

Statue honors Borlaug legacy

By ROD SWOBODA

IOWA native and famed agricultural scientist Dr. Norman Borlaug was commemorated with a memorial statue unveiled at the U.S. Capitol on March 25 in Washington, D.C., as Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad headed a large group of Iowans on hand for the official ceremony. The new bronze statue of Borlaug is in Statuary Hall. About 300 people gathered for the event.

Iowa's congressional delegation was present, along with students, teachers, business leaders, state officials and others. The state installed the bronze statue of the agronomist and humanitarian, whose work saved millions of lives worldwide. The unveiling was on the 100th anniversary of Borlaug's birth. He died in 2009. His achievements as a plant breeder earned him the title "Father of the Green Revolution."

After growing up on a farm near Cresco in northeast Iowa, Borlaug went on to dedicate his life to breeding better varieties of wheat, and working with farmers and politicians alike to improve methods and policies to alleviate hunger and malnutrition worldwide. His research focused on teaching farmers in developing countries to escape poverty and hunger by growing more food, more efficiently. That work earned him a Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.

Centennial events begin

The statue unveiling on March 25 began a year of Borlaug Centennial events. "This is a historic celebration of Dr. Borlaug's legacy. His agricultural innovations saved an estimated 1 billion people around the world from hunger and starvation," said Branstad. "It is a fitting tribute that our state and nation is honoring Dr. Borlaug on the 100th anniversary of his birth and on National Agriculture Day."

Besides the Nobel Peace Prize, Borlaug has the distinction of receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal, America's highest civilian honor. In all of history, only two other Americans have won that trifecta: Martin Luther King Jr. and Elie Wiesel.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Sen. Charles Grassley, among the

Key Points

- Late Dr. Norman Borlaug commemorated with a memorial statue in U.S. Capitol.
- Ceremony honoring this Iowa native took place on the centennial of his birth.
- The crop scientist and humanitarian worked to alleviate hunger worldwide.

dozen people who spoke at the event, called Borlaug a great humanitarian and visionary who focused on ending hunger and boosting farm productivity. Those who spoke expressed optimism that viewers of the Borlaug statue would be inspired to carry on his research and find future breakthroughs in agriculture.

"The global impact that Dr. Borlaug had is an example and a challenge to all of us as we look to the future and Iowa's role in feeding and fueling a growing world," says Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, who attended the event. "The installation of this statue is an opportunity to celebrate Dr. Borlaug and help inspire others, especially our youth that he was so passionate about, through his amazing story."

Borlaug founded The World Food Prize in 1986 hoping it would come to be seen as the "Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture" to recognize and inspire breakthrough achievements in feeding the world. The WFP Foundation is in Des Moines.

"From our decade of working together, I knew Norman Borlaug to be the most humble, hardworking and inspiring person I ever encountered," says Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, president of the World Food Prize Foundation and chairman of Iowa's Borlaug Statue Committee. "At The World Food Prize, his legacy lives on through our annual prize, our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium, and our youth programs, including the Borlaug-Ruan International Internships. Now with a new website to honor Dr. Borlaug, we hope to engage thousands of people around the globe to help fight hunger."

The World Food Prize has launched an interactive website where visitors can post what they'll do this year in honor of the Borlaug Centennial to help feed the world. People are encouraged to share their



100TH BIRTHDAY:

A statue of Iowa native Norman Borlaug now resides in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. It was unveiled at a March 25 ceremony on the 100th anniversary of his birth. Known as the Father of the Green Revolution, he was a crop scientist and founder of the World Food Prize.

thoughts at www.worldfoodprize.org/norm.

"The greatest challenge we face in the world is about being able to feed the 9 billion people that will inhabit the globe by 2050," says Quinn. "Norman Borlaug knew that. We need Norm to be reminding us about this; his statue will help tell people that this has got to be top priority."

The statue of Borlaug was made possible in 2011, when the Iowa Legislature approved a resolution, and Branstad appointed a committee to raise funds and commission an artist to design, create and install a statue of Borlaug in the U.S. Capitol. After conducting a worldwide artist search, the committee chose Benjamin Victor of South Dakota. DuPont Pioneer and an anonymous donor offered financial support for the project.

Each state is represented by two statues of notable citizens in the National Statuary Hall Collection in the U.S. Capitol. The Borlaug statue replaced the statue of U.S. Sen. James Harlan installed in 1910, which will be relocated to Mount Pleasant, Iowa. The second statue representing Iowa is of Samuel Kirkwood, Iowa's governor during the Civil War, installed in 1913.

IPTV documentary

More information about the statue project is at www.iowaborlaugstatue.org. You can also learn more about Borlaug and the centennial celebration events worldwide and find ways to get involved in fighting hunger at www.worldfoodprize.org/norm.

An Iowa Public Television documentary, "Norman Borlaug: Journey to Statuary Hall," airs April 22 at 6:30 p.m. and April 25 at 8:30 p.m. on statewide IPTV. The full program will also be available online at www.

Iptv.org. The Borlaug story and statue will educate and remind people of his legacy, says Quinn. Viewers of the program will get a behind-the-scenes look at how much work went into this effort to design, create and install the statue.

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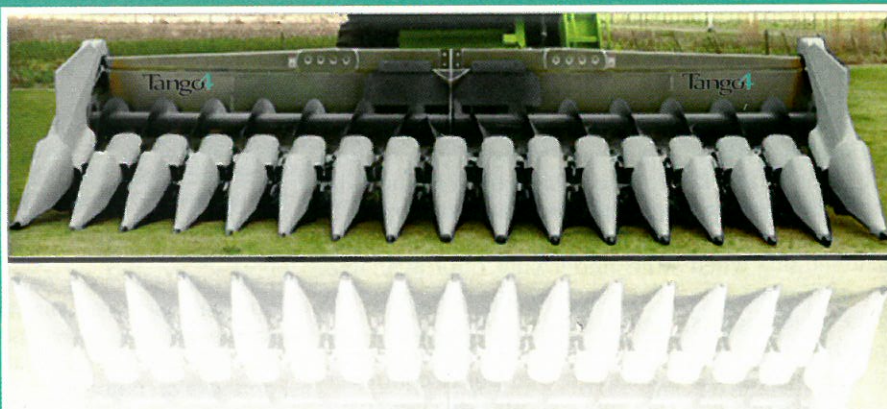
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