

Bob Huggan

A tribute from his friends, colleagues and students



St Kitts, 2007

I am truly sad to hear of Bob's passing. I have fond memories of our week together in St. Kitts.

I pray that his family will find comfort in the wonderful memories that they developed with their loved one.

Yasmin Williams-Robinson, Bahamas, mcivyspring92@hotmail.com

So sorry to hear. I remember his easy going approach and the way he included and guided everyone in those sessions in St. Kitts. I also remember his love for nature and his dear olives that he grew in France.

Condolences to his wife and family circle.

Juanita James, Antigua, juanitajivj_500@hotmail.com

I'm sorry to hear of Bob's passing. This is indeed very sad news. I met Bob and yourself in Grenada 2006 at the CARDI/CTA workshop. He was indeed a brilliant teacher with loads of knowledge to share in communication for development. He was also very friendly and accommodating.

I learned a lot from both you and Bob, much of that knowledge I still apply in my current work.

Please extend my condolences to his family.

Clive Murray, Grenada, klivem2003@yahoo.com

I too am really sad to hear of the passing of Bob. Apart from the excellent technical instructions he gave at the workshop in Nevis he was a great story teller. I recall how affectionately he described his vineyard and the arrangement he had with the winery-- a portion of the grapes he delivered was set aside for his own home consumption, and he would regularly trek to the winery, wine jug in hand, to replenish his wine supply.

My prayers and condolences go out to his family.

Regards,

Ballay

Ballayram, PhD

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Sorry to hear that Bob Huggan died. I knew him briefly way back when he was at ICRAF - and I was only passing thru gathering publications for ALIN - or perhaps Rodale redistribution. But I do remember how helpful he was...

Interesting also that I ended up running the Comms Unit for a while at ICRAF many years down the road!

Bob Wagner, Kenya, bobolink@iconnect.co.ke

Thank you Paul for this information. It is indeed sad to learn this news. Bob is truly a gentleman, fun to be around, deeply knowledgeable and had a wealth of experience in development communication. Of course, him, your self and I did a book together and I also had one on one interaction in numerous occasions. Bob will be greatly missed both as a friend and colleague. Please pass to his wife my deepest condolences.

Isaac Bekalo, Kenya, isaac.bekalo@iirr.org



Course participants, St Kitts, 2007

I met Bob in St. Kitts in May, 2007 at CTA-sponsored training workshop.

I was impressed with his personality and the quality of teaching which was very informal and interactive.

He brought out the best in all of us. He was an excellent communicator. We will miss him on our blog.

I take this opportunity to thank God for sending him to train us, albeit for a few days, making us better development communicators.

My deepest sympathy and condolences to his wife and the rest of his family.

I thank you for sharing Bob with us.

May his soul rest in peace.

Mario Chavarria, Belize
Bob's Class of 2007
Email marioachavarria@yahoo.com



Uganda, 2005

I was saddened today to hear of Bob's death and attach a short tribute, which I hope you may be able to utilise for the Memorial Service in Montpellier.

My condolences to Isabel, about whom he talked so often with great pride and affection.

With kindest regards,

Michael.

Philippines, Kenya, South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Trinidad, Netherlands: Bob worked in many more countries but in those we worked together. Meeting first at IRRI, when he was Director of Communications and I a visiting agricultural journalist, Bob proved both a wonderful facilitator and a great host socially. My memories are of exceptionally productive days interviewing IRRI staff and equally 'productive' evenings made mellow with malt whisky in hand.

And that might have been that had not CTA invited Bob to lead the first of several workshops for senior agricultural scientists in ACP countries wishing to improve their communication skills. Bob generously nominated me to join him and complement his sessions on the written word with my experience in radio and TV. Working together could have been a merely adequate experience but it turned out to be much more; we

were different enough and yet similar enough that not only did we enjoy those workshops but the participants did so too...as did several members of CTA staff who visited for a day and stayed on for more!!

Sadly Suffolk, where I live, is remote from the South of France and, Bob and I have not met for some years. But memories live on and if, as it has been said, we all live while people remember us, Bob is assured of an international team of those who valued and learned from his professionalism. And through them, he will surely live on.

