

Obituary, Jean J. Tancous

Jean Jacobs Tancous, former President of the American Leather Chemists Association (ALCA), passed away on October 6th, 2022 at the age of 96. Jean graduated from the University of Cincinnati (U.C.) holding a B.A. degree in Chemistry (1945) and an M.S. degree in Chemistry (1949). While in college she worked as a Research Assistant for the Tanners' Council Research Laboratory (located on the U.C. campus) which conducted research for the tanning industry. Upon graduation, she continued working for the Tanners' Lab as a Research Associate for 37 years (1949-1986). While at U.C., Jean also taught graduate level courses in microscopy, histology and leather chemistry.



Throughout her career, Jean was involved in basic and applied research studying the causes of hide and leather defects. This included studies of the effects of diseases and injuries to the living animal, defects occurring during processing, curing and storage of hides. She recommended solutions for eliminating these serious economic losses to the livestock, meat packing, tanning and leather industries.

Jean published over 54 articles in professional journals concerning research on skin, hide and leather and presented over 40 lectures/papers to her colleagues at the ALCA. In 1974 Mrs. Tancous was elected President-Elect of the ALCA and subsequently served as President from 1976-1978 and again from 1983-1984.

A major undertaking was the compiling of the subject matter for a book entitled *Skin, Hide, and Leather Defects* published in 1959. Jean co-authored this book with Dr. Fred O'Flaherty and William T. Roddy. Jean subsequently updated this book and published a second edition in 1986.

Jean joined the ALCA on March 2, 1960 and was bestowed life membership in 1978. She served the ALCA as a Councilor from 1965-1967, President-Elect from 1974-1975, and President from 1976-1977 and 1983. In 1962 she was the first woman recipient of the Alsop Award for her creative research. In 1965 she won the ALCA Prize Paper Award for her paper "Occurrence and Nature of Pulpiness in side Upper Leather" which she presented at the 9th IULTCS Congress in Lyon, France. For many years she was a member of the Raw Stock Committee and chaired the committee from 1972 to 1974. She was on the 1974 Alsop Selection Committee and chaired the same committee in 1980 plus being a member of the committee in 1995. In 1975 she presented

the John Arthur Wilson Memorial Lecture entitled "Rawstock" at the 71st ALCA Annual Convention at Lake Placid, New York. She chaired the John Arthur Wilson Lecture Selection Committee in 1983. She was the recipient of the 1996 ALCA Fred O'Flaherty Service Award recognizing individual active ALCA members who have made significant contributions to the Association and the leather and leather products industries through the ALCA. Finally, in 1997 Jean was the recipient of Hall of Fame award from the United States Hide, Skin and Leather Association. Because of her accomplishments, she was listed in "Who's Who in Science and Engineering".

After retirement from the Tanner's lab (in 1986), Jean built a small testing lab in the basement of her Cincinnati home where she provided consulting services for the U.S Hide, Skin & Leather Association. Jean worked part time in this lab until she was 93, giving 32 more years of service to the leather industry. Jean passed away 3 years later.

Jean loved researching everything, recoding statistics (football), bird watching, growing plants, playing the piano, puzzles, cryptograms, sewing and reading to her grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 56 years, Ernest Tancous. She survived by son, John W. (Betsy) Tancous of Akron, OH; daughter, Judy A. (William) Thompson of Columbus, OH; grandchildren: Emily (Collin) Ferguson, Catherine (Justin) Miller, Stephanie Tancous, Laura (Adam) Gossett and Natalie (Scott) Shellhorn; great grandchildren: Adelyn, McKenna and Brynlee Ferguson, William Gossett, Bodie and Callie Miller, and Emery Shellhorn.

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