

# *Jim Brewbaker*

## **JAMES L. BREWBAKER ENDOWED FELLOWSHIP**

### **REASON FOR THE GIFT**

By establishing this Fund, Donor is providing perpetual funding to support a fellowship for graduate students who are studying plant breeding at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), Department of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences.

### **ABOUT THE DONOR**



Dr. Jim Brewbaker traces his crop improvement lineage back to Gregor Mendel, the father of “Mendelian” genetics. Dr. Brewbaker’s father obtained his Ph.D. with corn breeder Dr. H. K. Hayes who in turn obtained his Ph.D. with E. M. East, among the geneticists who rediscovered Mendel’s principles at the turn of the 20th century. Jim grew up learning about sugarbeet breeding from his father, later completing his Ph.D. in 1952 with Sandy Atwood on clover genetics in Cornell’s Department of Plant Breeding and Biometry. He then post-doc’d with Arne Muntzing in Sweden, served two years breeding rice and corn at the University of the Philippines and then five years in radiation genetics with the US Atomic Energy Commission. In 1961 he joined CTAHR at the invitation of Horticulture Department chair and vegetable breeder Jim Gilbert.

Dr. Brewbaker was instrumental in founding HCIA, the Hawai'i Crop Improvement Association, following his corn research in the 1960's. Hawai'i's climate lends itself to year-round seed propagation, improvement and development. Today the seed industry is valued at one-third of the entire agriculture industry of Hawai'i and generates nearly \$250 million annually and growing.

At CTAHR, he created the Hawai'i Foundation Seeds that manages collections of parent seed stocks – overseeing their collection, evaluation, purification, and propagation and providing seed samples and education to the community. The largest collections are corn and tropical legume trees such as Acacia (koa) and Leucaena. He has won awards and accolades for his work from every major plant breeding organization and is working on his 287<sup>th</sup> publication.

After 52 years at UH Mānoa, Dr. Brewbaker is still very involved in plant breeding. He plants and harvests almost weekly while keeping copious notes. He says his most recent publication is “about a virus that ruined some of my sweet corn hybrids since one of their parents turned out to be susceptible. We’ve been hastily squashing this problem by converting the offending parent to resistance.”