The Section of Plant Breeding & Genetics in the School of Integrative Plant Sciences (formerly Department of Plant Breeding & Genetics, formerly Department of Plant Breeding & Biometry), and the Office of International Programs in the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences lost a dear friend and colleague with the passing of Loy Van Crowder at the age of 95 on March 1, 2015 in Cornelia, Georgia.

Professor Crowder started life in the little North Carolina town of Polkville, where he was born on February 5, 1920 into a rural farming family. Although he worked in the fields from an early age, his father having a mule-drawn plow cut down to suit Loy’s size as a small boy, he excelled in school where he joined the Future Farmers of America (FFA) club. He won first place in speaking locally and then at the state FFA meeting as well. He graduated at the early age of 16 and left the farm for Berry College near Rome, Georgia. This happened in 1937 in the midst of the Great Depression and Loy had no money for a college education. He chose Berry College because it offered education in exchange for work at the college. He worked in a number of areas including the dairy, grounds, and tree trimming. It was at Berry that Loy met and courted the love of his life, Eloise Cooper from Tignall, Georgia.

Loy graduated in 1942, when the U.S. was involved in World War II, and he wanted to join the war effort. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was accepted for bomber training in B-25 twin-engine bombers. He married Eloise in 1943 after finishing his basic training. He trained to fly the B-25 bomber and, perhaps as a precursor to his later teaching career, he was so successful that, after receiving his wings, he was sent as a B-25 instructor to Turner Field near Albany, Georgia, where he remained for most of the war.

Following the war, Loy decided that he wanted to follow a career in agronomy -- a case of the “boy leaving the farm, but the farm not leaving the boy.” He and Eloise moved to Athens, Georgia in late 1945 so that Loy could pursue an M.S. degree in agriculture at the University of Georgia. While working in Griffin, Georgia, at the University of Georgia agricultural experiment station, Loy and Eloise started a family with two closely spaced children, Judie and
Van. After two years in Griffin, Loy was encouraged to seek a doctorate degree. He moved the family to Ithaca in 1949 to study for a Ph.D. in plant breeding at Cornell University. In 1952, he completed the degree and returned to the Griffin experiment station. After three years there, Loy accepted a position with the Rockefeller Foundation to work in Colombia, as the Director and Research Coordinator for the Foundation’s Agricultural Program. He moved the family to Bogota in 1955 where he took up his post. Suzi was born in 1958. After eight years, Loy and Eloise decided to move the family back to the U.S., so in 1963 Loy accepted a position as International Professor of Plant Breeding at Cornell, one of the original 10 international professorships established by then Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Loy worked at Cornell for 17 years, taking sabbatical leaves and assignments in many countries including Japan, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Nigeria and Costa Rica.

During his time at Cornell, Loy took a sabbatical leave at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB) and is well remembered there for his scholarly contributions and by the former plant breeding field staff as “the American professor who drove as fast backwards as forwards.”

Loy retired from Cornell as a Professor Emeritus in 1979 and accepted a position with the Rockefeller Foundation in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, from 1980 until 1984 when he retired from the Rockefeller Foundation and took a position as an adjunct professor at the University of Florida. Loy worked as a consultant in many Latin American, African and Asian countries until he retired completely in 1996, moving to Cornelia, Georgia to be close to family living nearby.

Loy was internationally recognized for his expertise as a plant breeder and in particular as a tropical forage breeder. He was a dedicated supporter of and contributor to international plant breeding, which was the hallmark of his career. He wrote numerous journal articles and several books, one of the better known being *Tropical Grass-land Husbandry* written with a colleague in 1982. He showed exceptional leadership in training graduate students to deal with plant breeding problems of the tropics and developing countries. He influenced many U.S. students to pursue careers in international plant breeding, and helped prepare international students for leadership positions in their respective national programs, and in some cases at the highest level of university administration and cabinet-level government positions.

Loy was an accomplished teacher and contributed significantly to the curriculum in plant breeding. When the Division of Biological Sciences was created, the introductory course in Genetics was reassigned from Plant Breeding to the Division. Later it became evident that another introductory course in breeding and genetics was needed in the College. The responsibility for developing this course was shared by the Poultry Science and Plant Breeding departments. Loy accepted the responsibility of developing and teaching the plant section of the new course until his retirement. The course is still offered and is popular with Cornell undergraduates.

Professor Loy Van Crowder was a man who started life with little, worked hard and gained a lot, and along the way, did a lot of good for a lot of people.

Loy is survived by his wife Eloise of Cornelia, GA, daughter Judi (Fred Wendt) of Alto, GA, son Loy Van, Jr., B.S.’74-MPS’77- Ph.D. ‘89 (Patricia Parrera) of Blacksburg, VA, and daughter
Suzi (Randy Hall) of Augusta, GA; sisters, Linda Spangler, Fredericksburg, VA, and Carole Lattimore, New Melle, MO; grandchildren, Melissa Tymchuk, Frank Wendt, Mary Catherine Hall, Betsy Hall, and Julietta Crowder; six great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother Gene Crowder, sister Ruth Wilson, grandson Ryan Perry Crowder, and granddaughter Anna Eloise Hall. His grandson, Nathan Crowder died November 25, 2015.

W. Ronnie Coffman, chair; Robert L. Plaisted, Judy Singer