



Wilda Hagstette Martinez

OCT 4, 1929 - JUL 24, 2011



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Martinez, Wilda H. passed away peacefully on July 24, 2011 at home. Mrs. Martinez was born in New Orleans, LA, and graduated from Sophie Newcomb Memorial College in 1950. Mrs. Martinez retired from the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in 2007 as the ARS North Atlantic Area Director after working for ARS for 53 years. Upon beginning her career with ARS in 1954, Mrs. Martinez served as a Research Scientist at the Southern Regional Research Center where she made significant contributions in the areas of cottonseed biochemistry and alternative uses of cotton byproducts. In 1975, she joined the ARS National Program Staff where she served as National Program Leader for Marketing and Processing of Field Crops, and later as Associate Deputy Administrator for Agriproducts and Human Nutrition, until 1997 when she became Director for the North Atlantic Area. Mrs. Martinez received numerous awards throughout her career, including the USDA Superior Award in 1972 and 1982, The Federal Woman's Award in 1975, two Presidential Rank Meritorious Awards in 1997 and 2005, and several Honor Awards. Mrs. Martinez was published in many scientific journals, both national and international, and was a long time member of the American Chemical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She was greatly loved and respected by her family, friends, and colleagues. Mrs. Martinez is preceded in death by her parents, William J. Hagstette Sr. and Hilda Wax Hagstette. She is survived by her daughter, Lyra M. Erath; siblings, Esther H. Jordan, Elizabeth Walker, Stephen (Natalie) Hagstette, and William J. (Elena) Hagstette Jr.; grandchildren, Amanda Erath (Jacob Schlesinger), and Charles G. Erath IV.

Family and friends are invited to join together for a celebration of Mrs. Martinez's life on Sunday afternoon, July 31, at 15 Zion Street, Kenner, LA from 2-5 pm.



Obituary

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In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Foundation – Hospice and the New Orleans Museum of Art.



Tribute Wall

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PZ

Professor Zheng Zhang posted:

It was a deep grief in hearing the passed away of Wilda H.Martinez ,she had a rich, full life, and dedicated every of her efforts to public affairs, I was so impressed with her remarkable contribution on improving the joint China-US TCK Research, now all the fond memories of 15 years cordial cooperation had became heartily condolences to Wilda H.Martinez family from her Chinese friends.

March 6 at 9:59 AM

AL

Alice H. Lichtenstein posted:

My condolences to Ms Martinez's family. Wilda had a way of making each person in a crowded room feel like they had her full attention. She was a truly lovely person.

August 25 at 2:25 PM

JB

Jeffrey Blumberg posted:

The Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University has achieved much of its current success because of the unceasing support, strategic thinking, and political savvy that Wilda brought to our table at several critical junctures. Wilda was a 'tough cookie' and I admired her for knowing what she wanted for her programs and making it happen through very hard work and the remarkable force of her will. Wilda was clear, straightforward, and respectful when working with research scientists. She always loved learning about our latest research results. Wilda explicit in her high expectations of everyone - and never allowed herself a lower standard. I have missed Wilda since her retirement from the USDA and know many of my nutrition colleagues feel the same way.

August 25 at 3:54 AM

KC

Kathryn Conti posted:

My condolences to the family of such a wonderful person. Peace be with you all. Ms. Wilda Martinez, what can I say about such an amazing and remarkable woman? I knew her so briefly compared to many of her ARS family, but she always made me feel welcomed and appreciated. She impacted my life in my first year working with ARS, more than she knew. I had never met a woman more humble and powerful in such a peaceful/quite way - always working for betterment of science. A woman, never seeming to step into the spotlight but always behind the successful endeavors, she was a true pioneer for women in leadership. Always willing to stand firm in what she believed, always standing behind her decisions. A true supporter and leader in one. I will always admire her in so many ways. What can I say about such an amazing woman... She'll be greatly missed and I will always remember her. ~Kathryn

August 9 at 6:00 AM



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SD

Sandra Dubois posted:

My deepest sympathy to Wilda's family. She was a true inspiration, and a breath of fresh air to everyone, especially women. I remember her laugh was infectious. What a dynamo! Wilda Martinez has been sorely missed since she retired as our North Atlantic Area Director.

