

Mannon E. Gallegly, Jr.



Dr. Mannon E. Gallegly, Jr., was born in Arkansas in 1923. He earned his B.S. degree from the University of Arkansas and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin. He came to West Virginia in 1949 to work at the West Virginia University as an assistant professor at the WVU Agriculture Experiment Station and has lived here ever since.

His academic achievements have made notable contributions to agriculture in West Virginia and around the world. In particular, he is known for his work in breeding tomatoes and potatoes resistant to late blight, and for his associated expertise on the *Phytophthora* species.

In 1963, he released the “West Virginia ’63” tomato from his breeding program, commemorating the state’s centennial. The new tomato was a hit with home gardeners and has remained popular because of its unparalleled disease resistance and excellent fruit quality. Seeds from the tomato have been deposited

in the USDA’s national seed bank for preservation.

He developed several breeding lines of potatoes with similar disease resistance. Those lines were used by the USDA National Potato Breeding Program to produce varieties that were released for commercial production.

In the academic field, Dr. Gallegly is well-known around the world as one of the leading experts on *Phytophthora*, a genus of fungi that causes late blight. The organism was responsible for the Irish potato famine, and its effects on numerous other plant species from strawberries to oak trees.

He has been a significant mentor to numerous graduate and undergraduate students, many of whom have gone on to have notable careers of their own. He is the author or co-author of more than 60 publications, including a 2008 book titled *Phytophthora: Identifying Species by Morphology and DNA Fingerprints* that is a widely used taxonomic key used to identify nearly 100 harmful species of *Phytophthora* by morphology and DNA fingerprint.

He is a fellow of the American Phytopathological Society, a member of the Potato Association of America and a member of the Tomato Genetic Cooperative. He received the Campbell Soup Award for his work with tomatoes, and served as the chair of the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences at WVU for 16 years. He retired in 1986, but continues to conduct research projects as professor emeritus.