Michael Pickstock

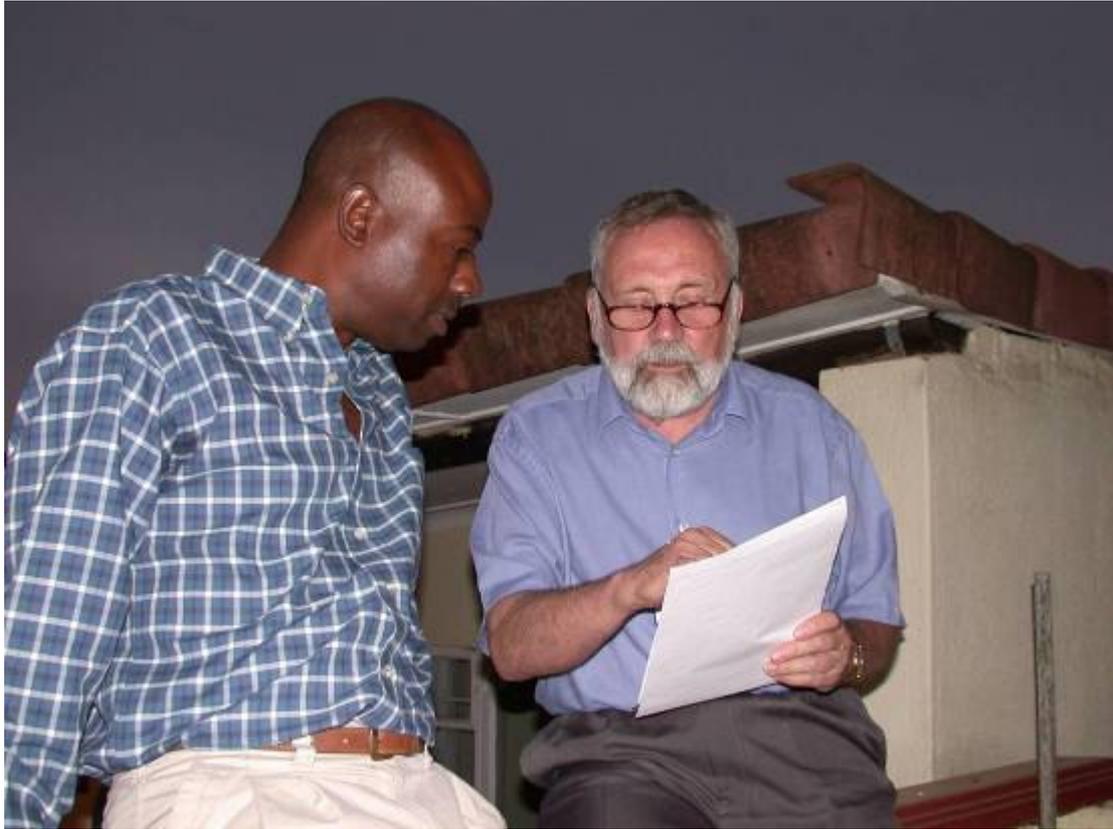
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Mbabane, Swaziland, 2002



Mbabane, Swaziland, 2002

This is sad. I interacted with him in one of my first writeshops in IIRR. I recall him as very knowledgeable and energetic for his age.

May God rest his soul in peace.

Rahab Njoroge, Kenya, rahab.njoroge@iirr.org

Hearing about our loss has left me feeling as if I have an empty space inside.

I only spent a week or two under Bob's wings but I feel as if I learnt the world about communication in that time. His warm caring personality was a perfect example of good communication. I too think of green fields and orchard when he comes to mind. He spoke so lovingly of his wife that I know she will miss him terribly. I hope her memories of him will in some way comfort her in this her time of mourning.

Yvette De Freitas, Trinidad and Tobago, yvettedefreitas@yahoo.com

Dear Isabel and Abby,

Stephanie and I were saddened to hear of Bob's death just a few days ago. And although we are saddened by his passing on, we can also celebrate Bob's life and what he gave to those he came into contact with.

