

VITA

Pamela Jo Thomas was born to Joe and Betty Thomas on April 27, 1960 in Beckley, West Virginia. Early childhood and public school years were spent in the rural hamlet of Greenville, West Virginia, home of the world-famous Saltpeter Caves. The siblings of Pam — Jeff and Paula — recall with great amusement, the avoidance of dirt from early childhood years through early college years. Upon graduation from Union High School, Union, West Virginia in 1978, Pam entered Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). Two years and many classes later, Pam took a course in Introduction to Horticulture and liked the chapter on soils so much, she changed her major to Agronomy. Pam was a member of the Soil Judging team which placed 3rd in regionals in 1982 and 4th in nationals in 1983. She also was President of the Agronomy Club in 1982-83. She graduated with a B.S. in Agronomy--Soil Science option in 1983 from Virginia Tech. Pam entered a master's degree program at Virginia Tech in 1983 under the tutelage of Thomas W. Simpson and James C. Baker. Her thesis research involved studying the effects of soil erosion on productivity of soybeans on Cecil and similar soils in the Piedmont. Pam also was able to serve as graduate assistant for the Soil Judging Team which placed 1st in 2 regional competitions and 2nd in national competition. After receiving a M.S. in Agronomy (Soil Genesis) in 1987, Pam mapped soils in Tidewater Virginia for five years in Charles City and Surry Counties under the guidance of Bob Hodges, the most knowledgeable field soil scientist in Virginia. In 1992, Pam transferred to the Virginia Tech campus as a Research Associate to assist J.C. Baker with administrative duties in the Soil Survey program. A shrink-swell soils disaster in Chesterfield County in 1991-92 prompted the need for expansive soils research in Virginia. Pam began her Ph.D. program in Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences in 1993 under the guidance of James C. Baker and Lucian W. Zelazny. In addition to conducting research on expansive soils, Pam served as President of the Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists in 1995. She also served a 4-year term (gubernatorial appointment) on the Virginia Certified Professional Soil Scientists Board from 1992-96. In the 1997-98 academic year, she coached the Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team which placed 1st at the regional contest in 1997 and 8th at the national contest in the spring of 1998. Pam is a member of the Soil Science Society of America, the Association of Women Soil Scientists, and the Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists. Awards and honors include 1) Sigma Xi, 2) Phi Sigma, 3) Gamma Sigma Delta, 4) Sam Obenshain

graduate student scholarship, and 5) C.I. Rich graduate fellowship. She is a certified professional soil scientist in Virginia and in the American Registry of Certified Professional in Agronomy, Crops, and Soils. Pam completed her Ph.D. program in May 1998.