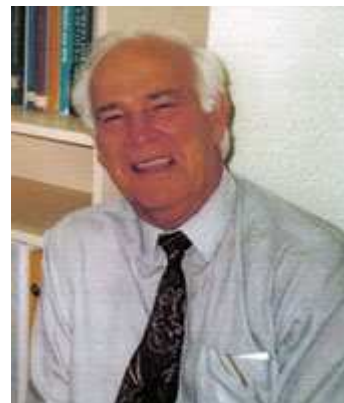


## Vale Jeff Ladd



It is with deep sadness that we learned that Jeff Ladd, aged 78, passed away in Adelaide on 22 July 2009.

As well as being an internationally renowned soil scientist, Jeff has been a friend and mentor to CSIRO staff for over 50 years; he retired in 1995, after 41 years, and became an honorary post-retirement fellow for a further 10 years.

For his achievements in soil science, Jeff was awarded the prestigious Prescott Medal of Soil Science by the Australian Society of Soil Science in 1993, and honoured with a lifetime achievement medal presented to him at the Enzymes in the Environment Conference in Grenada, Spain in 1999.

Jeff's scientific work over the years represents a major contribution to world soil science and agriculture, specialising in microbiological and enzymic activities of soils, the biochemistry of soil organic matter, and the cycling of nitrogen and carbon in cereal agroecosystems. He has an impressive publication record, which included being honoured with a 'Citation Classic' in 2004 (top 10 most frequently cited publication in the science literature as measured by the Science Citation Index).

Born in Adelaide in 1931, Jeff obtained his Bachelor of Science (Hons) 1st Class in 1952 and Masters of Science at the University of Adelaide in 1954. He was appointed to CSIRO Division of Soils as a Research Officer in 1954 to study biochemical processes in soils. His early work concerned the oxidation of hydrocarbons in soils and its possible significance for oil exploration. His studies of bacterial decomposition of the phenolic compounds that characterise humic substances in soils, led to his recognition as a world leader in this field and being appointed Senior Principle Research Scientist in the Division in 1974. He was Head of the Soil Biology Section from 1987 to 1989 and also Program Manager of Soil Nitrogen and Organic Matter.

Jeff moved from his studies of humic materials in soils to examine the pivotal role of microbial biomass in the turnover of soil carbon and nitrogen. He built up a small team whose studies, using  $^{14}\text{C}$  and  $^{15}\text{N}$  to follow carbon and nitrogen through the economically important wheat-soil system, earned him a well-deserved place among the world leaders in this field, as well as in his former field of humus biochemistry and soil enzymology.

Jeff was a highly modest, motivated and innovative scientist. Scientists throughout the world will miss a colleague from whom they learnt much and a kind and thoughtful friend.

Jeff is survived by his wife Margaret, two sons and four grandchildren.

The CSIRO Alumni has set up a tribute page in Jeff's honour. You are invited to read the

tributes from colleagues and friends or write your own comments and reminiscences which the Alumni will pass on to his family. The tribute page can be found on [AxON – The CSIRO Alumni Online Network, Vale Jeff Ladd](#).