Bob joined IRRI some time after me - I arrived in Los Banos in July 1991, and Bob came in as Head of the Information Center some time in 1992 I think. We were 'brothers in arms' - head of centers reporting to the same deputy director general who neither of us had much time for. And I guess we did spend some time taking him down a peg or two in a subtle way. But the day-to-day frustrations that we experienced were alleviated in some ways by taking a 'relaxed' perspective on some of things we were asked to do. When I moved into the senior management team in 2001, and shortly afterwards took on management oversight for the Communications and Publications Services and the Library and Documentation Services (original components of the Information Center when Bob was at IRRI) I remembered many of the things that Bob and I used to discuss. Indeed, through Bob, I learned a great deal about the art of communication, and communicating science in an understandable and meaningful way became somewhat of a passion of mine.

Bob and I did publish a couple of pieces together about rice germplasm:

Jackson, M.T. & R.D. Huggan, 1993. Sharing the diversity of rice to feed the world. *Diversity* 9, 22-25.

Jackson, M.T. & R.D. Huggan, 1996. Pflanzenvielfalt als Grundlage der Welternährung. *Bulletin—das magazin der Schweizerische Kreditanstalt SKA*. March/April 1996, 9-10.

I remember Bob as a fun-loving and trusted friend and colleague. In the early 90s, it was November and around my birthday, Bob and I had taken to going to the IRRI Club for a beer (or three) after work. The Club had opened to great fanfare just a few weeks previously. To our dismay, we were told that beer was no longer available, and very quickly the demise of this grand venture (the 'baby' of another DDG who we didn't much care for) came about. Nevertheless, Bob and I had a good laugh about it all, and drowned our sorrows with a Coke!

Bob will be missed by many former colleagues and friends around the world. We hope that the pain and grief you are experiencing now are tempered somewhat by knowing there are so many folks out there who esteemed Bob in so many ways.

Mike and Steph Jackson, UK, mike@jacksonmail.org



Grenada, 2006

Words cannot describe the depth of emptiness in my heart on learning of the passing of Mr. Bob Huggan; a humble gentleman but, a giant as a professional who no doubt made a positive impact in sharing his talent and craft to a group of young and eager citizens across the landscape of the Caribbean at a Communication workshop in Saint Kitts Nevis.

This encounter to my understanding fostered a deep and respectful working relationship with Bob and members of the group long after the twilight of the first session at the workshop.

