

## 2022 Cedric Kuhn and Kenneth E. Papa Outstanding Graduate Student Awards Department of Plant Pathology, University of Georgia

The Cedric Kuhn and Kenneth E. Papa Awards recognize the scholarship, professionalism, and excellence in research of two graduate students in the Department of Plant Pathology each year. The 2022 awards were presented during the annual meeting of the Georgia Association of Plant Pathologists (GAPP) in Savannah, GA, on May 25.



*Frannie Martin (Kuhn awardee) and Phil Brannen (accepting Papa Award on behalf of his student Kendall Johnson)*

The Cedric Kuhn Outstanding M.S. Student Award is presented in honor of Cedric Kuhn (1930-2000), who in the late 1950s became Georgia's first plant virologist. Kuhn was first located at the Georgia Experiment Station in Griffin, later transferring to the Athens campus. He served as the first Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Plant Pathology, playing an instrumental role in the development of the doctoral program. Kuhn was named a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society (APS) in 1987 and was awarded the D.W. Brooks Excellence in Research Award in 1989. The 2022 Cedric Kuhn Outstanding M.S. Student awardee is **K. Frannie Martin**, who is working under the direction of Phil Brannen and Paul Severns. Her research involves a field survey describing plant-parasitic nematode communities on *Vitis vinifera* and French-American hybrids and their differences across Georgia's major wine grape growing regions. In addition, she has recently completed a 2-year field trial testing the efficacy of the post-plant nematicides fluensulfone and spirotetramat against ectoparasitic nematodes in North Georgia vineyards.

Frannie, while a student in our graduate program, is also a member of the staff as a Research Professional in the Extension Nematology Lab under the direction of Ganpati Jagdale. In 2021, she was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place for her presentation entitled "Survey results of pathogenic nematodes on wine grapes throughout Georgia" at the Southeastern Professional Fruit Workers Conference's student presentation competition.



*Frannie Martin's research area (left) and her collecting soil samples in the field for nematode analysis.*

The Kenneth E. Papa Outstanding Graduate Student Award is presented in honor of Ken Papa (1931-1986), a former professor in the Department of Plant Pathology, who was a renowned fungal geneticist and one of the first geneticists at the University of Georgia. He played a major role in the Plant Pathology graduate program through his service as Graduate Coordinator, and was elected Fellow of the Georgia Academy of Science in 1977. The 2022 Kenneth E. Papa Award was presented to **Kendall Johnson**, a Ph.D. candidate working with Phil Brannen and Clive Bock. Kendall's research focuses on foundational research for early detection and management of phony peach disease (PPD), a detrimental disease of peach in the southeastern U.S. caused by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* subspecies *multiplex*. The overall goal of her research is to develop management strategies for peach growers to improve orchard longevity and profitability while contributing to industry sustainability. Kendall has worked to determine the prevalence and distribution of PPD in U.S. peach production areas, assess the accuracy of visual identification of symptoms, identify distribution patterns of PPD within commercial orchards through spatial analysis, and conduct metagenomic analysis of *X. fastidiosa*-infected peach roots.

Kendall has been recognized previously by the Georgia Association of Plant Pathologists and Southern Division-APS for oral presentations receiving 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, respectively.



*Kendall Johnson with one of her research subjects (left) and her proudly displaying the Papa Award plaque.*