

2022 Kermit Coulon, Sr. Outstanding Service Award 61st Annual St. James Agricultural Tour

The 2022 recipient of this prestigious award was born and raised in Lockport, La. As a son of a sugarcane farmer, he grew up knowing the crop that he would later spend his career working to improve. At an early age he learned the importance of sugarcane varieties and the work it takes to grow a crop of cane. As the oldest son he shared the responsibility of chores around the farm with his three brothers and three sisters. He graduated from Central Lafourche High School in 1978.

He furthered his education by attending and graduating from Nicholls State University in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in plant science. While at Nicholls, he was active in the Nicholls Ag Club and Delta Tau Alpha National Honor Society. He continued his education at LSU and went to work in the sugarcane breeding program with Dr. Freddie Martin. While at LSU, he completed a master's degree in sugarcane breeding.

In 1990, he joined the sugarcane breeding effort at the USDA-ARS in Houma, then under the direction of Dr. Ben Legendre. Our recipient's knowledge of varieties flourished over his 32 year career at USDA to become an expert in all aspects of the sugarcane breeding program. He now leads all off-station testing efforts for the breeding program at USDA including the nursery, infield, and outfield trials. This job requires continuous assessment of fields throughout the season across 22 locations throughout the sugarcane growing region of Louisiana and the coordination of planting and harvesting outfield test plots at each of these locations.

I think we can all agree that the three way partnership between USDA, The LSU Ag Center and the American Sugarcane League has been instrumental in providing many high powered varieties for our Louisiana sugar farmers. Our recipient was integral in his role at USDA as one strong leg of this three-legged stool. During his time in the Louisiana commercial breeding program, our recipient saw the release of every sugarcane variety since the release of CP 74-383, a total of 29 varieties. This included the release of LCP 85-384, HoCP 96-540 and now L 01-299. He has also authored or coauthored at least 64 publications during this period.

Please now join me in awarding **Mr. Edwis “Tee Ed” Dufrene** the **2022 Kermit Coulon, Sr. Outstanding Service Award** for RESEARCH and EDUCATION to the Louisiana Sugarcane Industry this 27th day of July, 2022.