



# A special type of support for science

By Jack Payne, jackpayne@ufl.edu, @JackPayneIFAS

There are at least two things that make money motivate. One, of course, is the amount. Another is the source. When money comes from producers, it can be an incentive for University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences faculty to work even harder.

When that money is a gift, it establishes a relationship, like the one Bill Dawson has had with three generations of the Graves family.

As the J.R. and Addie S. Graves Endowed Chair in Citrus Biotechnology, Dawson has nervously traveled in the passenger seat of a speeding Lincoln as then 80-something J.R. “Rip” Graves drove to lunch. He sat across the table from Rip’s son, Richard Graves, for no-nonsense conversations about results. Rip’s grandson, Jeff Bass, who leads Graves Brothers, speculates

that his children’s decision on whether to embark on careers in citrus depends in part on Dawson’s progress on HLB.

## ADVANTAGES OF AN ENDOWMENT

Richard and his sister, Elizabeth Graves Bass (Jeff’s mom), established the endowment in their parents’ name a quarter century ago. Endowments attract talent. They also allow for conversations to take place over years, even decades.

Those conversations Dawson had with Richard in the years before his death in 2006 stay with Dawson to this day. “I felt like I had to do better because of him,” Dawson said.

Bass keeps up the positive pressure. He has not only donated money himself, but he has encouraged fellow producers to support IFAS science with their own treasure, toil and talent.

For that, Bass was recognized at a banquet in October in Gainesville as the IFAS development council’s Volunteer of the Year.

The beauty of the endowment is its use for a particular kind of science, not a particular problem, Bass said. It gives a faculty member freedom to work on what is most important. It also gives a scientist a sense of responsibility to do everything possible to deliver a solution for growers.

Dawson was a leading scientist in taming the tristeza virus that was perhaps the central disease threat to citrus a generation ago. With what he learned about the virus in 25 years at the Citrus Research and Education Center, he hopes he can now conscript it into service as an HLB fighter. The idea would be for the virus to “infect” trees and turn off the genes that make them susceptible to HLB.

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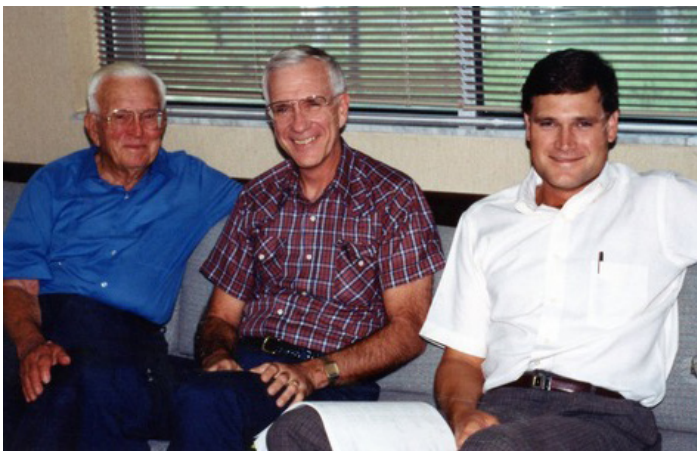
## GROWER INVOLVEMENT

The conquest of HLB is a grail for hundreds of IFAS researchers. Endowments such as the Graves family’s are one way for producers to get directly involved in the science that has supported the industry for more than a century.

If you’re interested in exploring direct support for science, contact Christy Chiarelli at ccw@ufl.edu or (352) 273-0353. Even if you can’t write a check, there are other ways to get involved.

Your involvement is a powerful motivator, because just like money, it’s not just how much support you give. It’s that the support comes from you that makes it so meaningful. 🍊

*Jack Payne is the University of Florida’s senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources and head of the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.*



**Jeff Bass (right) with his uncle Richard Graves (center) and his grandfather J.R. “Rip” Graves (left)**