



## Dr. Robert Courtney Pearce

August 8, 1965 - May 22, 2026

Dr. Robert Courtney Pearce, 60, of Georgetown, KY, formerly of Oldham County, passed away on Friday, May 22, 2026, at his home surrounded by his loving family. Born on August 8, 1965, in Louisville, KY, “Bob” was the only child of Amelia Courtney Pearce and the late Franklin West Pearce. On July 25, 1987, Bob married his best friend and soulmate Cynthia Ann Williamson Pearce, and together they built a wonderful life, raising their son William, cherishing and supporting their family and friends, contributing to their professions in extraordinary ways, opening their home and hearts to seven cats, and valuing each day for 37 years before her untimely passing on July 23, 2025. A 1983 graduate of Oldham County High School, Bob’s love of farming and introduction to FFA (Future Farmers of America) in high school, inspired his professional career. He earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Agronomy with a Minor in Biology from the University of Kentucky in 1987, his Master of Science Degree in Soil Science from UK in 1989, and his Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Soil Science from the University of Georgia in 1994. Bob attended the Georgetown First United Methodist Church with his mother. Hired as an Assistant Extension Professor of Agronomy in the Department of Plant and Soil Science at the University of Kentucky in 1994, Bob began his career as a Tobacco Extension Specialist, providing over 32 years of academic and extension service. Promoted to tenured Associate Extension Professor in 1999 and again to Full Extension Professor in 2016, Bob earned the prestigious title of Philip Morris Endowed Professor from 2018 – 2024.

Over the course of his career, he took great pride in mentoring 17 Master's and PhD students as the advisor/co-advisor, guiding their research in tobacco and hemp.

Highly respected as a researcher and extension specialist, Bob became a trusted, sought-after resource of unbiased research-based information on all aspects of tobacco and hemp production. He was an international authority on conservation tillage and no-till tobacco production, and he conducted over 200 "on-farm" research trials in growers' fields across Kentucky on conservation tillage, variety testing, topping and grading, tobacco fertility, and disease control. Known for his unwavering availability for growers, he never left a call unanswered. Bob conducted over 300 winter tobacco grower meetings, over 125 field days, over 40 agent trainings, and made over 60 invited presentations outside Kentucky during his career. In 2019, he stepped into a new responsibility, becoming the Director of the Hemp Research and Extension Program, creating innovative ways of connecting local growers and processors, and pioneering a multi-state collaboration across multiple universities throughout the United States.

A prolific writer, Bob led the development of the first Burley & Dark Tobacco Production Guide in 2007, expanding in 2010 to become a multi-state effort. He also wrote book chapters, new or revised numbered extension publications, tobacco fact sheets, and countless popular press articles. Bob had a gift for interpreting complex research information and creatively sharing it in ways that were clear, concise, and the most impactful for others.

Recognized for his commitment to the agriculture community, Bob received the Outstanding Specialist Award from the Kentucky Association of County Extension Agents in 2013 and the Leadership Award from the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative in 2014. A natural leader, he chaired the Tobacco Workers Conference twice (2010 and 2020) and headed the Tobacco Science Research Conference in 2025.

Bob Pearce also loved creating memorable meals as the "grill master". Fascinated with all the inventive ways to prepare and grill food, he constantly

challenged himself to try new ingredients and methods to share with those lucky enough to get that invitation.

Bob left an indelible mark on his family, his friends, his colleagues, and all who shared his passion for agriculture, family, learning, and life. Bob was a loving father who always made an effort to spend time with his son, William, playing outside or just having a good time being with one another.

Surviving and blessed to be his family are his son William Franklin Pearce; his mother Amelia Courtney Pearce; his mother-in-law Linda Ann Rutherford Williamson; two brothers-in-law: Randal Williamson (Aimee) and Joel Williamson (April), all of Georgetown; his niece Ashley Williamson (Max); his nephew Matthew Williamson (Emily); his great niece Freya Edison; his great nephew Lachlan Williamson; dear family friends Brent, Sarah, and Jacob Styer; and a host of extended family, friends, colleagues, and farmers, who are grateful for his powerful example of how to be an extraordinary steward of all the people and land entrusted to his care.

A Celebration of Life for Bob Pearce will be held at 2 pm on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at Georgetown First United Methodist Church, 1280 Lexington Road, Georgetown, KY 40324.

Friends and family are invited to gather from 11-2 pm preceding the service. Woodhead Funeral Home, Falmouth, is honored to serve the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations are suggested to the Scott County Humane Society: 751 Slone Drive #13, Georgetown, KY 40324.

# Upcoming Events

## Gathering of Family and Friends

JUN 13. 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Georgetown First United Methodist Church  
1280 Lexington Road  
Lexington, KY 40324

## Celebration of Life

JUN 13. 2:00 PM (ET)

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1280 Lexington Road  
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