

Cary Fowler '71

Many of Cary Fowler's classmates remember him as a serious and modest fellow with a shy but winning smile. He seemed knowledgeable about politics and the social issues of the day. He was soft-spoken and wore sandals a lot—not unusual in the late '60s and early '70s. However, even casual observers might have sensed that Cary's feet appeared to be headed down paths many of his peers would likely never try.

They were right. Since his days at Rhodes, Cary has followed a remarkable path that has led him to a rather unique career. Simply put, it involves preserving and ensuring the world's food supply — neither an ordinary path, nor a small task, by any means.

Today, he is Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, an organization that works to conserve crops and make them available for the world's current—and future—food security. Farther along his path, Cary played a key role in creating the Svalbard Global Seed Vault near the Arctic Circle, the famous cold-storage facility that contains hundreds of thousands of seeds that the world might someday need for its very survival.

In a profile about him in *The New Yorker* four years ago, Cary was quoted as saying that midway into his academic career and after dealing with some daunting health issues, he became “scared” that he hadn't really done anything that mattered—“I hadn't contributed constructively to society,” he said.

He need no longer feel that way. Just last year, Cary received a prestigious Heinz Award, which honors individuals whose achievements have contributed to a cleaner, more sustainable planet.

Indeed, for his devotion to this Earth and all of us who live upon it, and for taking his own path in the service of others, I am pleased to award Cary Fowler the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.

William E. Troutt, President
May 14, 2011