



Lonnie O'Neal Ingram

July 1, 2020

Dr. Lonnie O'Neal Ingram, who pioneered genetic engineering of bacteria for production of fuels and chemicals from inedible plant materials, passed away on June 25, 2020 at the age of 72 in Charleston, South Carolina. Dr. Ingram served as a Professor of microbiology at the University of Florida's Microbiology and Cell Science Department (part of the Institute for Florida Agricultural Sciences) in Gainesville, Florida from 1972 through 2017, retiring as a Distinguished Professor. His scientific accomplishments were recognized by his induction into the National Academy of Sciences (2001), the American Society for Microbiology and the Society for Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology. In addition, he was honored by various organizations both in the US and abroad, including the US Department of Agriculture (Distinguished Service Award; 1993). An engineered bacterium developed by his research team for efficient conversion of sugars normally found in plant materials into ethanol was awarded landmark US patent 5,000,000 in 1991. This was one of their many patented microorganisms and processes for production of ethanol as a fuel and chemicals for production of renewable plastics. Many of these microorganisms developed by his team were licensed to the industry. He presented his research to groups around the world and advised the State of Florida and President George W. Bush on renewable energy issues in 2007. His success came through grit and imagination. The students he trained over the years can be found all over the world carrying on the tradition he established at his lab. At work, he was an inspiration and guiding light to his

peers. The bacteria and yeasts he studied kept growing through weekends, but he would take his young sons along to the lab on the weekends and treat them to milkshakes and cheeseburgers (a fair trade). He loved working with his team at the lab, and he loved to fish and travel with his family, especially to Crescent Beach. Following retirement, he resided on Anastasia Island in St. Johns County and Charleston, SC.

Dr. Ingram was born in Greenwood, South Carolina, and was raised in Cheraw, SC by his mother, Jean Weeks Ingram and his adopted father, Thomas Belk Ingram, an attorney and state magistrate. He graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1969 and two years later was awarded a Ph.D. degree in 1971 by the University of Texas.

Dr. Ingram married Vickie Webb, with whom he raised three children before her passing in 2003. Dr. Ingram later married Nancy Draffin of Charleston, South Carolina.

He is survived by his loving wife, Nancy, his children and their spouses, Thomas (Traci) of Jacksonville, Kenneth (Viktoria) of Brandon, FL, and Erin Ingram of Quechee, VT, and their children, Claire, Peter, Jake, Elisa, Maura and Eliot. He is also survived by his brother, T. Belk Ingram (Vickye) of Ponte Vedra Beach, his step-children, Scott Draffin of Tega Cay, SC, Katherine Draffin of Charleston, and their children, Savannah, Sophia and Kati.

In lieu of flowers the family requests memorial donations be made to the University of Florida Department of Microbiology & Cell Science to create a scholarship in Dr. Ingram's honor. Gifts may be made online at <https://bit.ly/nealingram> or by mail (payable to UF Foundation, memo Ingram Memorial F001305) to UF Foundation, PO Box 14425, Gainesville, FL 32611.