



Science
Societies

In memoriam: Michael "Mike" Lilly

February 28, 2025

In Memoriam

Michael Lilly
1951–2024



Michael "Mike" Lilly, a member of SSSA (39 years) and ASA (20 years), passed away on Sept. 22, 2024. He was born Aug. 25, 1951, in Pulaski, IL. He graduated from Shawnee

Community College in 1975 and earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Plant and Soil Science from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1977.

His employment included: USDA–NRCS in the Illinois counties of Pulaski, Calhoun, Jersey, Kankakee, Knox, and Pike. He served as Soil Survey Project Leader, Resource Soil Scientist for northeast Missouri and Assistant State Soil Scientist and State Soil Scientist in Mississippi. His duties included land use planning, sustainability, agriculture production, digital soil mapping for flood prevention, and land restoration; attending meetings and annual conferences; and serving on the National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils.

Lilly mentored many soil scientists, assisting in the advancement of their careers. After retiring in 2007, he worked a few years in the Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services (ACES) Program out of NRCS Area 2 office in Pearl, MS; continued to enhance his education; and gave back by volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and NRCS and guest lecturing at Mississippi State University. He was still actively on-call to assist regionally with various soil field assignments and events.

He co-authored *The Soils of Mississippi* (World Soils Book Series) and previously had published another soil science book. He was recently honored as a Lifetime Achievement Award recipient from the Central Mississippi Blues Society, Inc. (where he also served as former Parliamentarian and Board Member) and won numerous car show awards as a member of the Alpha Romeo Car Club. He was a member of a number of blues societies, maintained friendships with many blues artists, and frequently served as a judge for various blues competitions throughout Mississippi. He enjoyed taking cruises; visiting museums, flea markets, juke joints, and blues festivals; father–son deep sea fishing trips; and spending time with his grandchildren.

Lilly is survived by a son, Michael (Annie) Lilly of Chicago, IL; two brothers, William Lilly of Chicago, IL; and Lowell (Helen) Lilly of St. Louis, MO; one sister, Runette Travis (Arthur Morgan) of Villa Ridge, IL; two nephews; one niece; two grandchildren; and a host of beloved cousins, family, and cherished friends.

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