

THE CAMPBELL FAMILY: AN ASHS HORTICULTURAL DYNASTY

The American Society for Horticultural Science is a sizable international organization comprised of impressive minds across numerous scientific disciplines. Within ASHS, and occurring commonly, like-minded groups have been able to come together. Sometimes groups are pre-formed and become members together. But rarely has it been demonstrated to our membership that embodying a horticultural life can be truly a family affair—at least not to the extent that the Campbell family has shown us.



When Carl Campbell became a member of ASHS back in 1959, he could not have known he was beginning a family legacy of care and accomplishment that is now into its third generation. All he must have been able to see at the time was that he intended to maximize his own impact in a field deserving his dedication and that our organization was a means for him to advance himself professionally.

But he started something that we trust has instilled in his lineage a sense of pride. Without question, he has helped instill that feeling within ASHS. We are proud to be able to claim him as having been one among us.

Carl Campbell was born in Decatur, Illinois, but spent most of his working life in Florida.

He saw something crucial and beneficial to be done as a guardian of tropical plants—primarily fruit-bearing plants—initially centered around where he lived in Homestead, Florida. He graduated from Illinois State University before earning his masters at Kansas State University. From there, he went on to earn a PhD from Purdue University. Throughout his education, he honed an understanding of the importance and diversity of tropical fruit.

Beginning in 1960, Carl taught at the University of Florida's Tropical Research and Education Center. While there, his research included specifics on propagation, pruning and spacing, mineral nutrition, irrigation, and pest and disease control. All of which led to improvements in production systems for growers in Florida and elsewhere. His focus on tropical plants in Florida led to his gaining an intimate awareness of similar plant life everywhere.

He worked as a consultant in projects in various developing countries including Bolivia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela.

Carl Campbell became an ASHS Fellow in 1986 and was later awarded the honor of ASHS Outstanding International Horticulturalist, both of which are handed out sparingly. He was a very active and notable participant, and not just with our organization. At one time, he was President of the Florida State Horticultural Society, and he served as Secretary–Treasurer of the Interamerican Society for Tropical Horticulture (the successor of the Tropical Region–ASHS). He was clearly a man with a lot to give, and he gave that.

Carl's wife, Becky Campbell, who shared Carl's passion, experimented methodically with cooking with tropical fruit. She shared extensively her knowledge with ASHS, FSHS, and ISTH members on the topic of cooking and drying tropical fruits.



Together, Becky and Carl had five children, and their appreciation for and love of horticulture had a recognizable impact on their next generation. Their son Rob grew up to become a prominent figure in the nursery industry in Miami-Dade County. And their sons Craig and Richard pursued careers as horticultural scientists.

Craig kicked off his collegiate pursuit at Florida State University with an eye toward marine biology, but later moved to University of

Florida. He was drawn to their Horticulture Department and majored in Fruit Crops. He remained at UF to earn an MS focusing on postharvest biology of tropical fruit crops.

Almost immediately, he was offered a position with Brooks Tropical Fruit Company in Homestead, and became their first Quality Control Manager. While being promoted within Brooks, Craig engaged opportunities to collaborate extensively with his alma mater and with USDA on fruit fly quarantine programs, fruit treatment protocols, and many other postharvest biology studies. He was accomplishing important, notable research that served to benefit the entire fruit industry.

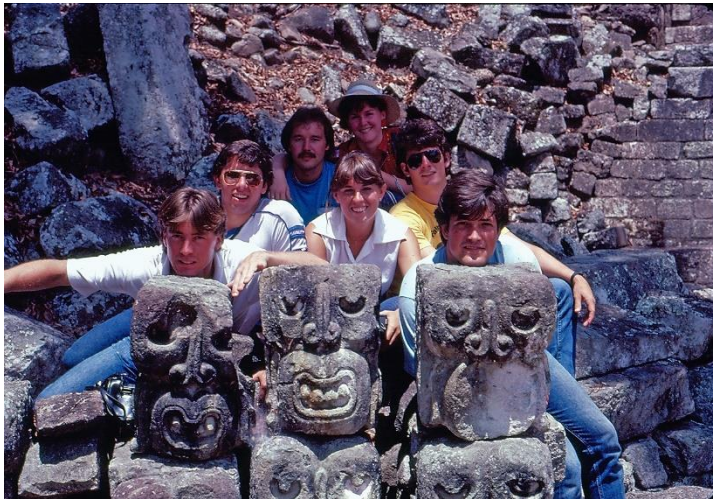
His pivotal work soon caught the eye of EcoScience Corp, which brought Craig onboard as their Director of Research and Development. While at EcoScience, he proved his worth by helping to develop fruit and vegetable coatings and a new biofungicide for fruit packinghouses.

The Abbott Laboratories Pharmaceutical Company lured Craig to their employ as a Field Research Scientist in their agricultural chemicals business, where he continued his career developing biorational pesticides for fruit and vegetable growers. It's a crucial, ecofriendly endeavor that he continues today as the Senior Field Research and Development Scientist for Valent USA, based near Orlando, Florida.