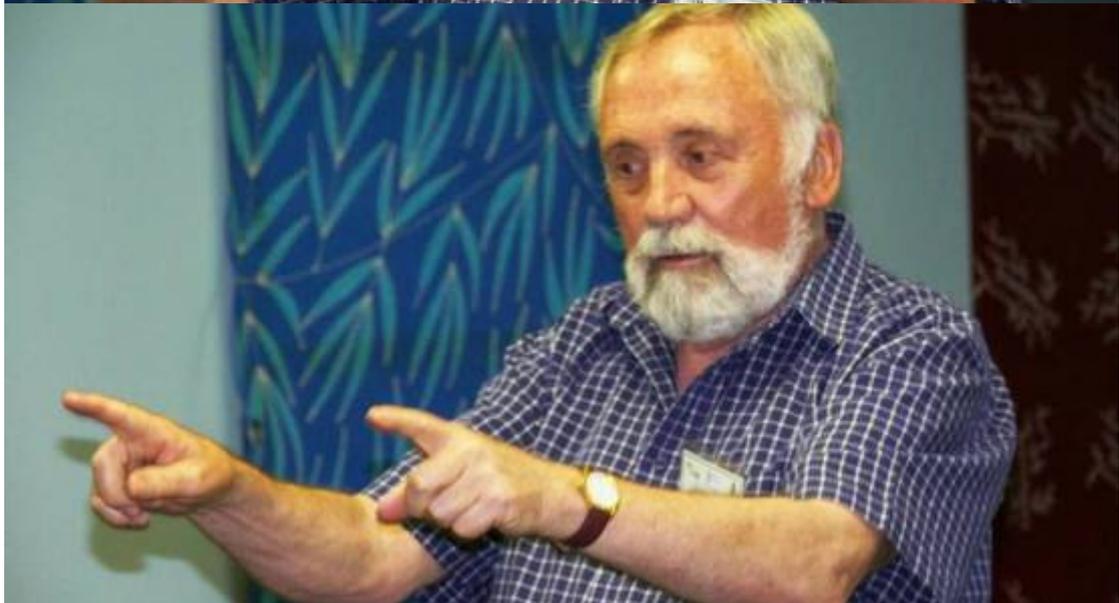
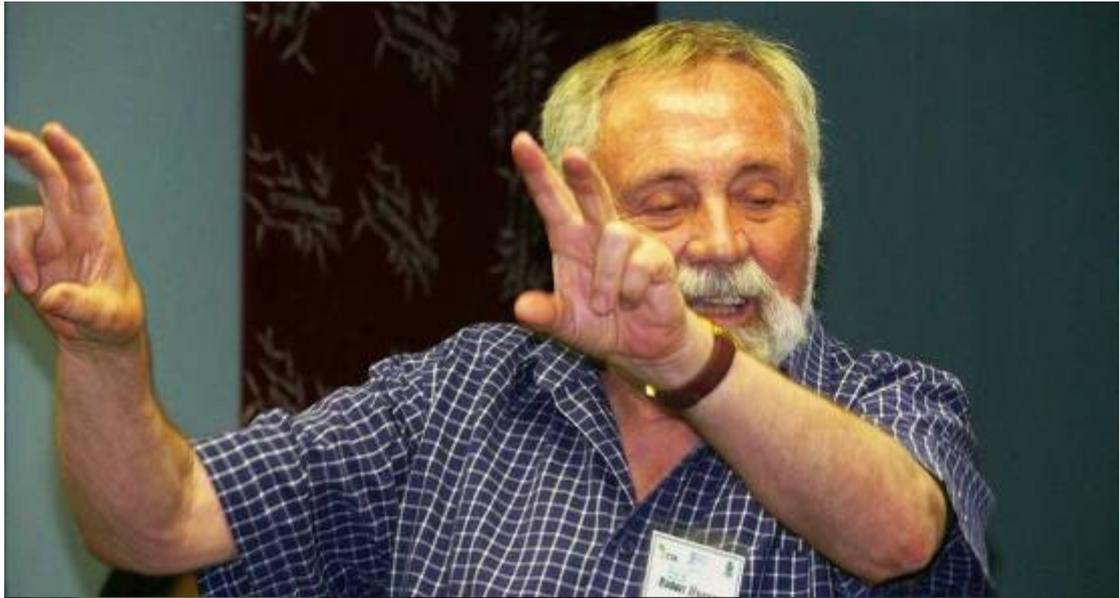
His passion to pass-on his knowledge and experience in pursuit of excellence and professionalism was unwavering. In so doing, Bob awakened undiscovered talents, nurtured and armed his apprentice with optimum confidence. Thus, I shall always be guided by the example he set.

Interestingly, the doors of homes were being opened by everyone for Bob whenever he returns to the Caribbean region, except one drawback...when we teased him that we ain't have no vineyards. His response with a baby's smile, "I can always start one" Yes, genuine friendships were established, friendships that will always linger in the bowels of our hearts of a humble giant. Mr. Bob Huggan.

To those he has left behind: relatives, friends, colleagues I extend my deepest condolences.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory!

Selwyn King, Trinidad and Tobago, kingselwyn2016@yahoo.com



St Kitts, 2007

To remember Bob I always think "Hulk Hogan"
The name rhymes well.
He was a charismatic man with a smile that reaches the eye,
long before it reaches the mouth.
A man who speaks of his Olive trees with pride
A man who spend hours on a stone under a tamarind tree in St Kitts
looking for a monkey.
That's the man I will always remember.
That's my Bob Hulk Hogan.
I too extend deepest condolences to the Bob's family.