August 8 at 6:32 AM

TW

Tom And Jill Whitaker posted:

I was saddened by the news of Wilda's passing. As an ARS scientist, I worked with Wilda over a period of 35 years. During that time, I grew to admire and respect her organizational and leadership skills. She was an amazing lady and I will miss her very much.

August 3 at 5:50 AM

JH

Jan Hanover posted:

My deepest sympathies to the family for your loss. Wilda was a one of a kind person. I learned much from her in the 10 years we worked together. I so admired her intellect, strength, compassion and sense of humor. She possessed many gifts and I consider Wilda a great role model of mine, as she was to many. A truly remarkable woman! Sincerely, Jan Hanover

August 2 at 8:03 AM

SB

Susan Bartley posted:

So very sorry to hear of the passing of one great lady.

August 1 at 2:57 PM

IK

Ivan W. "Buddy" Kirk posted:

When your heart is empty, filling it with happy memories can help. We have pleasant memories in working with Wilda in her tenure with USDA, Agricultural Research Service, and Southern Regional Research Center. I was saddened to hear of our losing her. Please know how sorry I am. iwk

August 1 at 7:30 AM



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RF

Roger W. Fuester posted:

The employees at the USDA-ARS Beneficial Insects Introduction Research Unit, Newark, DE, join me in expressing our condolences at the passing of Wilda Martinez. We appreciate the leadership and support she provided our laboratory while she served as Area Director of the North Atlantic Area. Sincerely, Roger W. Fuester Biological Science Collaborator

August 1 at 5:14 AM

JL

Jane Hagstette Lacoste posted:

My Sympathy to the Family. I am so happy that Joel, E.B.and I had a visit with Wilda and Ester a couple of years ago. It was so enjoyable. Love to all, Jane

July 31 at 1:27 PM

GZ

Gan-Yuan Zhong posted:

My heartfelt sympathies and condolences go to Wilda's family. Wilda brought me to the USDA-ARS Grape Genetics Research Unit in Geneva, NY in 2007. I was fortunate enough to get to know her and worked under her guidance for about six months before she retired. Even though the period of time we worked together was relatively short, I received much needed support and guidance from her for developing my research program and career in the USDA-ARS. I thank her for all she did for me. Wilda was not only a respected leader, but also a great supervisor and mentor. Wilda will be sorely missed.

July 30 at 6:46 AM

LL

Li Li posted:

My sincere condolences on your loss. Mrs. Martinez will be truly missed and remembered by us.

July 30 at 4:13 AM



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HZ

Howard Zhang posted:

It is indeed a surprise to learn from colleagues in Windmoor, PA, that our beloved colleague, Mrs. Wilda Martinez passed away. This indeed is very sad news. Wilda was part of the decision with John Cherry that brought me to the USDA Agricultural Research Service Eastern Regional Research Center in 2004. I was so impressed with her broad knowledge and her strong determination. She is an excellent example of what an Federal employee should be, loyal, hard working, smart, honest and personable. I thought about visiting with her during IFT in New Orleans this year in June but I apparently missed the opportunity. I wish to say good-bye to Wilda and pass my condolences to her family and relatives. Howard

July 29 at 1:10 PM

AB

Antoinette A. Betschart posted:

I extend my heartfelt sympathy to Wilda's family. For over 40 years I had the privilege of knowing, working with and sharing a cherished friendship with Wilda. She was one of the most gracious, creative, and committed persons I have ever known. Her dedication to ARS, the scientists and research were unparalleled. I deeply treasure the friendship which we shared and will continue to keep Wilda and her family in prayer.

July 29 at 11:49 AM

CT

Cynthia And Kevin Taylor posted:

Wilda was a wonderful woman. I miss her companionship at the Abita Museum. She was always kind and encouraging to Kevin. Her time here was well spent.

