

Peter A Peterson received his PhD in biology/chemistry, with an emphasis on genetics, from the University of Illinois in 1953. He then undertook a study on avocados and peppers at the University of California at Riverside, where he described the diurnal flowering cycle of the former and discovered the first linkage group and a male sterility system in the latter. In 1956, he joined the Department of Genetics at Iowa State University before moving to the Department of Agronomy in 1960. His lifelong research has focused on transposable elements (TE), beginning with a Bikini-bomb-induced mutant containing the *En* TE. In 1977, Professor Peterson joined the Max-Planck group in Cologne in a collaboration to investigate the molecular aspects of the *En* element and a number of TE-induced mutants. His current research is focused on the biology and role of TE in maize populations.