Shirley Wilkes, St Kitts and Nevis, swilkes_99@yahoo.com



Grenada, 2006

I worked at IRRI as a video producer in the 1990s at the same time Bob Huggan became director of Communications and Publications Services. I didn't know him very well but there was one time when we worked in a recording studio in Manila

together and on the way back to Los Banos we stopped briefly at Santis, a deli, so he could bring his wife some horseradish. He said she loves it. As I was a nationally recruited staff, he assumed the deli might be a bit pricey for me so he offered to lend me some money, which I didn't need but I thought that was quite nice of him to offer.

Sometimes it is the little things you do that you are remembered by people. In my case, it is Bob's thoughtfulness that made an impression on me.

Cristina Douthwaite, Philippines, cdouthwaite2004@gmail.com

Bob was always kind-hearted to the CPS staff and gave us plenty of room in which to be creative and try new things. Our favorite project with him was "Listening to the Farmers." It was one of IRRI's best corporate reports ever thanks to Bob's guidance and support.

We are saddened by his passing and send our condolences to Isabel and Abbey and the rest of his family.

Ram Cabrera and Carolyn Dedolph Cabrera, Philippines, carolyncabrera@me.com



Uganda, 2005

Though eventually death is inevitable to all, when it finally comes it is usually difficult to deal with. One thing I learnt from Bob was "Crowd Control" He had a way with words that both captured his audience and passed on the message. I first met Bob in a writeshop process and was always aware of his presence even when he was quite. I guess this was due to his jovial spirit. I am both sad and happy. Sad because out of probably a selfish need, I feel that I have been robbed of a special friend and mentor. Happy that in this world of billions I was one of the lucky few who knew Bob at a personal level. May strength and resolve be by our side (Friends and Family) at this trying moment.

Warmest of regards

Nyotumba Bonaventure (Bonnie), Kenya, nyotsz@yahoo.com



St Kitts 2007

Bob was my supervisor when I joined IRRI in 1998 as a Public Awareness Assistant. At that time and fresh from my stint as Press Officer of the Australian Embassy in Manila, Bob was very supportive in letting me get emersed into rice literature for almost two months before letting me handle IRRI Hotline up until he left IRRI for Montpellier. He gave me a nice picture frame, a brown brief case and a blue barong (native long sleeved shirt) as souvenirs when he left. I shall miss a soft-spoken and kind critic, editor, teacher and friend - Bob Huggan.

Johnny Goloyugo

Senior Associate Scientist - RKB Coordination, Training Center
International Rice Research Institute, Los Baños, Philippines
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I always smile whenever I think of Bob. He was such a jovial person who put everyone at ease and included everyone in his session. He will surely be missed. Rest in peace Bob.

To his relatives, remember Bob LIVED and he left you with pleasant memories. Long after the pain of separation has subsided, the memories will live on.

Delia Weekes, Dominica, cuffyd5@gmail.com

Tribute to Bob Huggan

It is with great sadness that we heard the news of Bob's passing. Our hearts go out to Isabel and Abbey and we send them love and our constant thoughts in these most difficult days they are confronting together. They have the loving support of so many friends, which we know will be a great source of comfort and strength to them both.

Graham and I arrived at IRRI in the Philippines at almost the same time as Isabel and Bob, in 1993. One of the first things we did was to join a scuba diving course, of which the theoretical part was conducted at IRRI and the practical check-out dive at a nearby beach, Anilao. Isabel did not do the course but Bob did and this was when we got to know him more. There was such a large number of us that they had to divide us into two groups. We had two small children, so Graham and I went into separate groups to enable us to take turns being with Catherine and Alex. I was in Bob's group, along with Josphine Prain, Brigitte Courtois and several others. Our group had done our check-out dive and several of us were heading off in a banca for a recreation dive with a dive master when our banca engine stopped – too far away from the shore to swim back! While we waited for another banca to pass by and take a message for help, we passed the time chatting about our lives as our small boat gently bobbed on the water's surface, the clear, turquoise sea plunging gloriously beneath us. Bob's pride in Isabel's successful writing career, his love for her and for Abbey was so evident and heart-warming to hear. This deep love Isabel and Bob felt for each other never changed.

