

The Norm Reath Guest Lecture Series

Supported by The Norm Reath Expendable Faculty Support Fund in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Alexander Norman Reath Jr. “Norm” (March 12, 1924 – October 9, 2021) was a two-time graduate of Michigan State University’s Horticulture Department. Throughout his 35 years of employment at Gerber Products Company, Norm passionately worked with universities and growers across the country to optimize the production of fruits and vegetables for baby food products.

Norm enlisted in the U.S. Army and began his service in 1943. After serving in Europe, he took advantage of the G.I. Bill and obtained his B.S. in Horticulture from Michigan State. A chance encounter at the MSU Union led Norm to meet his future wife, Jane, and they wed in 1949. He continued his studies with the MSU Graduate Program in Horticulture from 1949-1953. Norm worked summers at the Michigan State University (MSU) Experiment Station in Chatham, Michigan where he conducted studies in growing fruits and vegetables in the harsh climate of the Upper Peninsula. Norm was recruited by Gerber Products Company in 1953 and relocated to Fremont, Michigan to work as one of the first Agricultural Research Engineers. Norm had a long and successful career at Gerber, retiring in 1988.

Norm was a humble man and loved working with the people at Michigan State. He loved working with growers locally as well as throughout the Midwest. He also loved his time at Gerber, working closely with the original owner, Dan Gerber. Norm would have been very pleased to listen to the guest speakers today and continue the critical work that he focused on in soils, pesticide management and new plant varieties that help all connected to the food industry.

Carol Reath Josefowicz, *Norm’s daughter*



Picture taken of Norm in 1988 by Gerber’s Fort Smith, Arkansas produce staff.