July 29 at 10:14 AM

GS

George Somkuti posted:

It was a privilege to work with Wilda and I am grateful for the years we shared as colleagues. Wilda was and outstanding leader and an honest, supportive, and generous friend. I offer my deepest sympathy to her family and friends. George Somkuti

July 29 at 8:59 AM



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SL

Steve Lehotay posted:

I wish to add my condolences to Wilda's family. She had a very sharp mind and was an exceptional leader in ARS. I remember being intimidated by her tremendous presence in my first encounter with her in the mid-1990s. I was given advice to let her vent first if needed, and then calmly try again, but I never had to do that because she was always appreciative and supporting of my work. In one meeting, it struck me that I'd never seen anyone so intently focused on what I was telling her about a work issue. She had great awareness and knowledge, and she always had the best interests in mind when she made recommendations and decisions. She had unwavering support of the science, and used her influence to make a difference for the better.

July 28 at 9:51 AM

CO

Charles Onwulata posted:

Wilda was a great advocate for science and was very fair and supportive to scientists like myself. My condolences to her family and dear friends.

July 28 at 4:43 AM

DG

Donita Gibboney posted:

My heartfelt sympathy to all family members in the passing of Wilda. Having Wilda as our North Atlantic Area Director of the Agricultural Research Service for many years, I can speak to what a wonderful, intelligent woman she was. I always admired her and know what a loss this must be for the family. My sincere condolences.

July 28 at 4:13 AM

HF

Harr Farrelly posted:

I first met Wilda when we were both protein chemists, she at SRRS and myself at ERRC. Both as a scientist and an Administrator she recognized and promoted excellence in science in ARS. She will be missed as a colleague and friend.

July 27 at 12:27 PM



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JS

Jean Silvasy posted:

Wilda was a remarkable woman and leader. I was in the Agreements section when she became Area Director for NAA, then moved to IT. Wilda was supportive, considerate, and kind. I liked knowing she was back at home in Louisiana and I am very sad that she is gone. In the years since she left us, she has routinely sent us a King cake for Mardi Gras. It felt like she never left us. Now she has. My sincere condolences to Wilda's family for your great loss.

July 27 at 12:09 PM

JC

John P. Cherry posted:

My prayers and heart felt thoughts are with those closes to Wilda. Wilda and I go back to 1976 when I replaced her as Research Leader at the Southern Regional Research Center, ARS, USDA. She moved on to become a key program leader in ARS. Over the years I cherished our research discussions. I continually learned from her and grew in my career. We became an Executive team when she accepted the position as the North Atlantic Area Director, ARS, in Wyndmoor, PA, where I was Director of the Eastern Regional Research Center, ARS, and reported to her. I will remember her always not only as a working partner, a peer, a supervisor and a collaborator, but also as a friend. Wilda left us way to soon and I (in fact all of us who worked with Wilda)will sorely miss having the oppotunity to be with her again in her/our favorite place, New Orleans, LA, discussing our careers together and the great times we had developing and leading successful research programs in ARS, USDA. John P. Cherry.

July 27 at 12:02 PM

TW

Tim Widmer posted:

My deepest sympathies. Wilda was very helpful in my move here to Fort Detrick, which was greatly appreciated. She will be missed.

July 27 at 12:00 PM

CS

Christopher Sommers posted:

Wilda was a classy lady and I enjoyed working with her. I could always depend on her to be honest and fair. I will miss her. My condolences to her family and friends.

July 27 at 11:48 AM



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ST

Shu-I Tu posted:

Wilda was a great person who deeply cared her follow colleagues. While she occasionally might be very tough in her tone of voice, she always reserved a very considerate spot for everyone in her heart.

July 27 at 10:55 AM

WS

William Schneider posted:

I wish you all the best in what is undoubtedly a difficult time. Dr. Martinez was a fearless advocate of USDA-ARS science, and a powerful in shaping the beginning of my career in science. Sincere thanks to her and my condolences for her family.

July 27 at 10:54 AM

KR

Kathleen Rajkowski posted:

It was with sadness that I read of Wilda's death. She was the Center Director at Eastern Regional Research Center, where I met her. Wilda Martinez was a great influence in my career and guided me in the research program I am in currently. I have fond memories of her and thank her for all she did for me.

July 27 at 10:53 AM

PS

Paul Stodghill posted:

My sympathies and prayers go out to the Martinez family. Mrs. Martinez was a very effective administrator, but more importantly, she was a great person to work with. We will miss her.

