The death of Larry Mitich brought sadness to the myriad lives he touched throughout his trek in life. He was a gentle and kind man that took whatever time was necessary to help and guide all that sought his wisdom. After writing about the lives of so many well-known personalities in the succulent world, it is appropriate that his own accomplishments now be summarized.

Larry was born on May 16, 1927, in Lead, South Dakota and grew up in Wyoming. He served in the U.S. Army while stationed in Germany for two years during the Korean War. His life was dedicated to academia in both seeking and disseminating knowledge, predominately in the science of weeds and the study of succulent plants and plantmen. He was 73 years old at the time of his death.

Larry’s education was extensive: a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from the University of Wyoming in 1951, a Master of Science degree in Agronomy at the same university in 1955, and in 1963 a Ph. D. in Agronomy—Weed Science from Cornell University and the University of Wyoming.

Professionally, Larry’s life was devoted to teaching. He taught agriculture at Wyoming High School in 1951 and 1952 and was an Assistant Professor of Agronomy at the University of Kabul, Afghanistan, from March 1955 to September 1959. From January 1960 to February 1963 he was a graduate research assistant at the University of Wyoming and from February 1, 1963, to September 30, 1980, was Professor of Agronomy at North Dakota State University. Larry joined the University of California at Davis in 1980 and retired in May 1995. After retirement, Larry continued to pursue his passion for cacti through research and writing.

At UC Davis he served as director of the board of Friends of the Davis Arboretum and served as its president for a year. He helped organize the UC Davis Botanical Society, served as first president, then as Treasurer until his death. At retirement, Larry was granted the title of Weed Scientist Emeritus in the UC Davis Cooperative Extension. He was a recognized authority on the weeds that plague farmers’ crops.

Larry was made a Fellow of the CSSA in 1979 and a Fellow of the Weed Science Society of America in 1983 and was elected to their board of directors in 1986. He was elected as their vice president 1988, served as President-elect and Program Chairman in 1989, and then as president in 1990. He joined the CSSA board as a Director in 1981, served as Vice President from 1992 through 1995 and as President from 1996 until his death.

Larry was well known for being a prolific writer. He began writing articles for the CSSA journal in 1963 and some are still being published after his death. Listing the articles he has written for this journal would fill several pages of this
Selected Articles
(Compiled by Myron Kimnach. Articles appeared in Cact. Succ. J. (US) unless otherwise noted.)

Non-biographical, listed by date
The odyssey of Dr. George Engelmann. Excelsa 4: 31–39

issue, as they number some 200! A selection of the more important ones is listed here. His articles have also been published in the Euphorbia Journal, Haseltonia, Excelsa, and several other journals throughout the world. Larry had written over 370 extension publications and articles for applied research publications and research reports as of 1995; the number has increased considerably since then. Larry was a significant contributor to “Intriguing World of Weeds”, a feature in Weed Technology; some 50 installments had been published at the time of his death. In addition to his writing, Larry served as editor for several newsletters, textbooks, publications, magazines, and various articles. His acumen with the written word was not limited to fluent writing—he also amassed one of the world's largest private collections of books on succulents.

Larry was the chairman of the CSSA Honors Committee and served on the Research Committee. He judged at many shows, gave programs to several clubs throughout the U.S. and at

Figure 3. From left to right: Jon Rebman, Larry Mitich, Charlotte Mitich, Voytek Foik. Photo by Eva Foik.
the CSSA’s biennial conventions and served as program chairman for two of those conventions.

According to Charlotte Mitich, his wife of 45 years, a memorial plot at the UC Davis Conservatory has been planted with aloes and an agave, with an accompanying plaque.

Larry Mitich, weed science professor emeritus for UC Davis Cooperative Extension, died on Wednesday, August 16, 2000, while in his Robbins Hall office. While working at his desk he experienced heart failure and died peacefully.

Larry’s wisdom, his gentlemanly demeanor, his smile, and his friendship will be sorely missed by all those whose lives he touched.

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