

# A 30-YEAR IMPACT



When Tom Holtzer retires in October 2016, he will leave behind a legacy of leadership that has spanned two departments, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and Extension. Holtzer served nearly 30 years as a department head, first in the Department of Entomology and continuing as head when entomology became part of the newly formed Department of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management, or BSPM. For the last year, Holtzer took on a new college leadership role as deputy director of the Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean for Extension.

"For me, it has been a great run in the College of Agricultural Sciences," said Holtzer. "I really enjoyed the role of department head and then the opportunity to contribute in a brand-new role in my last year has been especially rewarding. I have had a chance to put my experience to good use in my efforts to streamline and better coordinate the relationships between research supported by AES throughout the state and Extension efforts and lay some solid groundwork for the next person in this role."

Holtzer arrived at Colorado State University from the

University of Nebraska in 1988, when he joined what was the Department of Entomology. In 1996, he led the merger of Entomology with Plant Pathology and Weed Science to form BSPM. Holtzer led the new department from its creation through 2015.

BSPM offices are adjacent to those of the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, and Holtzer often served as a bridge between the two units, encouraging faculty collaboration and stimulating industry research.

"Tom worked directly with wheat growers and helped raise the profile of our Wheat Breeding program," said Scott Haley, a professor of soil and crop sciences who leads CSU's Wheat Breeding program. "Whether it was hiring innovative wheat researchers as a part of our faculty or obtaining grants to help support the program, Tom was instrumental."

Praise for Holtzer's leadership is not limited to those internal to CSU. Dan Anderson, president of the Colorado Wheat Research Foundation, was quick to recognize Holtzer's work with the industry. "It has been through Tom's vision and leadership that advancements in pest management and weed science have benefited wheat growers statewide," said Anderson.

Throughout much of his time as department head, Holtzer also maintained an active research program, taught, and mentored graduate students. Scott Merrill, now a research assistant professor at the University of Vermont, was Holtzer's student until he completed his Ph.D. in 2007. Merrill recounted one instance when he worked throughout the night and into the wee hours of the morning with Holtzer to finalize a USDA proposal.

as department head of the euphonious Department of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management, steered through academic reorganization, tight budgets, and policy changes, and recruited outstanding faculty, staff, and students, all while maintaining a cheery, enthusiastic air," said Blodgett. "A unique Renaissance man wearing the many hats characteristic of the land-grant University mission areas, conducting active research, advising

students, and his leadership in research, graduate student advising, and teaching, number among

## A UNIQUE RENAISSANCE MAN WEARING THE MANY HATS OF A LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY

"Tom was always available to help, and help with more energy and thought than a graduate student," said Merrill. "I feel extremely fortunate to have had Tom as my principal adviser and mentor through graduate school." For the last 10 years, Holtzer co-taught Agricultural and Food Systems Ethics, an undergraduate course that invited students to explore some of the difficult ethical questions facing 21st-century agriculture.

the many hats that he wears, switching among them effortlessly with great aplomb. He has inspired generations of faculty, students, and staff."

Frank Peairs, a professor in BSPM, chaired the search committee that brought Holtzer to campus in 1988. "Tom has always had a positive relationship with the faculty and the college administration," said Peairs. "He moved both departments forward in times of budget uncertainty and ensured that resources were allocated to support graduate students and for faculty members to maintain a level of excellence in their research."

Although his post-retirement plans are far from settled, Holtzer notes that he is looking forward to a dory boat trip down the Colorado River not long after he packs up his office.



1969 1971 1975

B.A., biology, Thiel College; undergrad ecology field trip  
M.S., entomology, ecology minor, North Carolina State University  
Ph.D., entomology, ecology minor, North Carolina State University



1980

Entomological Society of America awards ceremony



1982

Assistant professor at the University of Nebraska



1996-2015

Led the merger of Entomology with Plant Pathology and Weed Science to form BSPM



2011

Guest at Haramaya University graduation in Ethiopia



2006-2016

Co-taught Agricultural and Food Systems Ethics



2015-2016

Took on a new college leadership role as deputy director of the Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean for Extension



2016

Retired after 30 years with CSU  
Celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary with wife, Irene