

IN MEMORIAM - JAMES W. (JIM) COULTER

James W. Coulter passed away on Friday, April 17th. Jim was a wonderful, loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend to many.

Jim was born in Lockport, NY, in 1928 and grew up with brother, Roger, at the Coulter homestead on North Ridge Road. His “schooling” started in a one room school house on North Ridge. He attended Wilson High School and graduated in 1949 from Cornell University, where he was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. He married Shirley Nagler in 1950 and they began life together in Lockport. They had three children: David, Debra and James.

Jim worked for Chevron Chemical selling agricultural chemicals for 35 years, starting in western New York and ending with a territory across the East Coast. He and Shirley lived in Medford, NJ, for seven years, after which he retired to the family homestead in 1978 and started Coulter Farms, growing fruits and vegetables. Coulter Farms has grown steadily from its small start over the last three decades. Jim especially enjoyed working with cousin and Farm Manager Jeff Hall over the past 20 years.

Jim was active in the Emmanuel United Methodist Church, serving as head usher across several decades. He was a past president of the Niagara County Farm Bureau and received the NY Farm Bureau Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award in 2005. He also served on the Cooperative Extension Board, the Niagara County Farmland Protection Board, the Wilson Conservation Club and the Town of Cambria Zoning Board. He is a past member of the Masons and the Kiwanis Club. Jim enjoyed his family and friends, hunting and fishing, and the farm. He drew his energy from farming and the people he met along his path.

Jim played an active role in the berry industry at both the state and national levels. A member of the New York Berry Growers’ Organization from its beginning, he always had an active leadership role in the organization. As board member Jim was always looking forward to address future needs of the berry industry in NY and came to meetings prepared to share good ideas on advancing the industry. He recognized the vital need that research plays in the industry and always contributed generously to the association’s research fund. Jim was an excellent collaborator in berry research, supporting both monetarily and by participating in on farm research and demonstration trials. As part of his operation Jim wholesaled strawberry plants to local growers, always contributing a portion of the sales to the research fund. Jim was always very positive and encouraging about the industry and often called fellow berry farmers during the season to check how things were going. Fellow growers noted Jim to be very easy to get along with and talk with and that he will be greatly missed among them.

Jim was also a member of the North American Strawberry Growers’ Association and hosted a western NY stop for their 2007 annual summer tour, providing a tractor and wagon rides for on-farm tours of his operation and refreshments for NASGA members.

Jim was always available to contribute to the discussion on farm topics from the size of the berry crop to migrant labor issues. He was involved in early conservation practices like no-till corn and trickle irrigation and enjoyed tinkering with each new plant variety or farm technology. He was known for maintaining a personal and genuine relationship with his suppliers, customers and competitors, extending from his chemical sales days to his farm career and his personal life.

Jim is survived by his wife, Shirley; sons David and Jim (Penny) Coulter; and daughter, Debra (Doug) Jangraw. He has five grandchildren Rebecca (Jon) Ophardt, David Jangraw, Saer Coulter, Audrey Coulter and Wyeth Coulter. He is also blessed with sisters-in-law Shirley Coulter and Carolyn Nagler, four nieces and nephews, and a large extended family and group of friends that he loved dearly.

Expression of sympathy may be sent to: Shirley Coulter, Coulter Farms, 3871 N. Ridge Road, Lockport, NY 14094.

Donations in memory of Jim may be made to the Emmanuel or North Ridge United Methodist Churches, the New York State Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education, the Western New York Land Conservancy or a charity of your choice. Or join Jim in his efforts to support the NYS berry industry and send a contribution to their research fund.