http://www.humicsubstances.org/documents/Biographies/life_history_Stevenson.pdf).

IHSS and all its' members share the feeling that one of our prominent humic substances (HS) scientist has left us and we all share a major loss to our science and community. Frank's dear family should know that we are with them sharing their sadness and loss.

Dr. Stevenson was a Professor of Soil Chemistry, at the Department of Agronomy, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Stevenson conducted a prominent career being a pioneer in exploring innovative approaches to the study of (HS) and was for more than thirty years among the most influential in pushing forward the frontiers and guiding the directions of soil organic matter research. His contributions have not only greatly increased our understanding of these complex organic substances, but also established a firmer foundation to form strategies for management of this valuable resource both to support agricultural production and to protect the quality of our natural environment. Specifically, Dr. Stevenson's contributions combine both physicochemical and biochemical approaches to the characterization of soil organic matter. His pioneering studies on the fractionation and identification of specific nitrogen compounds, such as amino acids and amino sugars in soil organic matter, have not only led to a fuller appreciation of the composition of soil organic nitrogen containing compounds, but also paved the way to characterize more clearly the processes involved in nitrogen cycling. These fundamental contributions have been essential to better management of various sources of nitrogen in crop production and maintenance of environmental quality. His early studies on the use of hydrofluoric acid as an extractant for soil organic matter led to better appreciation of the importance of clay-organic complexes in soils and waters. These findings subsequently provided the basis for a better understanding of the fate and behavior of pesticide residues in soils and for a more rational assessment of pesticide residues impact in the environment. An additional major component of Dr. Stevenson's research was dedicated to heavy metal binding by HS and to methodologies of determining stability constants for the bonds being formed. These complexes were shown to be of major importance in both agriculture and the environment.

Being a university professor, a highly skilled writer and author of two major scientific books, numerous book chapters and original papers published regularly in top quality scientific journals, Dr. Stevenson helped to guide the career development of a whole generation of soil chemists and biochemists, by his teaching, mentoring and publications. His books have been widely used as "must read" texts in advanced level courses. Due to his outstanding contributions Dr. Stevenson has been recognized as an honorary member of IHSS and as a prestigious laureate of the Wolf Prize, granted to him in the Parliament of Israel, in 1994.

Prof. Frank J. Stevenson has been well known among his colleagues at the University of Illinois as well as worldwide, as a kind respectable person, and a wonderful family member sharing life with his wife Leda Stevenson and children.

IHSS members worldwide do send condolences to Dr. Stevenson's family members and his community in Arizona.

*Yona Chen  
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