

I was a professor of Agronomy at Western Illinois University and active in WSSA and the North Central Weed Control Conference when I met Ellery. Western, one of the state universities, had a much smaller agriculture program than the University of Illinois, but we were carrying out some research, mainly from industry-funded grants. Ellery asked me to share my findings with him and included me in the annual meeting to determine weed control recommendations for the state. Ellery sought and listened to contributors and generously included our names as contributors on the state of Illinois recommendations. When audio visual or technical information was needed to support our teaching programs, Ellery was always available and eager to help. He was a selfless person that gave his all to his profession and to those around him.

**Rodney J. Fink**  
**Retired Dean of Applied Sciences**  
**Western Illinois University**

I was a graduate student at University of Illinois in the mid to late 1980s. I loved some of his quotes like "The sun came up in the east today". He was a great guy who was truly unique. I had the opportunity to help him one spring season when he hurt his back and I learned a great deal about attention to detail, doing things correctly and "getting it done". His commitments to his family, university and weed science were great.

**Fritz Koppatschek**  
**Director**  
**ABG AG Services**

I suspect I met Ellery in the early '60s, but it was when he spent a year at Oregon State on sabbatical in the mid '60s that I got to know him well and we became lifelong friends. Ellery was always modest and unassuming. It did not take long to find that he had a very sharp mind, had innovative ideas, and possessed the drive to carry out his projects. I know that we learned more from Ellery than he learned from us, and we certainly had a great deal of fun during his year in Corvallis.

**Arnold P. Appleby**  
**Professor Emeritus**  
**Oregon State University**

Ellery Knake was, above all, a wonderful person- humble, talented, wise in so many ways, full of subtle humor, a pleasure to work with, a great and very dedicated editor of WEEDS TODAY. and a credit to the field of weed science.

**John Ahrens**  
**Weed Scientist Emeritus**  
**The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station**

Those who knew Ellery also knew of his fondness for sharing stories about his experiences. He often couched one of his favorite stories as a training tool for young extension weed scientists on the potential hazards of weed identification. He relayed that one day he had received a folded-over brown paper bag in the mail, which he assumed contained a weed the sender wished him to identify. Opening the bag, he reached inside and felt around to find the customarily-enclosed slip of paper which would

tell him who sent the sample and what they would like him to do with it. Upon finding the slip of paper, he was startled to read the message scribbled across it: "Is this poison ivy?"

**Aaron Hager**

**Associate Professor and Weed Science Extension Specialist  
University of Illinois**

I have lots of recollections of Ellery Knake---all good! Over a span of 20 years, we frequently traveled together and spoke to farmers at traditional county Extension winter meetings throughout Illinois. Ellery, of course, covered weed control and I spoke about insect pest management tactics. Ellery was an excellent speaker and had a sense of humor that he intertwined with his slides on weed management tactics to emphasize specific points. The first time I recall Ellery speaking to a farmer audience--- it must have been the early '60s when herbicides were just beginning to gain adoption by farmers--- he emphasized the power of a small amount of herbicide to control weeds. He illustrated the point by pulling a vial of a liquid herbicide from his suit pocket and explaining how a small amount of the chemical was enough to control weeds. It was an effective attention-getter. Another effective technique that he used in his slide talks was to show a slide of a tape-measure and a hand saw and the admonition to "measure twice and saw once." The point, of course, was to emphasize the importance of calibrating the spray equipment to avoid over or under rates.

Ellery did care deeply about people and as we traveled, he always made it a point to ask about our sons and what they were doing. He and Connie were a wonderful couple and he was very proud of his sons.

He was a GREAT weed scientist and his contributions to Illinois agriculture regarding weed control tactics are absolutely gigantic. His talks, magazine articles, radio, and TV appearances speak volumes about his stature as a weed scientist at the University of Illinois. It's a fact that he received many, many phone calls with questions about weed control from farmers and pesticide dealers---when he was in the office. Ellery was sought out at farmer meetings and readily answered specific questions from individuals---before, during, and after meetings. Ellery was dedicated to serving farmers, not only via his communication skills, but also through his research plots at the DeKalb Research Field in DeKalb County. Among many other awards, he was elected to the "Hall of Fame" by the Illinois Extension Advisers Association – an award that this organization gives to those who serve agriculture.

**Don Kuhlman**

**Professor Emeritus**

**Agricultural Entomology**

**University of Illinois**

One of Ellery's most ambitious and involved projects was an annual herbicide screening trial in which he planted 40 rows of crop and weed species in one direction and sprayed 50 different herbicide products or combination of products in the other direction on two different areas. One area was used for pre-emergence and preplant incorporated products and the other area for postemergence products. This study had a total of 4000 different evaluations.

Always the teacher and true Extension professional, Ellery involved Extension Advisers and Vocational Agriculture teachers in the work he was doing. Over the years, there were nearly 50 different Advisers and teachers that he involved in the University of Illinois graduate program and in his research. The last Monday and Tuesday of April of each year were the days that he planned to establish the screening trial.

He was almost always able to get it done on those days regardless of the weather or weather forecast. An important part of the day was the trip to the local restaurant for lunch. Ellery had a sweet tooth and made a point of making sure everyone got a piece of the home-made pie with lunch.

Ellery would spend many hours evaluating the screening trials and his other research studies. From sunrise to sunset, Ellery would walk through the studies doing evaluations, taking notes and determining what he could learn from each treatment. At the end of the day, he would comment, “Who could ask for anything more than the beautiful sunset, birds singing, fresh air and being able to do what you enjoy doing.”

Ellery hosted a “Twilight Herbicide Tour” each summer. Usually 125 to 150 farmers and chemical representatives would attend the tour. The guests would board wagons and travel around the farm as Ellery would explain what he was seeing in each of his study areas. One year, Ellery stood in the rain for over 30 minutes talking to the guests as they sat on the tarp-covered wagons listening closely to his description of what he was seeing in the trials. The rain didn’t stop him from continuing on with the program.

Doing winter Extension Agronomy Day programs around the state, Ellery would always insert humorous slides in his presentations to keep the audience interested. One of his favorite slides was a picture of a log chain hanging in front of a board with areas labeled - spray and don’t spray. His comment with the slide was not to spray when the log chain wind gauge was blowing straight out.

Dr. Ellery Knake was a unique individual who was active in professional organizations, interested in research and Extension and always seeking answers to questions that would help those in agriculture, especially the farmer. He always tried to answer this question - What did the results of research mean for the farmer and how could he apply them to have a more profitable operation?

**Lyle Paul**

**Agronomist and Superintendent, Northern Illinois Agronomy Research Center  
University of Illinois**

The place was Rome. The year was 1978. The event was a toga party. You missed a little something in life if you never witnessed Ellery and his wife dancing in toga.

**Ford Baldwin**

**Practical Weed Consultants, LLC**

Regardless of your specific calling, I would admonish you to take pride in your profession and in your own accomplishments. The purpose of life is to accomplish something that outlives you. And in achieving your goals I hope that our Society, yours and mine, can be of service so that we might all better serve mankind. In closing, I quote from a great statesman who lived for a while in Illinois, and then moved to Washington, D.C. to leave his mark. ‘Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I plucked a thistle and planted a flower, wherever I thought a flower would grow.’— Abraham Lincoln.

**Ellery L. Knake**

**Professor Emeritus of Agronomy and Weed Science  
University of Illinois**

**From His Presidential Address, WSSA, February, 1975**