I loved getting to know Isabel in our Book Club at IRRI, a constant joy with such vibrant and fascinating conversations around the books we read and our diverse experiences and viewpoints. Isabel met my mother on her visits to the Philippines and, with great sensitivity, understood so many of the difficulties my mother was experiencing in Zimbabwe, always asking after her throughout the years afterwards. My mother joins Graham and myself in sending her love and heartfelt sympathies to Isabel and Abbey as they mourn their great loss of Bob, husband and father.

Something I loved to see at parties was Isabel and Bob dancing together! They were a handsome couple and had a wonderful way of dancing, not touching and yet marvellously synchronised in their movements and rhythm. They exuded joy in each other and everyone around them was touched.

Other party memories, shared by our children, include Bob as Santa Claus, riding down to the IRRI Guesthouse in a little cart drawn by a carabao. The picture enclosed here shows Bob with the children around him and IRRI's current Director General, Bob Zeigler, as one of Santa's colourfully-dressed helpers!

The wealth of memories and love together will always be with you, Isabel, and you will draw strength from them always. We send our warmest love to you, Abbey and Saulis.

Susan and Graham McLaren and Nettie Humphreys (Susan's mother)

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Christmas, 1993 at IRRI (Martin Kropft, Bob Huggan as Santa Claus, Bop Zeigler and Prabhu Pingali)

I remember Bob during the CTA session in Uganda. He had a nice sense of humour - I especially remember him during the jokes' session when the workshop team travelled to Hotel Diplomate in Muyenga/Uganda.

Well, may he rest in eternal peace.

Nora Odoi, Uganda, odoinora@kari.go.ug

Bob Huggan, former Information Center and CPS head, passes away

Today's IRRI Bulletin, <http://irri.org/news-events/irri-news/bob-huggan-former-information-center/cps-head-passes-away>



Bob Huggan, at right, explains the new rice plant type to visitors at IRRI sometime in the mid-1990s.

Robert "Bob" Huggan, 79, head of IRRI's Information Center/CPS (1993-97) and a senior advisor, External Operations (1997-98), passed away last Tuesday (15 February) in Montpellier, France, after a lengthy illness.

Bob was an expert in public awareness, donor relations, appropriate dissemination of scientific research results, R&D communications, cross cultural communications, and information management. He is survived by his wife Isabel and daughter Abbey.

A Canadian, Bob had previously served as associate editor (public affairs) and deputy director, Communications Division, International Development Research Center (IRDC), Canada (1980-87); director of information and communications, World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Nairobi, Kenya (1987-90); and head of information and communication, International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain (INIBAP), Montpellier, France (1990-93). He was also a visiting professor, Institute of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB, 1993-98). In recent years, he had been a consulting writer, editor, and translator, primarily in Europe and Africa.

He earned his masters in journalism in 1982 at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. He was an inspirational teacher and communication strategist in the agriculture and development arena and a colleague and friend to many throughout the world.

Isabel and all of Bob's friends who are fortunate enough to be at Bob's memorial service today,

Bob and Isabel were part of a special community at IRRRI during a very special part of its life. Bob joined as Head of IRRRI's world renowned Communications and Publications Department, replacing Tom Hargrove, its founder. Bob came in to fill Tom's enormous shoes and did so in a way that both charmed and reassured. He also inspired. I don't want to go into a laundry list of all the good things that Bob did for IRRRI's communications, just let it suffice to say that he put us on the right track that has served us well...allowing us to weather the serious storms of the CGIAR that swept over IRRRI in the late 90s and well into the 2000s. Bob's vision about what quality communications meant, his understanding that our targets were not just scientists, but everyday folks, and his seeing long before the rest of us that the Internet would grow into a powerful vehicle for IRRRI (our first Web presence dates from his days in leadership at IRRRI) have earned him a special place in IRRRI history. I think he (and Isabel) were really instrumental in getting some of us scientists to understand what communications really means, that public relations was actually a serious topic if you wanted to have an impact beyond your scientific field. SCUBA weekends and late night post - Guest House "Chicken on a Stick" session at the Denning's or Zeigler's, and book sessions with Isabel are only small fragments of a relatively short but memorable stay at IRRRI. Life in the Funny Farm was made immeasurably richer by Bob's grace, wonderful sense of humor and deep commitment to what we were trying to do. That he and Tom Hargrove should both have left us within the time frame of just a few weeks is shocking to us all. I'll refrain from making any irreverent comments about writing press releases for the Lord.