July 27 at 10:46 AM

BD

Bonnie DiSalvo posted:

To Wilda's Family, Wilda was a wonderful person and I am glad I had the chance to work with her. She was a pioneer in this organization, and was well ahead of her time. She will be sorely missed. Sincerely, Bonnie DiSalvo

July 27 at 10:45 AM



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DN

Darleen Nelson posted:

My condolences go out to the family of Mrs. Martinez. She was a wonderful lady that had more knowledge than many will ever have. She was a fair person and a good leader. I was lucky to have known her for the 4 years before she retired from ARS.

July 27 at 10:44 AM

CW

Candace Wilson posted:

Wilda provided excellent leadership within ARS for many years and supported the scientists but also worked well with the administrative personnel. She's remembered fondly as an excellent leader, great woman and the overall wonderful person that she was. Her legacy will be the science she supported and the memories of the good times shared.

July 27 at 10:43 AM

DA

Dr Zaheer Ahmed posted:

May God give courage to the family for their loss.

July 27 at 10:42 AM

JP

John Phillips posted:

I first met Wilda in the late 70s when she was on the National Program Staff in Beltsville, MD. Our paths crossed infrequently until she assumed the position of Area Director for the North Atlantic Area in Wyndmoor, PA in the late 90s. She served for 10 years in that position until her retirement in 2007. She was my direct supervisor during that period. She was an excellent leader and a warm, kind and understanding "boss". Her leadership and intelligence have been sorely missed since her retirement. Wilda led a long and fruitful life with many well-deserved honors. She will be fondly remembered by many within ARS and USDA and by many outside of government. My condolences to her family and many friends and associates.

July 27 at 8:56 AM

EW

Ed Wickham posted:

Wilda was a great Center Director for ERRC. I missed her leadership.

July 27 at 7:24 AM



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CL

Cheng-Kung Liu posted:

I am very sorry to heard this bad news. Wilda is a great person. She did a lot of good things to ARS. We really miss her. Cheng-Kung Liu ARS, ERRC, BOAC

July 27 at 7:17 AM

KS

Kymbrilee Snipes posted:

My deepest sympathy to the Martinez family for your loss

July 27 at 6:00 AM

KB

Kwesi Boateng posted:

Farewell, great lady you broke several barriers and achieved a great deal; may you rest in peace. It was a privilege working with you.

July 27 at 5:43 AM

MR

Mila Aldema Ramos posted:

Please accept my deep sympathies and condolences for the demise of Wilda. May she rest in peace.

July 27 at 5:14 AM

SI

Susan landola posted:

So very sorry to hear of Wilda's passing. She was a great lady and an inspiration to all of the women at the ARS. My condolences to the family.

July 27 at 4:53 AM

DC

Donald Comis posted:

I fondly remember working with Wilda over the years.

July 27 at 4:29 AM



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JG

Jennifer Woodward-Greene posted:

Wilda, thank you for your work and dedication to science, and for your support and inspiration to others (like me) in the field. My deepest sympathy to family and friends.

July 27 at 3:22 AM

DC

Darrell Cole posted:

I enjoyed knowing Wilda from 1980 to now and enjoyed working with her many years as an ARS-USDA employee. Wilda held strong convictions and gladly enjoyed a strong debate. She was a major driver of ARS research for many years and was a well respected member of the Administrators Council. She will be missed by her colleagues.

July 26 at 3:12 PM

MN

Marva Nesbit posted:

She was an amazing woman. I am deeply saddened. My sympathy to her family.

July 26 at 2:33 PM

IC

Ingrid Schmidt Charlton posted:

To Wilda's loving family, If you carry all the happy times in your heart, perhaps it won't seem so heavy. Sharing in your sorrow, Ingrid

July 26 at 12:33 PM

SH

Sandy Miller Hays posted:

Wilda was a wonderful person and a tremendous friend to me, and I learned so much from her in our years of working together. I remember our laughing together over so many things--it's incredible to think that she's gone. I will miss her so much--she was a very special person in so many ways.

July 26 at 11:55 AM

DM

Denise Madden posted:

Wilda was a wonderful woman that I admired and respected and loved. She will be missed by so many especially me. Lovingly, Denise

July 24 at 3:09 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Wilda by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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