

In memoriam: Scott Finlayson

October 21, 2025

In Memoriam



Scott Finlayson

A longtime member of the Texas A&M Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Scott Finlayson, Ph.D., died in an accident in August 2025.

Finlayson graduated from Simon Fraser University in 1986 and from the University of Calgary in 1994. He had been a part of the department for more than 30 years, starting in 1994 after receiving his doctorate in botany. He served as a postdoc prior to becoming an assistant professor in 2002. In 2009, he was promoted to associate professor.

Finlayson's research focused on plant physiology and development. He investigated the roles of environmental signals as conditioners of plant growth and development and concentrated on discovering the mechanisms through which they work.

His research emphasized the roles of phytohormones as response coordinators and used genomics as a hypothesis-generating tool. He demonstrated that the sorghum leaf sheath functions to repress tiller outgrowth and discovered novel pathways through mechanical stimulation of sorghum stems.

Throughout his career, Finlayson published numerous articles and had more than 4,000 citations. He also supervised numerous graduate students, the most recent, Dr. Sungkyu Park.

As an assistant professor, he taught Physiology of Plants every year and served as the faculty lead for the Soil and Crop Sciences Seminar Course for many years. Finlayson was also preparing to take over the distance sections of recreational turfgrass this fall semester.

His students said his humor and lively banter made them smile and eased the tension when they were slated to present their seminars.

They described him as "an incredibly insightful educator and accomplished researcher on an individual level" who made himself highly accessible by keeping an open door

and radiating positivity and helpfulness. He served as a professor, advocate, and outstanding mentor to the department.

Finlayson is predeceased by his father, R. Bruce Finlayson in 2005. He is survived by his mother, Shirley Finlayson, and brothers Mike (Sherri) and Steven (Kim) and niece and nephew, Jada and Brennan, all of Vancouver, Canada, as well as his wife of 32 years, Michelle, and his beloved cat, Snorri.

Those who wish to celebrate the life of Finlayson by making a gift in his memory to the Texas A&M Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, can do so by visiting <https://txamfoundation.com/give> and under "choose a designation," typing in "57261." Gifts may also be mailed in his memory to the Texas A&M Foundation with "57261" written in the memo: Texas A&M Foundation, 401 George Bush Dr., College Station, TX 77804

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