Bob (and Crissan) Zeigler

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Better than Bond

I first met Bob when he was at IRRRI and I was at IIRR (two institutions destined to be forever confused because of their similar acronyms). Together with ICLARM (the fisheries research institute then located in Manila) we organized an occasional get-together of our communication departments. Like a true communication professional, Bob was very willing to spend time sharing the IRRRI communication unit's latest initiatives. But unlike so many professionals, he really cared – not only about getting his message across, but also about the people he was talking to.

I worked with him on various other occasions after we had both left the Philippines – we produced a book on public awareness together with IIRR and CTA in Kenya, and

we taught courses on communication and public awareness in Uganda, St Kitts and Grenada. It was always a pleasure to work with him, and I looked forward not only to our double-act in the classroom, but also the beer afterwards.

In all these cases, Bob was the key source of information and inspiration: he not only imparted his deep experience in a humble, charming and amusing way. He also showed he cared deeply that the students understood and could practise what he was talking about.

He was extraordinarily generous with his knowledge. I continue to use the materials that we developed together – and I suspect that the many other teachers and communicators he worked with do the same.

Bob had many stories to tell. I think my favourite was that his first wife (sorry, Isabel) broke off a relationship with another man to marry Bob. The “other man” was a young actor named Sean Connery – James Bond – who was later voted “sexiest man alive”. That made Bob more attractive than Bond.

I’ve no idea if this story is true, but I very much hope it is.

Paul Mundy

Development communication specialist, Germany
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Acting an interview with Paul Mundy during a training course in Kampala, Uganda, 2005

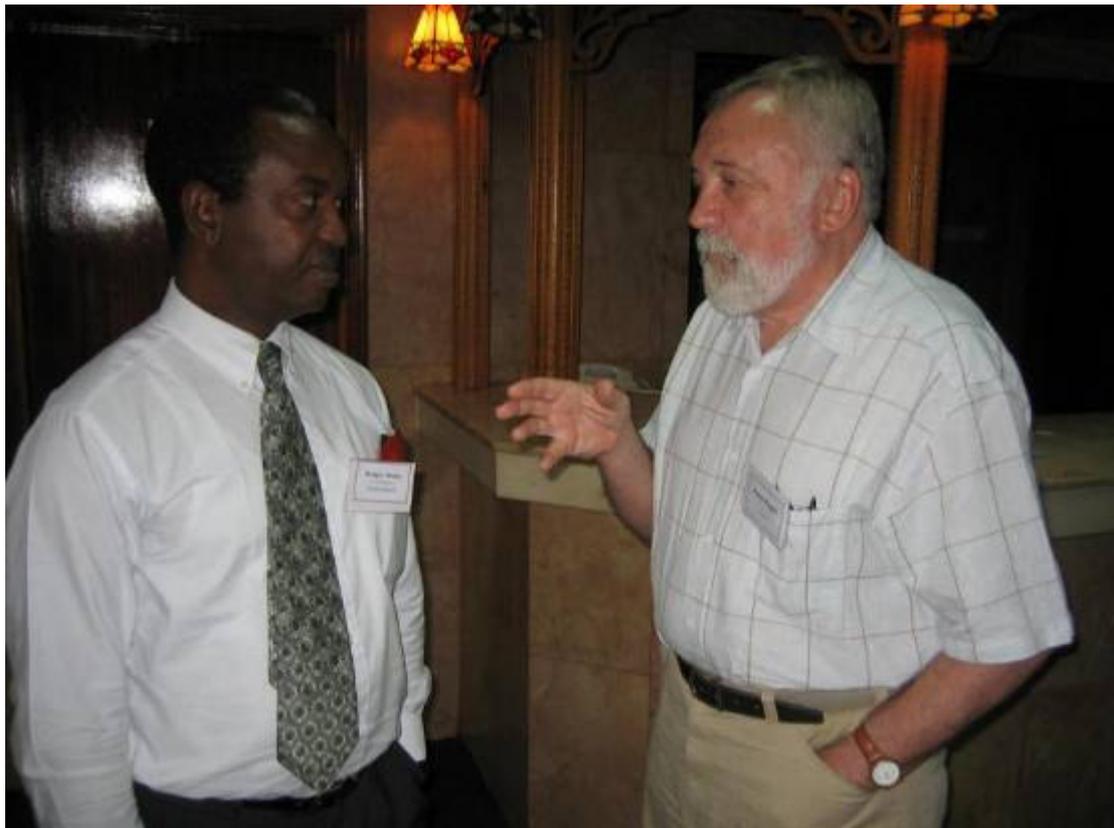
Tribute to our departed friend Bob Huggan

