Norma Louella Cashion, 1953—1984

E. S. Luttrell

Norma Cashion was born in Greenville, South Carolina, on 19 January 1953. She died near México City on 15 December 1984. The photograph reproduced on this page accompanied an interview with Norma that appeared in the Athens, Georgia Banner Herald/Daily News combined edition on Sunday, 27 February 1983, the day before she reported to the Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo to join the Wheat Program as a post-doctoral fellow in plant pathology. On 15 October 1984 she received an appointment as associate scientist in the Maize Program at CIMMYT. Sixty-one days after she started on this new assignment she was killed in a hit-and-run accident on the highway between CIMMYT headquarters and México City.

Norma entered Furman University in South Carolina in 1971. She received a liberal arts education and graduated with a B.S. degree in biology in 1975. She held an honors scholarship during all four years at Furman and was awarded a stipend for off-campus research at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory in the spring quarter of 1974. As an undergraduate she was a laboratory instructor in zoology for three quarters. She was elected to Chi Beta Phi National Honorary Scientific Society.

Following her graduation from Furman, Norma worked as laboratory specialist in the Department of Pathology of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston during 1975–1976 and as laboratory technician in the Greenville General Hospital during 1976–1977. She became interested in forest trees and forest pathology and returned to school as a graduate student in the Department of Plant Pathology of the University of Georgia, where she served as a teaching assistant in forest pathology, elementary plant pathology, and plant nematology. She received the M.S. degree in plant pathology in 1979, working with David Dwinell, U. S. Forest Service, on "Effect of Nutrition on Susceptibility of Slash and Loblolly Pines to *Fusarium moniliforme* var. *subglutinans* and Studies on the Fungus in Vitro." She continued graduate study in plant pathology on a University of Georgia Graduate School Fellowship, working with E. S. Luttrell on "Biology of *Botryosphaeria* Species on Sweetgum and Sycamore in Relation to Their Potential for Coppice Growth Biomass Production." She received the Ph.D. degree at the end of the fall quarter in December 1982. At Georgia she was elected to Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and to Gamma Sigma Delta, the Honor Society of Agriculture. She became a member of the American Phytopathological Society and the Mycological Society of America. She was also a member of the National Audubon Society and the Athens Chapter of the Society for International Development.

Norma was a deacon of the University Church in Athens. Although she never made a great show of it, she was sensitive to other people, idealistic, and dedicated to practical service. As she progressed in plant pathology her interests turned to international agriculture and developing countries. During her final year at Georgia, she did so much in gathering information on career opportunities in international agriculture that our seminar chairman interrupted his schedule to let her give a presentation on this subject. She left behind in the graduate students' file the data she had obtained. Her search had the incidental consequence of revealing the generosity of established plant pathologists with experience in foreign countries in giving an unknown graduate student a starting point by supplying her with addresses of institutions and names of administrators and scientists. Overseas work, especially in isolated posts, requires experience in the field of service. Norma's postdoctoral appointment at CIMMYT, where she was part of a team at a prestigious institution, was an ideal solution for a new graduate seeking an introduction to international agriculture. At CIMMYT headquarters and at the CIANO spring wheat breeding station near Ciudad Obregón, Norma assisted with research on Karnal bunt of wheat and breeding for disease resistance. She also carried on a project on control of wheat diseases with fungicides. She profited as well from meeting the amazing numbers of scientists from all parts of the world who each year visit CIMMYT for a few days or for months of collaborative research.

Norma's death brought responses from a surprising number and diversity of people in the University of Georgia and around the country whom she had touched and from some who had looked to her for support. She seemed mild, soft-spoken, and fragile. Only those who were closely associated with her realized that her subdued manner was accompanied by an uncompromising independence and determination. One of the CIMMYT collaborators summed up this aspect of her character on returning from a field day at the CIANO station in which Norma had made her first presentation to local growers in Spanish. With a good-humored mixture of affection and respect he said, "Norma was nervous, but Norma is a tiger." Norma had everything but time.

(An article that Cashion co-authored, "Host-Parasite Relationships in Karnal Bunt of Wheat," begins on page 75 of this issue.)