His current research, perhaps what we might be able to term “his life’s work”, involves specialty crops and the development of all types of biorational pesticides. Among other things, he takes experimental compounds and develops them into EPA-registered and approved crop protection products. Craig proves to be another Campbell leaving betterment in his wake.

Craig has been an active member of ASHS since 1986. As his father had done before him, he has given tirelessly of his time and expertise to ASHS by assuming positions on numerous committees, councils, and professional interest groups. He helped our organization as ASHS Membership Representative. He has long participated on the Industry Division Advisory Council and served on the ASHS Board of Directors as the Industry Division Vice President.



The younger brother of Rob and Craig, is Richard Campbell. He earned a PhD in Pomology from Virginia Tech and has been an active member of ASHS since 1987. Richard worked for many years at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Miami. Due in part to his upbringing, he was no stranger to tropical fruits. In fact, quite a bit of his life’s journey allowed him to walk admirably in his father’s footsteps.

Richard served as a plant collector, Curator of Tropical Fruit, and Director of Horticulture for the botanic garden. He

proved himself to be a valuable resource as a consultant in tropical fruit throughout his career and has worked extensively throughout Africa, Asia, and the American tropics. For more than 25 years, he served as the Executive Secretary for the Interamerican Society for Tropical Horticulture.

For the past several years, Richard has worked for Ciruli Brothers, LLC, where he achieved the nickname “Mister Mango” by personally developing the Offshore Mango Program. Many ASHS members will know that Ciruli Brothers, LLC, is distinguished in the field of cultivating and distributing fruits and vegetables in the US, Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru. But Richard’s concentration on mangos, existing varieties and hybrids, has elevated him into the status of being one of the foremost authorities on this popular fruit. Impressive.

If fact, a love of and/or focus on mangos has permeated his marriage and family life. Richard’s wife Cecilia, the Horticulture Teacher at the Biotech Botany Magnet School in Miami–Dade County, has an MS in Mango Postharvest. Together, they have their own mango orchard in Homestead, where they grow and market one-of-a-kind mangos that they have collected, selected, or have bred over the past 30 years.

Cecilia and Richard have three sons (Daniel, Ian, and Thiago), all of whom have been active with their family’s orchard and business since they were old enough to help.

And this brings us to the third generation of the Campbell dynasty within ASHS.

Craig’s son Sean is a fairly recent member. He is the first of the new generation to count himself among our ranks. After earning his BS and MS in Food Science from the University of Florida (the latter degree concentrating on Sensory Sciences), he is now a doctoral candidate at UF, soon to become yet another Dr. Campbell. His current focus involves medicinal and beverage crop production in the state of Florida.

Sean comes to us as living evidence of the benefit family influence can have upon a person. Sean has grown up surrounded by horticultural excellence and is stepping forward to continue the trend.



As another Campbell who has taken it upon himself to already begin giving back to ASHS, Sean joined the Graduate Student Activities Committee and, among other things, has provided crucial assistance with and became one of the judges for the Graduate Student Poster Competition. At the 2018 Annual Conference in Washington, DC, he was the moderator for the Strategic Career Planning Forum.

Sean was selected to present his research at the ISHS Second World Beverage Conference in Xi'an, China, earning the society's Young Minds Award for Best Oral Presentation. That distinction motivated his invitation to the Crop Physiology and Climate Change Short Course held at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Not even done with his education, Sean is not merely riding the coattails of his family name. He is doing what Campbells seem to do. He is advancing the knowledge and practical application of his chosen field.

Sean's younger cousin Thiago, Richard's youngest son, is also walking his family's familiar path and has become their most recent member of ASHS. Like Sean, Thiago is pursuing his education at the University of Florida, and is majoring in Horticultural Sciences. He will begin the masters program in the fall. Thiago has been a member of FSHS since he was in high school. He has published with FSHS several times and has delivered papers as a junior author in ISHS and ISTH. He already knows that he wants to work in the area of fruit crops, perhaps work improve the current level of production and initiate innovative ideas that could help to revitalize certain aspects of the overall industry.

Both Sean and Thiago arrived at the door of their educational tract with experience and inherent knowledge that should enable them to best take advantage of their academic journeys and lead them toward generating a satisfying degree of impact.

The phenomenon of the Campbell family dynasty is perhaps a beautiful anomaly. Every member of their extended family, even those not included within our membership, is marked by achievement. They seem to guide themselves to live purposefully. Whether that was a decree handed down by Carl and Becky, it is certainly observable in a prima facie and grin-inducing manner.

Carl and Becky Campbell served themselves up as pure examples of how to behave. But so has every member of their family since then. They have founded upon an admirable formula that every Campbell seems duty-bound to embody.



Perhaps the rest of us could clue in and follow suit.