I first met Bob shortly after joining CTA in 2002. He had been billed to lead a CTA training course on Public Awareness and in fact had just completed one such course in the Caribbean. Right from that course planning meeting I saw the wealth of knowledge and erudition. More than that Bob came across as a person who was a good listener and who was ready to explore other options for doing things. It was this openness that struck me.

Since that meeting we had worked together on CTA several courses and we have bonded in a way that was wonderful. He was an excellent teacher - patience was his hallmark. Patient to hear out the questions betraying lack of comprehension of what had been taught and to repeat the explanations in ways that would help the lost to get back on track. It was a pleasure to be taught by Bob. He had his way with words that eased the worries of his trainees. He had a gentle humour that put back the confidence in his trainees.

Bob was a complete gentleman ready to follow through trainees even beyond the course without a fuss— such was his zeal to pass the skills and knowledge to the upcoming generation. We will miss Bob sorely.

Rodger Obubo, CTA, obubo@cta.int



With Rodger Obubo, Kampala, Uganda, 2005

Aurora, I, and everyone at Communication and Publications Services (CPS) at IRRI were saddened to hear of Bob's passing. He was truly a great friend and mentor to all of us. It is additionally distressing that this comes on the heels of the death of Tom

Hargrove, Bob's predecessor as head of CPS, just about a month ago. Tom was responsible for bringing me to IRRI the first time, as a visiting editor for a brief time, back in 1982-83. Bob brought me back in 1995 for a more permanent stay.

Bob was a regular scuba diving fixture at Arthur's Dive Resort in Anilao, Batangas. I'm sure many at IRRI still recall the evening he showed up at a Guest House party in some kind of pressurized suit with tubes sticking out all over. He looked like some kind of cyborg creature or bionic man out of science fiction. It seems he had come up too fast from a dive and, to top it off, he had come back to Los Baños via a road on the very high-altitude Tagaytay Ridge and so he got the bends and ended up in a pressure chamber for awhile. It almost killed him, but he still thought he had to make an appearance at that IRRI event. Anyway, that was typical Bob!

After he left IRRI in 1998, we continued to stay in touch, mostly by email. One time, I commented on a photo I saw of him that was being included in a commemorative album for someone departing IRRI. I wrote that he looked the spitting image of ole Papa himself—Hemingway! I asked if he had ever considered entering the annual look-alike contest that is held annually in Key West. He responded that it was one of the nicest compliments anyone had given him in years and added that Ole" Papa was only 61 when he died, the same age Bob was when he started at IRRI in 1993.

Bob was the ultimate professional, but, at the same time, a very warm and considerate person. The world of agricultural and development communication has lost a giant.

Gene Hettel

Head, CPS, IRRI
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St Kitts, 2007

Compiled by Paul Mundy paul@mamud.com and Rodger Obubo obubo@cta.int