Biographical Sketch

Dr. Ronald L. Phillips

Dr. Phillips is Regents' Professor and McKnight Presidential Chair in Genomics, and recent Director of the Center for Microbial and Plant Genomics, University of Minnesota. He earned the B.S. and M.S. degrees from Purdue University and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota; postdoctoral training was at Cornell University. Throughout his career, Dr. Phillips has coupled the techniques of plant genetics and molecular biology to enhance our understanding of basic biology of cereal crops and to improve these species by innovative methods. His research program at the University of Minnesota was one of the early programs in modern plant biotechnology related to agriculture. He is a founding member and former Director of the Plant Molecular Genetics Institute of the University of Minnesota and a founder of the Center for Microbial and Plant Genomics. He has served on numerous editorial boards, edited six books, and published over 70 chapters, 130 refereed journal articles, and 300 abstracts. Dr. Phillips teaches a course in plant genetics and is invited to teach it or present the results of his research at numerous university, governmental, and industrial institutions in the U.S. and abroad. He served as Chief Scientist of the USDA (1996-1998) in charge of the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program. Awards include Fellow of ASA, CSSA, and AAAS, the Purdue University Agriculture Distinguished Alumni Award, the Dekalb Genetics Crop Science Distinguished Career Award, the Crop Science Society of America Research Award, and an honorary doctorate from Purdue University. Dr. Phillips served as President of the Crop Science Society of America. In 1991, he was elected a member of the National Academy of Sciences and is former Chair of the Section on Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences. He currently serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, the Board of Trustees of the premier International Rice Research Institute of the Philippines, and recently as a Non-Resident Fellow of the Noble Foundation. He is the 2007 co-recipient of the prestigious Wolf Prize in Agriculture.

Dr. Phillips conducts research and teaching in plant genetics applied to plant improvement with an attempt to bridge basic and applied aspects. The research objectives have been to develop and apply molecular genetic information to the improvement of important traits, to evaluate somatic cell genetic systems for manipulating crop species, to develop and use genetic and molecular biological selection procedures, and to develop high-throughput genomic mapping procedures. As Regents' Professor and member of the National Academy of Sciences, he participates in addressing University-wide, national, and international issues.