
Obituary

Dr Herbert H. Siegel

1926 - 2017



Dr Herbert H. Siegel, Vice-President of WPSA (1996-2000), passed on July 11. His poultry career followed the Triad Law, commonly known as ‘The Rule of 3’ *i.e.* beginning (farmer), middle (scientist) and end (administrator). After poultry farming for a few years, Herb returned to university and upon completing the PhD from Penn State joined the faculty of the Poultry Science Department at Virginia Tech where it was my good fortune to share an office with him. During those seven years Herb exposed and taught me much about the physiology of stress

in birds. Our relationship, however was much more than collegial – we developed a friendship which has continued over decades. Herb was a ‘Renaissance man’, not only a fine scientist, he was a student of history, lover of sports, food, and music (try as he may he could not get me to enjoy listening to the Sunday afternoon radio broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera).

One of the high points of interacting with Herb was when he received the Poultry Science Association Research Award in 1961 for the paper ‘The relationship of social competition with endocrine weights and activity in male chickens’. This classic paper from over half a century ago demonstrates his visionary studies on the welfare of poultry.

In the mid-1960s Herb resigned from Virginia Tech to become a Research Physiologist with USDA-ARS. There, as a scientist and research director, he gained world-wide recognition for his studies involving stress physiology and disease resistance in poultry. A recipient of the British Poultry Science Gordon Medal of Research, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Poultry Science Association, a Fulbright-Hays Scholar at Wageningen, he routinely attended WPSA events. As Editor-in-Chief of Poultry Science from 1981-1986 and again from 1995-2002 he had a role in enhancing the scientific endeavours of others.

In 1984, Herb returned to his alma mater, Penn State where he served as Head of Poultry Science Department – The third leg of his journey. I recall very much a conversation during his retirement party at Penn State in 1991. Herb said that when he returned from serving in World War II and while farming that there was the ‘pull’ to do research with poultry. To do so was a big decision, yet doable because he had the full support of Rhea. Although ‘a star’, Herb was always humble and unselfish in crediting his family and others. The path he took enriched the lives of many, not the least of which is yours truly. Herb was a ‘mensch’.

Paul B. Siegel