



1. Title

The Lifetime Contributions of Professor J.Keith Syers to International Soil Science - A Memorial Symposium

2. Type

Divisional Symposium

3. Organizer(s) & Convener

Dr. John Ryan,

Carrigataha, Cahir, County Tipperary, Ireland (formerly of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, Aleppo, Syria)

Tel: +353-52-7466707

E-mail: ryanjohn1944@gmail.com

4. Rationale

In 2011, Professor J.Keith Syers died suddenly while still working in Thailand. His extraordinary career spanned five decades, having worked for significant periods in the USA, New Zealand, and Thailand. He had exceptional influence in many countries around the world as a soil scientist, research leader, administrator, and educator, especially in Asia, where he spent two extended periods in Thailand and considerable time in China. He was renowned for his contributions to soil chemistry and soil fertility, especially phosphorus, crop nutrition and soil management. He was a leading figure in the inter-phase of agriculture and the environment, in particular heavy metals. He was a champion of the fertilizer industry and served for many years as Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the World Fertilizer Industry (IMPHOS). Following retirement from normal academic life as Professor and Dean at Newcastle University, he spent several years in academic administration in two universities in Thailand. Professor Syers received numerous awards and recognitions for his contributions to agriculture, soil science and science in general, especially Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America, and the International Soil Science Award. Shortly before his death he was notified that he was to receive the Soil Science Distinguished Service Award; the award was accepted on his behalf by Dr John Ryan, a friend of many years and a colleague on the IMPHOS Scientific Advisory Committee. Professor Syers' legacy to soil science is not only reflected in his publications that documented advances in various areas related to soil science, but also to the legions of graduate students he mentored and who are now leaders in their respective fields around the world. Professor was a major contributor to international meetings around the globe, including world soil science congresses.

5. Objectives

The broad objective of the symposium was to highlight the various phases of the career of Professor Syers in terms of subject matter and, given his international character, regional and geographic influences. The various presentations in the symposium will be by scientists who were privileged to work with Professor Syers and who could provide both a scientific and personal perspective.





6. Description

The symposium will be chaired by Dr John Ryan and feature a range of international speakers who had significant interaction with Professor Syers. The aim of the presentations is to give a broad perspective on the life and times of Professor Syers, in recognition of his long and exceptional influence in the broad field of soil science.

